



## Number Six: Resources for Researching Federal Relief Programs in Dallas, 1932-1939

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Dallas Municipal Archives  
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Onsite Research by Appointment

Aimed at relief, recovery, and reform, the New Deal was President Franklin Roosevelt's answer to the economic crisis triggered by the stock market crash of 1929. With millions of Americans unemployed as a result of the financial collapse, the federal government took measures to get America back on its feet. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was the coordinating body for many of the government's "alphabet agencies". With the national unemployment rate topping 25%, the WPA disbursed some \$11 billion in work relief to millions of Americans between 1935 and 1942. During this period, the City of Dallas executed a number of WPA projects, employing many of the more than 15,000 Dallasites who were on the local relief rolls. The City of Dallas's WPA park improvement projects totaled nearly \$300,000 in federal funding. A total of \$124,000 was contributed by the City. Dallas led the state with 13,365 people on local WPA payrolls.

A large and complex organization, the WPA programs were coordinated by federal, state, and local authorities. The Dallas office of the WPA, organized under Texas Department #4, administered programs under several different organizations. These programs included the PWA (Public Works Administration), which split funding between City and federal sources and built several buildings in Fair Park; the WPA (Works Progress Administration), which constructed parks and built roads; the NYA (National Youth Administration), which contributed to the construction of Dealey Plaza; and the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps), which built parks and did other outdoor construction. The CCC was most famous in Dallas for its camp at White Rock Lake, which had educational and training opportunities for young men.

The citizens of Dallas benefited from more than just federally funded construction projects, however. The WPA also worked to expand educational, health, library, and community related projects. Needy Dallas residents benefited from sewing projects, a toy and shoe repair program, as well as a surplus commodities redistribution program. The city as a whole profited culturally from such WPA programs as the Federal Art Project, a public art project that employed artists who painted murals at Fair Park, Dallas City Hall, and other locations; the Federal Music Project, which hired musicians to perform at free public concerts; and the Federal Writers Project, whose participants produced *The WPA Dallas Guide and History*.

City of Dallas projects wholly or partly funded through federal programs:

Project	New Deal Agency	Built	Project	New Deal Agency	Built
Alamo Park	WPA	1936-38	Lagow (Mildred Dunn) Park	WPA	1936-38
Bachman Lake	CCC	1929-36	Lake Cliff Park	WPA	1928-36
Cedar Crest Golf Course	CCC	1936-38	Maple (Maria Luna) Park	WPA	1937
City Park	WPA	1930-39	Marsalis Zoo	WPA	1932-38
Cochran Park	WPA	1936-38	Martin Weiss Park	WPA	1936-38
Cole Park	WPA	1936-38	Monument Plaza	WPA	1936-38
Colonial Park	WPA	1936-38	Moss Park	WPA	
Dealey Plaza	WPA funds NYA labor	1936-41	Randall Park	WPA	1936-37
Exall Park	WPA	1936-38	Reverchon Park	WPA	1936
Exline Park	WPA	1936-38	Robert E. Lee Park	WPA	1936-38
Fair Park	WPA, CCC, PWA	1936	Stevens Memorial Park	WPA	1934-39
Field-Frazier Park	WPA	1936-38	Tietze Park	WPA	1934
Fretz Park (Original)	WPA	1926-38	Tenison Park	WPA	1941
Grauwlyer Park	WPA	1934	Tenison Memorial Park	WPA	1936-38
Harlee School	WPA	1936-38	Wahoo (JJ Craft) Park	WPA	1936-38
Hogg School	WPA	1936-38	White Rock Lake	WPA, CCC	1935-42
Kiest Park	WPA	1935			

## Manuscript and Paper-Based Materials

### **Dallas Park and Recreation Department-Related Records:**

Dallas Park and Recreation Department Subject Files, 1911-1970 [95-023] and additions

*Administrative correspondence and records concerning the day to day operation and construction of Park Department facilities. Note: New Deal materials are not comprehensive and in some files entirely absent.*

White Rock Lake - Park and Recreation Department Files, 1930-1950 [95-022]

*Administrative correspondence and records concerning the day to day operation and construction of White Rock Lake park facilities.*

Parks - Works Progress Administration, 1939-1940 [95-043]

*Administrative correspondence and records concerning Lake Cliff Park, wading pool specifications, and city landscaping requirements.*

Dallas Park and Recreation Department Plans and Drawings, 1911-1960 [02-003]

*Construction and planting plans for City of Dallas parks; includes master plans and drawings for White Rock Lake structures and landscaping and many Fair Park Texas Centennial buildings.*

Fair Park Esplanade Conservation [05-006]

*Information relating to the conservation of the Fair Park Esplanade which includes buildings that were created or adapted for the Texas Centennial and Pan-American Exposition.*

Fair Park Mural Conservation, 2001-2003 [02-007]

*Photographs, condition reports, and treatment details relating to the conservation and restoration of murals created for the Texas Centennial and Pan-American Exposition.*

Fair Park - Department of Park and Recreation Central Files, 1930-1960 [95-027]

*Administrative correspondence and records concerning Fair Park. Includes federal funding information only on buildings built by the City of Dallas or deeded to the City of Dallas after the Texas Centennial.*

Dealey Plaza - Department of Park and Recreation Subject Files, 1940-1941 [95-032]

*Records concerning the construction of Dealey Plaza.*

Report on the Dallas Park System, 1934 [03-015]

*Includes reports and information on park facilities receiving federal relief funds.*

Public Welfare, 1938-1946 [97-009]

*Includes a copy of the 1938 Dallas Welfare Survey with statistics on federal relief funds.*

Public Works, 1935-1934 [02-002]

*Includes information on public works that received federal relief funds.*

Flood and Levee Scrapbook, 1932-34 [91-120]

*Includes information on Trinity River bridges built with federal relief funds.*

## Maps

General Map Collection, 1915-1985 [99-001]

*Maps created mostly by City departments for various city government functions, such as planning and public works. Maps often include information about city limits, extent of neighborhood development, and transportation details such as interurban lines, bus lines, and train tracks.*

Public Works and Transportation Department, Maps, Plans, and Drawings, 1900-1954 [06-004]

*Includes some maps, plans, and drawings of public works projects that received federal relief funds.*

## Photographs

Park and Recreation Department Photographs, 1910-1994 [03-002]

*Includes modern aerial photographs of federally-funded or assisted park projects, a 1940 album documenting CCC projects at White Rock Lake, and other visual documentation.*

Dallas Water Utilities Records, 1882-1990, Photographic Materials Series [91-060]

*Includes photographs of federally funded Dallas Water Utility relief projects.*

Aerial Photograph Collection, 1930, 1949, 1974 [03-001]

*500 black and white photographic negatives and prints Aerial photographs of the entire City of Dallas taken in 1930, 1949, and 1974 for use by the city's Public Works and Planning Departments.*

## Records of the City Council, Boards, and Commissions

City Secretary's Files/Council Action Files [City Council Minutes, Ordinances and Resolutions]

*The Dallas City Council's official records, which includes information on the allocation and implementation of federal relief funds.*

Landmark Commission Minutes, 1987-Present

*Contained in City Secretary's Office Files by year in both hardcopy and microfiche. Indexes by year on microfiche. This body is charged with encouraging the use and/or adaptive reuse of historic buildings and houses within the City of Dallas. Includes Information on City of Dallas/federal projects proposed for or granted Landmark protection.*

Dallas Park Board Minutes, 1905-1975

*Includes reports and information on park facilities receiving federal relief funds.*