IT IS very easy to lose sight of the fundamental purpose for which the Professional and Service Division of the Work Projects Administration was organized—the useful employment of the white collar unemployed. Today in this Commonwealth more than six hundred unemployed clerks, teachers, lawyers, writers and persons in related occupational groups are engaged in a broad program of supplying keys to the millions of attested facts about our past, located in the records of court houses, municipal buildings, churches, libraries and historical societies. These workers are our neighbors, a little down on their luck at the moment but nevertheless employed at dignified labor while waiting for their ships of fortune to reach port. Many of these persons have returned and are constantly returning to private employment, with, we may well believe, their morale and social outlook not only maintained, but actually improved by their contact with Pennsylvania's rich cultural past. This contact was provided by their work in the various sections of the WPA Historical Records Survey. Most of our employees who were previously totally unconcerned with the work which occupies the Federation are now thoroughly aware of it and follow it with interest. In other words, we have made converts who will provide new popular support for all types of historical enterprise.

The secondary object of our program is to provide keys to unlock the great stores of historical material in the state and upon this subject I shall dwell at some length.

During the past three years the Survey has received from various individuals acting both upon their own initiative and as the representatives of historical societies requests for certain tasks...
to be carried out. Because of the limitations imposed by the approved project proposal under which we operate, it has been necessary to deny their requests. If this paper clearly outlines the objectives of the Survey so that there will be no further misunderstanding, much will have been accomplished.

Several weeks ago I met a friend in a Philadelphia club and spent the greater part of two hours in telling him about the work we are doing. Since he is a lawyer I felt that he would be interested in critically examining one of our inventories. To my amazement and chagrin, my friend included the following paragraph in his gracious letter of acknowledgment:

I have lived in my present house for thirty-five years. My wife's family lived in it for about twenty years before that. We have a very large and spacious attic and also a large storeroom. Each year of the occupancy of the house, different things have drifted to the attic and the storeroom and no inventory has ever been made. If you could turn some of your people loose on it, to inventory the various discarded playthings, furniture, portraits, pictures and the Lord knows what, you could produce a volume almost as big as that for Delaware county.

I should like to correct one general misconception concerning our work. We do not collect historical material as such. Researchers must still go to the depositories for their investigation.

Most of our personnel and effort is being concentrated on providing inventories of all the records of each county in the state. Many of you are familiar with the inventories of Luzerne, Delaware, Wayne, and Fayette counties which have been published. The field work has been completed in approximately thirty additional counties, and work is well under way in the remaining thirty-three.

The basic forms for these inventories are carefully devised work sheets which were designed in the national offices after conferences with many archival specialists in all parts of the country. The Pennsylvanians who played a prominent part in the planning of this phase of the work were: Dr. Curtis Garrison, former State Archivist; Dr. Francis Philbrick, professor of law at the University of Pennsylvania; and Dr. Julian P. Boyd, former librarian at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
Field workers are instructed in the manner in which these forms are to be filled in, and their work is closely supervised until they have a thorough grasp of the problem and its solution. The forms elicit such information as the name, dates covered, the quantity and content of a series of records, etc. When complete for a single county they are sent to the State Editorial Office in Philadelphia where they are edited. This process consists of reviewing the forms for their conformity to instructions issued to field workers, applicable laws regulating record-keeping systems, and the systems in use in other counties. On the basis of this review an entry is made. An entry is a numbered item in the inventory. The series of entries are more than a mere list of records of the county, because they are arranged in a logical fashion under the office which originated the record. In order that you may appreciate the high quality of the logic attained in our arrangement, permit me to quote Governor Charles A. Sprague, of Oregon, in a recent letter: "I want to acknowledge the receipt of the Inventory of the County Archives of Josephine County. I can see where this may be valuable for reference purposes. I notice that 'dog licenses' follow 'dance permits' and 'dance permits' follow 'authority to solemnize marriage.' I suppose that is the proper sequence. At any rate, young married folks today seem to want to dance and own dogs, so Josephine County is set up just right." Governor Sprague's letter is a warning to me to see to it that the "jag list" which exists in one of our eastern counties is properly placed in our inventory.

In connection with the Pennsylvania program we like to quote from a letter written by Judge E. Heller, a member of our advisory board: "We are fortunate indeed that the Historical Records Survey in Pennsylvania supported by the Work Projects Administration, has been able to gather together from the archives of the various counties, the written instruments from which we assemble the historical facts about the counties. This inventory is of great value at the present time, but will arrive at its greatest value when consulted and referred to in future years."

In addition to the entries in the inventory describing the records, the State Editorial Office in Philadelphia adds documented sketches of the county history in general, and of the functions and evolution of its government. Each office in the county is described in an essay which outlines its evolution, functions and record-
keeping system. These essays are documented from session laws, compiled codes, court decisions, attorney generals' opinions, the records themselves, and other available sources. The scale of this legal research is so large that it is really a department in itself. Eventually we plan to publish a key volume based on our legal research. This will constitute the most comprehensive description of Pennsylvania local government past and present which has ever been issued.

All forms are checked immediately after they are written and after the draft inventory is compiled in Philadelphia, it is returned to the county and all items are again rechecked. The volume is then submitted to Washington for approval prior to its publication. The national editors review the volume carefully, and may approve it for publication, approve with qualifications, or require such fundamental rechecking and rewriting that the volume may have to be resubmitted. It should be obvious that every effort is made to eliminate error.

Since these inventories are primarily reference tools, emphasis is laid upon the preparation of accurate and complete subject and chronological indexes. The procedure followed in preparing inventories of municipal archives is quite similar to that used in preparing the county volumes. A generous grant by the Board of Commissioners of the City of Hazleton will make possible the printing of the inventory of the municipal archives of Hazleton. This will be our first publication in the municipal field.

In physical extent, the inventory of the records of all churches, active and defunct, and religious bodies such as diocesan headquarters, conventions and similar bodies, is the largest. The basic volume in this series will be a directory of churches and religious bodies. This is the foundation from which the inventory proceeds, and it differs from all other church directories in that it includes defunct churches. It will be a valuable publication in its own right.

The main series of publications in the church field will be inventories of the records of each denomination with one or more volumes for each. Of the 17,198 congregations in Pennsylvania, 6,737 have been surveyed. It will be seen that while the work is under way a great deal remains to be accomplished.

Dr. Lewis C. Moon, state editor of Church inventories, has completed inventories of the Reformed, Jewish and Friends
congregations. These have been approved for publication by the Library of Congress. The survey of manuscript materials is an important part of our project. We apply the term manuscripts to the private records of persons, as well as institutions. Papers in this category are usually deposited in historical societies and libraries.

The primary survey publication in this field is the already well known *Guide to Manuscript Depositories*. The Pennsylvania guide, prepared by Bernard S. Levin, state editor of manuscripts, and published in November, 1939, by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, was the first publication of this nature in the United States. Our next series will be guides to manuscript collections. Because of a munificent grant by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, our guide to the major collections of this important society will be printed and issued this spring.

The third series in the manuscript field will consist of calendars of a single collection, which is chosen because of the valuable research material it may contain. Naturally, the advice of experts in the field wherein the collection will prove of most interest, is sought before calendaring is initiated.

The inventory of American imprints published prior to 1876 is an important phase in our program. Imprints cover books, broadsides and pamphlets. We have chosen 1876 as the terminal date of our inventory because that is the year in which the United States Catalog began publication. We know how fleeting and susceptible to destruction are our treasured pamphlets and broadsides; yet this material collectively constitutes a vast store of factual history, which has been little exploited. On forms devised by Dr. Douglas Crawford McMurtrie, the nation's outstanding authority on the history of printing, we list the imprints in the various libraries and special collections of the state. These are sent to the national imprints headquarters in Chicago where similar slips are received from all parts of the United States. Dr. McMurtrie now has more than five million slips covering thousands of special collections in all of the leading libraries. Of these, Pennsylvania has forwarded 426,015, which is about 85% of the total holdings of Pennsylvania libraries. Duplicates are eliminated in the Chicago office, and eventually we shall receive a check list of early Pennsylvania imprints locating the various items in libraries throughout the country. This work has already added many titles
not listed in either Sabin or Evans and has located Pennsylvania imprints of which no copies are now known to exist in the Commonwealth. The value of such a list to librarians, collectors, and historians in Pennsylvania will be incalculable.

Another enterprise which is being carried on in the older states of the Atlantic seaboard is the preparation of the catalogs of early American portraits. These catalogs are arranged alphabetically by the name of the subject and give information as to the painter, location, pose, costume, and other pertinent data. In Pennsylvania this work is under the direction of Mr. William A. Williams, who prides himself on the fact that with the cooperation of interested museums and galleries, the Survey has been the means of identifying several hitherto unknown paintings, and of correcting attributions. The published results of this phase of our work will prove valuable not only to historians and biographers seeking illustrative material, but to students of the fine arts and costume.

Pennsylvania is the location of two bibliographical projects, both of the utmost importance. Several abortive efforts have been made to compile a bibliography of Pennsylvania newspapers, but the lack of a sufficiently large subsidy has hitherto prevented the fulfillment of the proponent's desires. The present compilation which is nearing completion, is under the direction of Henry F. Marx, and is located in Easton. Interested persons have examined some of the results of his research and have been unanimous in acclaiming the work as a necessary and invaluable historical tool.

Under the direction of Edward H. O'Neill, formerly of the English department of the University of Pennsylvania, a survey is being made of the entire field of American literature, from its beginning in the early seventeenth century to the present time. Existing general bibliographies in American literature are being broken down for the purpose of reorganization and classification. The earlier method of arranging by periods is superseded by a simple alphabetical arrangement by authors with their dates. This bibliography is one of the largest and most important projects ever attempted in American scholarship. In this enterprise which we are proud to recognize as an important part of the Pennsylvania Historical Records Survey, we have the cooperation of scholars throughout the nation.

Such in brief are the research tools being devised by the WPA Historical Records Survey. I believe that the recent emphasis
upon regional and state history is a tacit admission that we are not now in a position to prepare really adequate national histories when there is so much about the life of the people in the places where they actually live, work and govern themselves, that remains unexploited. If I interpret this trend correctly the program of the WPA Historical Records Survey is bringing within the ken of all researchers the literary survivals of the past, and is laying a real foundation for historical writing. The superstructure will not rise immediately but when it is finally constructed it will be firmly established and not require rebuilding every generation, although it most certainly will be periodically repaired, and re-modeled until America's social, economic, political and cultural life becomes absolutely static along the lines indicated in Aldous Huxley's extravaganza "Brave New World."