



the view from the road:

katharine kellock's new deal guidebooks

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The loss of national confidence experienced by Americans in the 1930s stimulated a new preoccupation: what Warren Susman called the “complex effort to seek and to define America as a culture.”¹ Susman, Aaron, Stott, Pells and others have shown how cultural images—more than fully articulated ideologies—vied for centre stage in the period, as intellectuals, artists and the mass media tried to encapsulate their opposing visions of American society.² In this battleground of warring definitions, one major symbol of Depression America became the road: writers and photojournalists, in particular, used the road to symbolize the aimlessness, destitution and human suffering of the decade. There emerged, however, one important challenge to this symbolism: a series of guidebooks to America’s major routes which emanated from the Federal Writers’ Project in the late 1930s.³ Under the editorship of Katharine Kellock, these “Highway Route” guides took the image of the road and reversed its meaning:

FIGURE ONE (above): Ben Shahn, “Farmer carrying his wheat to the silo, Ohio, July 1938.” (Courtesy of the Library of Congress).

in this series, roads led not to visions of national misery but to a confidence in America's past and an optimism about her future which countered the most widespread fears of the Depression era.⁴

By focusing on the nation's roads, the Highway Route series was tackling a subject which, by the late 1930s, carried connotations of social breakdown. In the crisis of the Depression, politicians regarded the road system as an appropriate target for government funds: Huey Long won much popularity with his road repair measures in Louisiana, and Roosevelt made highway beautification one of his New Deal projects.⁵ For writers, the road persisted even more prominently as a symbol of human displacement throughout the decade. When Nathan Asch and James Rorty felt impelled to learn about the crisis in their country in the early 1930s, they took to the road. What they discovered was the futile wandering of a generation. For Asch, the road led nowhere:

I began to see the entire country, with its maze of road, twining, twisting, entering everywhere. I saw the million automobiles, and trains, and buses, and people walking on the road, all trying to get somewhere. I suddenly saw the map of America . . . with scarlet road extending through the states, across mountains, by the sides of the rivers, through the cities, and never getting back anywhere but into itself.⁶

Struck by the numbers of destitute hitchhikers by the highway, Rorty wondered: "What profound failure of American life did this drift of human atoms signify and embody, and to what would it lead?"⁷ In 1936, Dos Passos focused on the same phenomenon when he ended *U.S.A.* with the passive hitchhiker without purpose or goals, who simply "waits on the side of the road" to be carried "a hundred miles down the road."⁸ By the end of the decade, John Steinbeck was suggesting that down the road lay merely illusion. In *Grapes of Wrath* (1939), he described Highway 66 during the worst of the drought: "People in flight along 66. And the concrete road shone like a mirror under the sun and in the distance the heat made it seem that there were pools of water in the road."⁹

These visions were corroborated, perhaps most famously of all, by the Farm Security Administration photographers. Roy Stryker, head of the Historical Section of the F.S.A., protested several times that his photographers did record "positive pictures" of America as well as destitute migrants; nevertheless, from 1935 until the outbreak of the Second World War, the most widely reproduced photographs were those of bewilderment and fortitude in the face of extreme poverty.¹⁰ In this photographic "memorial of the Depression era," the road served repeatedly as focal point.¹¹ Dorothea Lange's famous photograph of U.S. 80, entitled "Westward to the Pacific Coast" (1938), uses the image of the straight, empty highway to hint an unending disillusionment: stretching far into the distance, the road offers the possibility of direction, movement, perhaps progress; but that vision is undercut by the absolute barrenness of the scene which shows that the road is, in William Stott's words, simply "traveling from emptiness to emptiness toward a receding goal."¹² When Lange peopled the road, she did so with dejected wanderers and straggling, homeless families (in, for example, "Oklahoma, June 1938"). That vision of human displacement was

underscored again and again, by Walker Evans, Margaret Bourke-White, Russell Lee and others: the highway exposed the absolute absence of security or comfort at the heart of these Americans' lives. A final photograph, by Ben Shahn (Figure 1), epitomizes the perspective of these writers and photographers: the artist was looking at the road and all it signified from the viewpoint of those who were stuck in the horse-and-buggy era, those who were vulnerable to the environment around them, those whose journey along the road was fraught with the possibility of failure.

The major architect of the counter-symbolism to this dark vision was Katharine Kellock, Tours Editor of the Federal Writers' Project and instigator and sole editor of the Highway Route series of guidebooks. Kellock was only a middle-level administrator in Washington, D.C., not a Presidential appointee nor a public spokesperson for the Writers' Project. But her optimistic view of the road was crucial because it strongly stamped the American Guide Series, which, as it was widely read and reviewed across the country, became an important carrier of cultural images. Kellock's ruling vision was influenced by three forces, all characteristic signatures of the New Dealer's background: the professionalization of social work, contact with the Soviet Union and the Progressive view of American history.¹³

Like many appointees, from Harry Hopkins downwards, Kellock came to New Deal agencies via her experience in social work of various kinds. Born into an Anglo-Saxon, middle-class, Baptist family in Pittsburgh in 1892, she began voluntary service through the Baptist Society and trained with the Red Cross. She then undertook relief work abroad and at home: from 1921 to 1924, she served as a relief supervisor for the American Friends Committee in Poland, Austria, and Russia; she also did public health work with the Taos Indian pueblo and the Henry Street Settlement in New York. In 1935, Lillian Wald was one of the people who recommended her for a position in the Resettlement Administration, which Kellock left in 1936 for the Writers' Project. Kellock's response to this relief experience seems typical of the "second generation" of women to enter the central New Deal administration. She was not part of what Susan Ware calls "the women's network" (the top-level appointees like Frances Perkins and Ellen Woodward who came to Washington in 1933), whose members' Progressivism was a mixture of reformist zeal and feminism. Kellock, ten years younger than these women, seems to evince the attitudes of those who arrived in Washington around 1936, as part of the Second New Deal. Ware explains that developments in social-work training led these younger women to concentrate more on individuals than on the social environment and to be more pre-occupied with professionalism than reform: "The old reformers, with their concern for the dispossessed and the downtrodden, especially the female dispossessed, were now being replaced by younger, professionally trained women whose visions were considerably narrower."¹⁴ Certainly, it would be difficult to tell from Kellock's correspondence alone that the Writers' Project was a relief operation; repeatedly she stressed competence and professional standards over rehabilitation.¹⁵ Moreover, it was clear that, while she recognized individual cases of hardship, she did not advocate general reform to the social and economic environment.

Kellock's relief work also brought her in contact with the Soviet Union, to which she had a very particular and idiosyncratic response. She was in the country at least thrice: in 1923, for relief work; in 1928, with her husband, when he was exploring trade possibilities; and in 1929, when she conducted a group study tour arranged by The Open Road.

Kellock seems to have remained unimpressed by Soviet society; she commented not at all on its political dimensions; but she did return profoundly convinced of the importance of travel guides. Travelling herself and leading others, she realized how thoroughly tour descriptions shaped perceptions of a country and how guide literature could confer international status on a location. She determined that the United States should have an appropriately elaborate guide series, describing not pleasure excursions but the industrial and social activity surrounding the country's most heavily travelled routes and designed to reach not just the expanding number of motorists at home but the American public at large: in the early days of the Project, she emphasized "how entertaining . . . [tours] can be, even for the fireside traveler."¹⁶ From 1929 to 1935 she lobbied leading publishers about this project, and it was this activity which caused her to be recruited into the Writers' Project at its inception, when the Project's leading administrators were casting around for a specific production plan.

Kellock's principle of selection for this guide series was largely determined by her education in American history. She studied history (along with other Social Science subjects and journalism) at Columbia University after the First World War, a period when Charles Beard, newly departed from the university, was still a major influence.¹⁷ From that Progressive teaching, Kellock imbibed a distinct method and vision. The history of America was the sum of its individual citizens' achievements, with due democratic attention paid to the ordinary worker's role; economic and industrial developments were prime movers in the historical story; and a generally optimistic picture of the nation's course resulted from the panoramic view. With this vision, Kellock became part of the distinctively New Deal impetus described by Alfred Haworth Jones as the use of past history to shore up present national confidence.¹⁸ First, she contributed to *The Dictionary of American Biography*, a cornerstone of thirties' preoccupations with the achievements of individual Americans; then she inscribed a very similar vision in the Highway Route series. Kellock herself attested to Beard's centrality to the guidebook project. She recommended to Henry Alsberg, the National Director of the Writers' Project, that all Project employees read, or at the very least consult, the Beards' *Rise of American Civilization*:

The Beard *Rise* is chiefly valuable for giving workers perspective on what is important and what unimportant. The introduction to the latest edition could very well serve as an explanation of the purposes of the guide; the real purpose is, of course, to educate Americans to an evaluation of their own civilization. "The history of civilization, if intelligently conceived, may be an instrument of civilization. Surveying life as a whole, as distinguished from a microscopic analysis by departments, it

ought to come nearer than any partial history to the requirements of illumination."¹⁹

In applying her interpretation of Beard, Kellock directed Project employees to concentrate on cultural and industrial progress, not the contemporary depression. Indeed, her repeated dictum to workers, that "a well-written tour provides a guide to the rise of civilization in the country through which it passes," tacitly assumed that, across the land, the Depression was a temporary aberration in a more important pattern of ever-rising civilization.²⁰

All of Kellock's culturally conditioned beliefs—her non-reformist understanding of relief work, her conviction about tour literature's contribution to America's heritage, her determination to perpetrate a particular interpretation of American history—devolved into a peculiarly concrete medium. In pointing to sights and details along America's roads, the guidebooks adopted the rhetoric of fact; yet, just as much as the documentarists and novelists, Kellock treated the road as a symbol. The difference was that, where they saw the road revealing the crisis in contemporary society, she believed that roads revealed purposeful movement, by linking the nation's past and present. She wrote:

Roads have not developed by accident; the general course of all routes of importance has been worn by the movements of large numbers of people who wanted to go from one place to another. Many routes were developed by migrating hordes. Thus the tour route is often a thread on which a narrative can be built, with history from the days of Indian occupation of the country to the present, told in geographical rather than topical or chronological sequence. The *social, economic, cultural, and political* histories of towns along routes are related to the history of the route itself and most points of interest are closely related to the main theme.²¹

As the Highway Route series unfolds, we see how, in the midst of the "mini-Depression" of 1937 and 1938, Kellock sent workers out on the roads to look for evidence of vigour, self-sufficiency and achievement: that is, evidence of American progress. At first, she restricted the guidebook's account to the local scene bordering the highway. Then, she tried to broaden her range to that of a regional history and, at that point, discrepancies in the guidebook's portrait become apparent. Eventually, however, in the final book in the series, she found a way to reconcile these discrepancies and come up with a description that was coherent at the level of national development.²² In presenting this image of the country, the series not only challenged the portrait of America in many thirties' works, including the most publicized F.S.A. photographs; it also implicitly countered the pessimism about the possibility of industrial recovery, the despair about the loss of individual power and the general fear about the future of America which were abroad in society. In mounting this challenge, the guidebooks made their contribution to the New Deal: the qualities which they described in the American landscape were essentially the qualities which the Roosevelt administration was trying to instill in the country.²³

U.S. ONE

In the first volume of the series, *U.S. One: Maine to Florida* (1938), Kellock used her understanding of Beard to reorient writers'—and by extension readers'—picture of their homeland. She chose U.S.1 as her first highway project not for its aesthetic qualities but because the route was one of the busiest and oldest in the country (linking twelve of the thirteen original colonies as well as North to South). She also decided to treat major cities along the way only summarily, devoting most space and detail to the smaller communities and isolated sights, because she believed that in them lay the true, "undiscovered" America.²⁴ Thus, her chosen route cut through the heart of both the history and the modern industrialized society of everyday America. What she coached her writers to look for along this route was evidence of progress, of various kinds, as expressed through individual activities and industrial achievements.

Kellock saw her task as revisionist: her instructions to Project workers direct them to shift their attention beyond the traditional high points of America's history, in order to realize the true wealth of the country's past and present. She set out her credo, using as her yardstick the 1909 Baedeker guide, which was the most recent guidebook to America:

We are trying to get away from the Baedeker type of guide that reveals little about the average citizen of the country today, about his interests—homely and otherwise—and about the way he makes his living . . . we endeavor to avoid the antiquarian viewpoint, with its emphasis on old-time events to the exclusion of the less romantic periods of development. We consider the story of the development and the description of a large factory of more importance than the details of settlement of a village.²⁵

That emphasis on the contemporary and the industrial she hammered home again and again. She told New York State workers that they were "over-writing the scenic features at the expense of the towns" and that she wanted "more visual description of people at work—what part human beings play in the industrial process."²⁶ Similarly, she advised South Carolina workers to reduce descriptions of ante-bellum life and say "more about the present day life in the state—descriptions of life in the mill villages, of people at work in canning factories, and cotton mills."²⁷

The effect of these instructions shows up in the selection and description of sights along U.S.1. First, while references to Revolutionary battles, Colonial architecture and Southern plantations by no means disappear, they do jostle side-by-side with descriptions of steel bridges, cement plants and asbestos quarries. Ridgefield, New Jersey is described in terms of its "unpretentious shopping center," bank, railroad tracks and "drab homes and factories"; one mile down the road, Fairview "is announced by the acrid smell from a bleachery" and by the plant of the International Fireworks Company.²⁸ Such industrial constructions appear much more frequently than the "mile-by-mile" rate promised by Kellock in the book's preface (ix) and attain a stature at least equivalent to that of the

more traditional sights. The treatment of people seems equally democratic. There are plenty of sights associated with Paul Revere, George Washington, Robert E. Lee and to living artists and statesmen. But equally we learn of those whom national memory forgot: we read that Mason House, Calais, was the home of Noah Smith, "said to have been one of the last people who had official business with President Lincoln before his assassination" (3); the pond in Fairfield, Connecticut, was the "trial by water" of Mercy Disbrow and Elizabeth Clawson, accused of witchery (190); and there is itemized a whole raft of women called Judith, after whom Point Judith, Rhode Island might (or might not) have been named (81). This profusion of hitherto unremarked buildings and people, plus the implication that all of them are worth attention, gave the lie to Henry James's famous complaint, that the American landscape lacks associations.

As well as being crowded, the scene is invested with vigour through the language of its description. Kellock forbade not just clichéd adjectives and superlatives but personal pronouns and passive or subjunctive verbs in tour write-ups.²⁹ As a result, the text is dense with inanimate objects linked with active verbs: the road "runs," "connects," "swings," "swoops" and "plunges"; the sea "attacks with a roar, retreats, and returns to attack again" (1); and buildings "border," "look out," "rise," "recall" and "guide." When human figures appear, the sense of energetic activity is reinforced by the manner in which stories of isolated incidents in these figures' lives rush upon each other without comment or conclusion. The impression is one of unflagging activity.

The thread that runs through all these descriptions and details and activities is the emphasis on man- and woman-made sights. *U.S. One* pays little attention to natural scenery, instead concentrating on detailed portrayals of architecture and long explanations of industrial processes (such as the cotton gin and the turpentine still in the Georgia chapter). Much space is given over, too, to metaphorical manufactures: despite Kellock's insistence on factual accuracy, she admitted huge numbers of narratives based on legend, tradition or even gossip. The logic seems to be that the stories, like the buildings and the industrial plant, are evidence of human ingenuity, elaborations heaped up on the American landscape. And it seems to be this logic which determines which people and events are rescued by the guidebook from oblivion: the text pays attention not necessarily to the famous, but to those who have managed to leave their mark on the landscape.

This orientation is conveyed most authoritatively in the photographs to *U.S. One*. Roland Barthes, Susan Sontag and John Berger have all discussed at length the way in which a photograph, by selecting and isolating one fragment of the world, endows it with a certain authority.³⁰ That intrinsic selectivity was multiplied in the editorial process behind the guidebook: not only did the, often anonymous, photographer choose his subject, but Kellock then selected from all the states' submissions the illustrations which, according to her priorities, were most suitable for this publication. That dual process of selection certainly endows these photographs with an impact which the dense, crowded text lacks. The thirty illustrations in *U.S. One* are focused and coherent in a way that the anecdotal text is not, and they must have helped to shape the traveller's percep-

tion of the passing scene. They would be even more formative in their effect on Kellock's "fireside reader," who would be unlikely to read the book entirely, but who might dwell at some length on the visual images. In various ways, then, the illustrations define this portrait of East Coast America.

First and most obviously, the visual work reveals the perspective adopted by the architect of *U.S. One*. "Stretch of U.S.1, New Jersey" (see front cover) shows that the viewpoint is no longer that of the Depression documentarist: the road is seen not by the horse-and-buggy farmer, open and vulnerable to whatever the road delivers, but by the motorist, enclosed in his vehicle and limited in his vision by the narrow rectangle of the windscreen. This traveller very much represents what Rexford Tugwell called "the comfort group": that class of people who lacked the ostentatious luxuries of the rich but who were protected by their employment from the vicissitudes of the poor. (In 1922, a much richer year for Americans than 1938, Tugwell reckoned that only one-eleventh of the total incomes in the United States were at the comfort level.)³¹ Not only is the motorist protected from the landscape by modern technology, but the scene into which he drives is not unadorned: along the clipped borders of this highway, unlike Dorothea Lange's, appear man's constructions, in the shapes of billboards and buildings.

This emphasis on construction continues throughout the photographs, since the vast majority are of architectural subjects, mostly of a distinctively ornate type. In *The Culture of Cities*, Lewis Mumford distinguishes between two categories of architecture: on the one hand, buildings, whose appearance reflects their functional, utilitarian purpose; and on the other hand, monuments, whose facades declare their main intent to be glorification, remembrance, or decoration.³² In the thirty photographs of *U.S. One*, there is only one image of a building, and it is specifically linked with New Deal resourcefulness: it is a rectangular, plain house from the Resettlement Administration's Greenbelt experiment in Maryland. All the other subjects are emphatic monuments photographed in an emphatically monumental style: neo-classical churches and capitols and, in particular, the majestic City Hall in Philadelphia, which was photographed especially for this guidebook lighted by a battery of spotlights which emphasize the grandeur of the sight while obliterating any life surrounding it. Not only that, but very often photographs concern ordinary Americans' own attempts to monumentalize their buildings. Take, for example, the "Wedding Cake House" (Figure 2), where an ordinary house has had superimposed upon it the decorative, non-utilitarian qualities of a monument. A more jarring example of superimposition appears in a photograph of an old slave market in Louisville, Georgia, which is presented with four white women in summer dresses arrayed along its front. Little has been done to dress up the architecture of the building itself, but by foregrounding the posing tourists, the photograph directs the reader's attention away from the structure's original function; the market becomes a sight to be visited, a backdrop to a picture-postcard scene.

When that process of monumentalization is linked to modern technology, the spirit of progress which lurks within all the illustrations becomes explicit. For example, one photograph portrays Bayonne Bridge in New Jersey (Figure 3) which, the text reports, was opened to traffic in 1932 and was "the longest steel-

arch bridge in the world”(129). The angle of the photograph is telling. In the foreground, at the bottom of the picture, are the old, decaying remains of either a ferry landing or a pier. Rising in an arc away from these ruins is the steel bridge, majestic and modern, extending the road across barriers to new distances. The contrast between past and progress is obvious.³³ Another photograph shows Hutchinson River Parkway in New York State, one of the several beautification projects in the thirties which were associated with federal funds and job creation.³⁴ This road is gently curving and well kept, bordered by the blossoming foliage of planted trees. Again, it is a road entirely different from Dorothea Langes’s and Ben Shahn’s: it is a highway with an artificially pastoral appearance, a creation which blots out the natural landscape beyond its reaches. As the photograph shows, it is a road for the motorized, for those who have the resources to make their travel controlled and purposeful.

When Fox Talbot began photographing monuments in the 1830s, his priority was to record “the injuries of time,” to preserve historic ruins visually.³⁵ A hundred years later, the photography and text of *U.S. One* have the exactly opposite thrust. They are intent on recording what men and women have accumulated through time, what they have achieved technologically, or in terms of legend-building, or simply by making their mark on the landscape. The result is history as democratic progress: a display of accumulations leading from past to present, with individual names—to a great extent previously unknown names—written into the record. This vision of continuous achievement was attained by an almost direct reversal of the documentarists’ approach. Like Roy

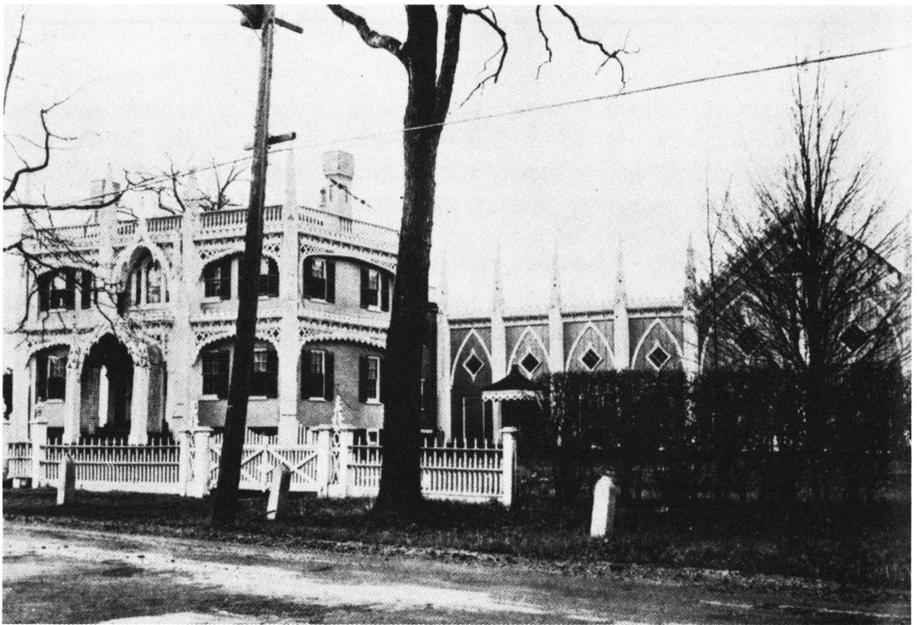


FIGURE TWO: "Wedding Cake House," Maine.



FIGURE THREE: Bayonne Bridge, New Jersey.

Stryker, Katharine Kellock sent out her workers to look at modern America. But where Stryker's photographers discovered roads populated with the destitute, Kellock's writers described a society of Americans, past and present, who are reasserting their individuality, creating monuments, and generally fashioning a vigorous world far different from the exhaustion and impotence of the Depression's victims. From the perspective promoted by Kellock, through her selection and instruction, the Depression does not loom large along U.S.1; what looms largest is the monumental achievement which is the sum of the innumerable individual efforts described in this guidebook.

the ocean highway

In *U.S. One*, Kellock applied her learned vision of American society in an anecdotal and atomized way and restricted the guidebook's scope to the locality of the highway. The range of the next volume in the series, *The Ocean Highway: New Brunswick, New Jersey to Jacksonville, Florida* (1938), is more ambitious than that: very similar material is worked up as a historical explanation of an entire region, the South. In attempting to deliver this larger regional history with the guidebook method, Kellock inadvertently revealed some of the shortcomings in her approach.

The Ocean Highway traces four highway segments—parts of U.S. 130, 40, 30 and 17—from New Jersey to Florida. Much of this route parallels U.S.1, but a much greater proportion of the Ocean Highway runs through the South. Consequently, the South is the focus of this volume's innovation: the introductory essay placing the tours in an overtly historical context. Kellock explains in this introduction: "An outline of that history is a necessary adjunct to a description of the towns and points of interest along the route; but much of the story of the Ocean Highway country is necessarily the story of the whole South."³⁶ The historical account which follows shows, again, the influence of the Beards' *Rise*: conflict between North and South is explained predominantly in economic terms, and slavery is discussed as an economic issue rather than a racial experience. Indeed, the Black figures remarkably little in this essay, which ends on an optimistic note: the prospect of new-found prosperity, with "the Old South . . . entering a new cycle in its long history" (xv).

When the tour descriptions begin, they carry exactly the same note of optimism and historical continuity as the introduction; indeed, the tours seek to prove, in their anecdotes and detailed descriptions, the generally positive outlook of the opening discussion. Continuity is achieved, first of all, by the concentration on fewer sights and more extensive treatment of each than in *U.S. One*. In every case, that treatment is a narrative which links the origin of the sight to its contemporary development. For example, the history of Brunswick in Georgia is detailed, right from its beginnings as a Spanish port in 1566, through its development as a plantation in the eighteenth century, to its downfall in the Civil War. The description ends on a typically optimistic note by pointing to the recent construction of a pulp wood factory which "provides opportunity for a major industrial development" (155-56). Instead of dashing from one unfinished story to another, as happens in reading *U.S. One*, the traveller here is guided through a series of cyclical developments, apparently complete local histories which purport to link past events to present progress in a chronological flow of narrative. Indeed, the guidebook closes with a demonstration of continuity. Having led the modern motorist down the Southern coast, the text ends with a 1584 travelogue, "Barlow's Description of the North Carolina Coast." The implication is that, in following the road to the guide's directions, the contemporary traveller is put in direct touch with his or her country's past and all that has been achieved in the interim.

With the text conveying all these aspirations to complete historical coverage, the issue of omissions becomes much more disturbing than in the previous account. The most obvious omission lies in the treatment of Blacks, a problem noted by Kellock herself. The evidence is that Kellock chided workers in the Southern states repeatedly to give her more material on Blacks.³⁷ But the finished text shows that she failed to solicit a due proportion of this material. It is not that Blacks receive no mention in the guidebook, but the space allotted to them is not at all proportionate to their acknowledged presence in society. The description of New Bern, North Carolina, for example, reveals that Negroes "constitute 52 percent of the population" (111), then, after a hasty remark about the Negroes' workplace and residence, the text turns to a very long, detailed paragraph about the town's German settlers. Similarly, the South Carolina

chapter gestures to the high proportion of Negroes in the state, then spends very little description on them. The fact that Project workers could not or would not submit sufficient evidence of black culture suggests that this section of society did not fit easily into the picture which the workers were being directed to compose. The resulting imbalance in the guidebook points up the gap between Kellock's vision and the project workers' output and, by extension, something of the limitation in her overall understanding of America.

The photographs, again, dramatize the implications of Kellock's ruling vision, suggesting that she was trying to fit the evidence into a predetermined scheme and that some discrepancies inevitably resulted. By and large, the illustrations in *The Ocean Highway* are the familiar mixture of monuments, dressed-up buildings and industrial sites. But five photographs involve single human figures—never the case in *U.S. One*—and the treatment of these human subjects suggests that the guidebook consistently wrote the individual into an entrepreneurial context. The results of that contextualization are at least ambiguous and sometimes contradictory.

The two photographs of Whites stress ingenuity and visible achievement, as so much of the written text does. In the first portrait of a Virginian child—"A Tangier Island Scooter" (Figure 4)—a potential victim of poverty has been transformed into an ingenious inventor. Children were a frequent subject for Depression photographers, and the image of this Southern child contrasts markedly with the compositions of Evans, Lange or Lee. Like any of Walker Evans's Southern children, the figure here is grubby and his clothing is tattered. But in Evans's photographs, such children invariably appear clutching at parents or physically hemmed in by their environment: they often seem to be passive and trapped. In this illustration, however, the child's ingenious invention—the "primitive sailboat" described in the text (72)—gives him mobility and some measure of control; like the motorist photographed in *U.S. One*, he is "in the driver's seat," steering himself, metaphorically at least, out of the Depression.

The other illustration of a white figure—the final photograph of a human in the book—shows a man surrounded by gigantic fish (Figure 5). The photograph carries two very positive implications. First, in the outsize fish, we see an example of the gigantic oddity, what Karal Ann Marling calls "the colossus," versions of which, man-made and natural, dotted the roadside in thirties' America.³⁸ The colossus is the oddity as monument, symbol of America's gigantic natural resources; thus, this photograph extends the guidebook's emphasis on monumentalism beyond architecture to the richness of the land itself. Second, the caption—"A Florida Catch"—indicates that at least one of the creatures is the deep-sea fisherman's own prize, and therefore the focus is again on very tangible human accomplishment. However, the way in which the colossal fish tower around and partly conceal the human figure also suggests that a third, darker message underlies the celebration of plenitude. This image shows that the physical prize can overshadow and outscale the person; to emphasize the monumental product can be to reduce the human element. Marling has said that, while the colossus is a real object, it also represents an illusion: "a stopping place in time, where the everyday rules of reality are suspended and an idyllic dream commences."³⁹ As a final, lingering image in the guidebook, this



FIGURE FOUR: A Tangler Island Scooter.

photograph suggests that there is something illusory or wishful about a world full of monuments, that, as in this illustration, monuments which are intended to celebrate human accomplishment can ultimately serve to obscure the ordinary human being after all.

If the photographs of Whites hint, at one level, of manipulation and tension in *The Ocean Highway's* version of history, the three photographs of black figures express even more graphically—though presumably unwittingly—the social consequences of the guidebook's emphasis on monumental achievement. Blacks as photographic subjects were an innovation in this volume: despite the coverage of Southern states in *U.S. One*, no illustrations of Blacks were included. What is really telling in these portraits is what Sontag calls “the uninnocent nature of a photograph's framing, angle, focus.”⁴⁰ While the subject-matter of these photographs certainly includes Blacks, in each case the composition subsumes the black figure under the image of monumental, entrepreneurial America; simultaneously, the caption—which both Walter Benjamin and William Stott identify as a central part of the photograph's syntax—actually obliterates the Blacks' presence.⁴¹ The first photograph is labelled “St. Michael's, Charleston, South Carolina” (Figure 6). The caption directs the reader to the monumental piece of architecture; that focus, plus the shadows into which the black

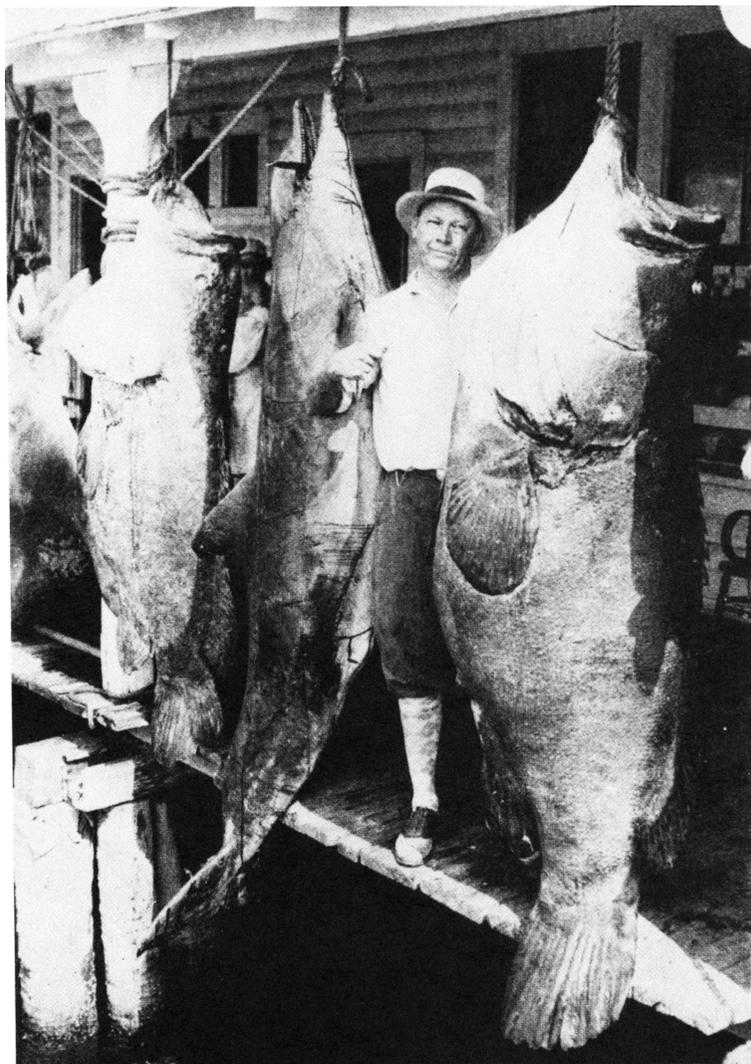


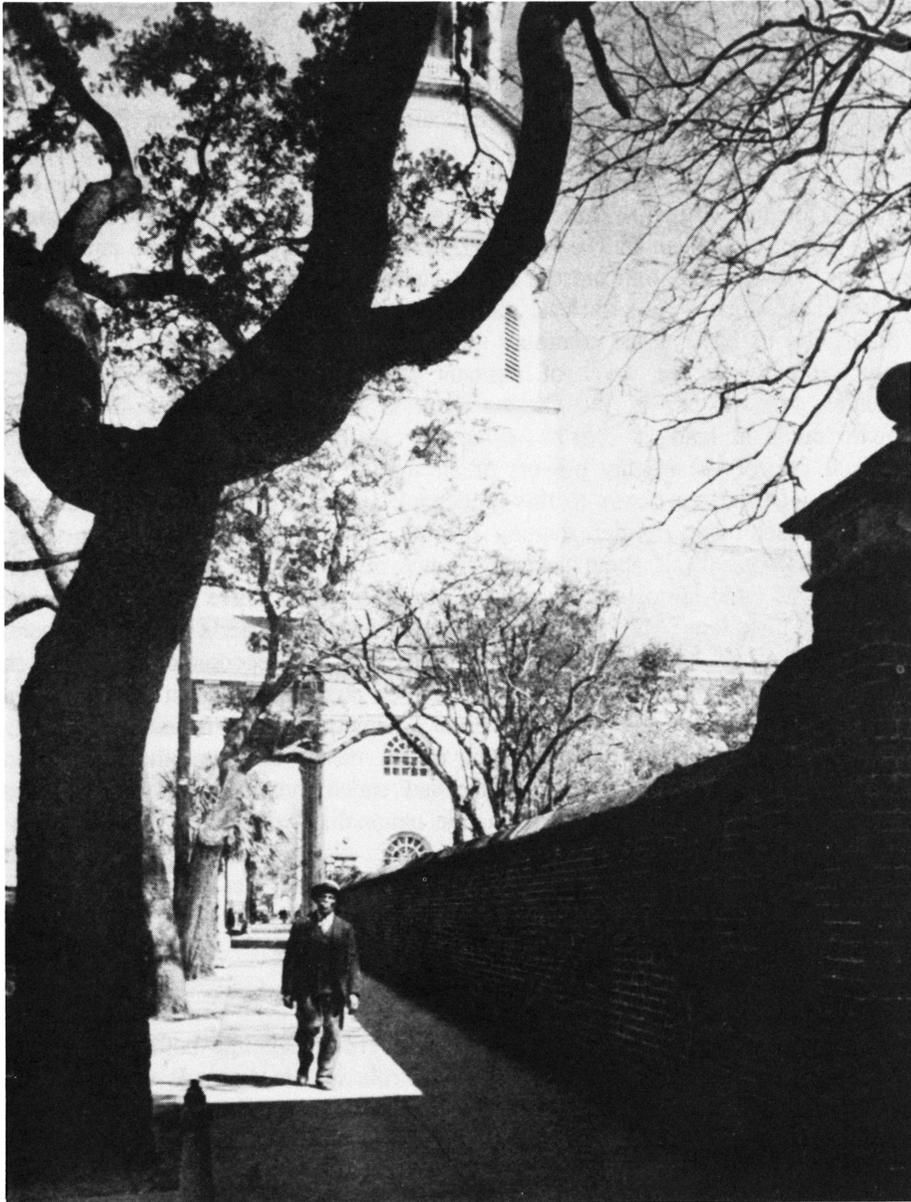
FIGURE FIVE (left): A Florida Catch.

FIGURE SIX (right): St. Michaels, Charleston, South Carolina.

man is walking, serves to displace the human figure to the margins of the scene. In the next illustration, the caption of "Tenant Cabin, South Carolina" again ignores the existence of the black woman who sits in the door of the cabin, not foregrounded but part of the building; she is wholly defined by the structure with which her figure blends. Once again, "Wetter House (1840), Savannah, Georgia" (Figure 7) takes the reader's eye away from the human up to the decorated architecture. All three of these figures are portrayed as potential members of middle-class society, perhaps even of "the comfort group": the man with the barrow adopts the most obviously entrepreneurial pose, but the man in the suit and the woman in the domestic sphere also seem to fill traditional niches. And yet, the composition suggests that there is no clear place for any of these figures in this portrait of America: while the captions for white figures acknowledge their accomplishments, the captions for Blacks literally ignore their presence;

and the man trying to make his living with the barrow becomes the most invisible figure of all, set against the wall that cuts him off from the monumental architecture which is such a prominent part of this guidebook's world.

What comes out in *The Ocean Highway* is a sense of tension absent from *U.S. One*. Because of the second volume's claims to completeness and its extension of the monumental note to an entire region's history and landscape, the exclusion of certain parts of society becomes noticeable. Despite Kellock's assertions about "telling all," there are consistent omissions in the treatment of



the most disadvantaged section of the region's population. Despite her insistence on describing "the average citizen," it seems that her real interest was in individuals who clearly displayed ingenuity or accomplishment. Kellock was not dealing in deliberate evasion; but when she selected illustrations to acknowledge the South's black inhabitants, she inadvertently revealed the awkwardness of fitting such people into her vision of the region. The problem seems to have been that her optimistic point of view, fostered by both professional and academic training, could not easily encompass groups whose problems went beyond the bounds of individual self-help.

the oregon trail

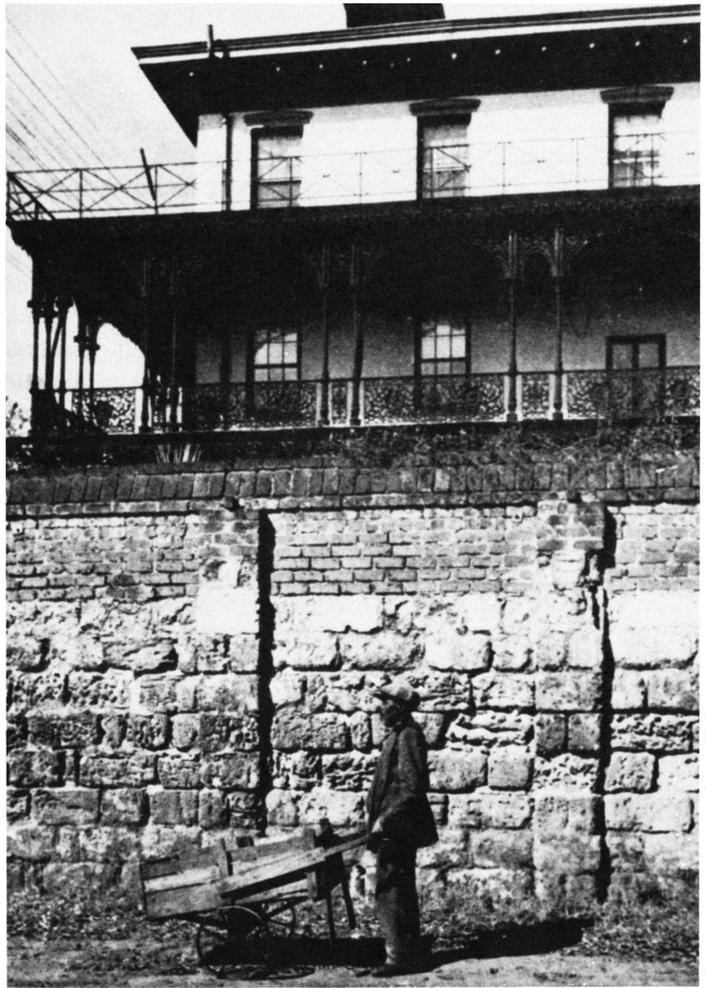
Whether or not Kellock recognized the dark underside to her optimistic picture, she changed her focus and method radically for her next project, calling *The Oregon Trail: The Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean* (1939) "an advance . . . a new type of narrative."⁴² Turning westward, she also turned her eye squarely on the victims of American social progress. To do so, she emphasized history even more than in *The Ocean Highway*; she stopped trying to encompass the link between past and present in the guidebook and instead focused the text on the past alone. Nevertheless, the volume has clear lessons for the modern reader, and its basic thrust continues to be confidence in contemporary America, now explicitly at the level of national achievement: Kellock's introduction declares, "the history of the Oregon Trail is the history of how two million square miles of land . . . came under the control of a weak new nation and made it one of the mighty powers of all time."⁴³

The introductory essays to this guidebook are, first of all, a direct challenge to the predominant frontier rhetoric of the 1930s. In the Depression years, Turner's famous thesis about the significance of the frontier to American development was cited almost exclusively in negative terms. There were, on the one hand, the historians who were beginning to dispute Turner's entire argument, asserting that he had ignored complex industrial and economic forces which were much more influential than the frontier on modern American society.⁴⁴ On the other hand, those who believed Turner's depiction of the frontier's centrality now stressed the negative connotations of his thesis: to them, the Depression proved that the closing of the frontier had ended the economic opportunities which accounted for America's distinctive nationalism, democracy and individualism. Roosevelt's use of the frontier image in his 1932 Presidential campaign was typical of this second group: he declared, "A glance at the situation today only too clearly indicates that equality of opportunity as we have known it no longer exists. . . . Our last frontier has long since been reached and there is practically no more free land"; the only solution was "enlightened administration" by the government.⁴⁵

The introductory remarks to *The Oregon Trail* challenge both of these assumptions, asserting the frontier's formative role in American development and its continuing presence in the spirit of the American people. The foreword by Alsberg, the Project's director, insists that "The Oregon Trail . . . presents a story particularly pertinent to our times" ([v]). Comparing the depression of the

FIGURE SEVEN:
Wetter House (1940),
Savannah, Georgia

1830s which stimulated western migration with the Depression of the 1930s, Alsberg underscores Roosevelt's point: "The great difference between then and now is to be found in the fact that today there are no longer western frontiers. Since we cannot migrate to undeveloped land as a solution for our troubles, we are now cultivating our neglected human and material resources." But Alsberg also argues for the frontier's continued relevance, declaring that "without a knowledge of the period between 1800 and 1870 it is impossible to under-



stand the trends of our times. The American spirit of independence that carried thousands of emigrants from the East to the Pacific Coast is still alive." Katharine Kellock, who shared with Bernard DeVoto a zeal for western history, asserted her belief in the survival of the frontier spirit even more strongly than her director. Her introduction ends: "The biological genes . . . that . . . made the United States an empire extending from coast to coast have not been bred out"(33).

The guidebook not only states a faith in the frontier's continuing influence; it also encourages the readers to believe in that influence by helping them to experience the past vicariously. By this stage, Kellock seems to have abandoned the attempt to cajole contemporary material from her writers; now she concentrated on her readers, enabling them to establish links between past and present for themselves. The *Oregon Trail* presents historical material almost exclusively, tracing the westering movement back to the Middle Ages, telling stories about the nineteenth century and printing extracts from diaries and letters of the period, most of them previously unpublished. But the guidebook goes beyond describing the past. It is actually fashioned into a quasi-historical artifact: the photographs and reproductions are primarily nineteenth-century, but even the

modern illustrations are sepia tinted to look old; and, as Kellock explained to one state director, the cloth covers were made to resemble "coarse, unbleached homespun," in imitation of the pioneers' cloth.⁴⁶ Modern travellers were not simply reading about and touching a facsimile of the past; in following the same route as the pioneers, they were re-enacting some of their history. Kellock very much emphasized this link created through transportation, insisting in the book's preface that "the pioneering forefathers were not different from their descendants. . . . No motorist today is more interested in his speedometer records than were the pioneers in those of their ox-cart 'roadometers'"(xi). In one of the tours, travellers are presented to themselves as the most recent wave of frontiersmen, following on from previous types in a Turnerian scheme. Jackson Hole, Wyoming, is described:

Here for many years the fur trader held rendezvous with the Indian . . . here the Indians fought and failed to halt the whites as they pushed westward; here the cowman made his own law and rid the country of the outlaw, the cattle rustler, and the horse thief; and here today come thousands of visitors in search of recreation. (209)

The guidebook has become a conduit for history, putting the readers in direct contact with their frontier roots.

In many ways, the past that is portrayed in *The Oregon Trail* resembles that described in the other two Kellock guidebooks. The dominant force is provided by individuals: "the history of the West is filled with the names of those whose ideas and activities, at decisive moments, determined the course of events"(1). As before, these individuals include famous names—Fremont, Lewis and Clark, Hugh Glass—but considerable attention is also given to hitherto unknown pioneers and their unheroic problems, which come alive in private diaries and letters. For example, at different stages of the journey we learn about the adventures of a Mormon pioneer, William Clayton: everything from the extracting of his tooth to his jealous obsession with his mile-counting "roadometer." Indeed, we learn much more about Clayton than about Bill Cody and Jesse James, who are mentioned dismissively in passing. Kellock deliberately advanced the ordinary over the stereotypically heroic, telling Vardis Fisher that she wanted "good tough-minded, unsentimental stuff," and reminding the Oregon director of "the realistic slant we gave to material on pioneers that had been presented somewhat sentimentally."⁴⁷ So when the guidebook leads readers to experience the past for themselves, it is inviting them to identify with the average, previously anonymous, flesh-and-blood pioneer.

Beyond this familiar democratic emphasis, there is one new consideration in this guide's portrayal of people. To an extent, *The Oregon Trail* encourages the reader to understand the motives and reactions of the Indians as well as the Whites. Tales of attacks on Whites are always prefaced by this kind of explanation:

By 1862 the western Indians had reached a point of desperation. They had been misled and coerced into signing agreements that confined them to lands far too small and quite unsuitable for the ways of life to which they had been accustomed. Promised payments in goods were either not being made, or were inadequate to support them. Game on which they depended for food was being destroyed recklessly by the invaders. (109)

Sometimes the criticisms of a contemporary White are quoted: “no pen can describe the misery and despair of a Pawnee village . . . while the white tribe was killing, or scaring their game off into the mountains, and I say that our Government here caused as much misery by negligence as the Turks have by savagery”(74). Individual Indians gain recognition mainly in the native legends about figures connected with various topographical features. And the illustrations—a Catlin drawing and photographs of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Indians—humanize the figures by focusing on them face on and acknowledging their presence directly in the captions. The impetus to expose the humanity behind the savage stereotype clearly came from Kellock. She exhorted the Nebraskan workers to avoid the word “massacre” in describing Indian attacks, itemizing all the justifications the Indians had for their reprisals; and she criticized Wyoming’s copy:

In treating encounters between whites and Indians, the copy puts great stress on the terrors of Indian attacks, and does not give the Indian side of the story which is that the natives were being deprived of their homes by white invaders. . . . Please try to get in some material from the Indian point of view.⁴⁸

Kellock was no longer asking for material about ethnic minorities, as she did in her editing of *The Ocean Highway*. Now she was encouraging writers (and thereby readers) actually to adopt the perspective of the Indian, to put themselves in the Indians’ position and try to understand their hardships. Readers were being led to connect two periods and two racial experiences.

None of this is to suggest that Kellock had abandoned her vision of progress. Her introduction maps out the development of the nineteenth-century West from “a few hundred thousand aborigines, most of whom still had a late Stone Age culture” to “more than 11 million citizens of the United States . . . divided into political subdivisions with stable governments” (1); the very vocabulary shows that she regarded this change for the good. Moreover, the guidebook’s rhetoric of biological genes from Europe and the triumph of American imperialism celebrates the white advance. Nevertheless, the account does acknowledge, as *The Ocean Highway* did not, that this progress involved injustice and misery and death for those who were not part of the march of civilization.

In achieving this balance in her portrayal of progress and loss, Kellock also handled the human presence in the monumental landscape, industrial and natural, much more equably than before. The clearest proof is the visual illustrations, more than half of which focus on human beings and caption their presence

directly. In terms of industrial achievement, we see what Kellock had requested right at the beginning of the series: "what part human beings play in the industrial process." Various illustrations of wagon trains and railroad lines center on the human beings who are bringing their inventions to the prairies: for example, the engraving "Union Pacific Workers (1867)" foregrounds men working vigorously with spades and picks and slaking the thirst caused by their energetic endeavours. In photographs of the landscape, we are reminded not just of man's accumulations heaped up on the land, but of the ways in which human beings and the land affect each other. Natural formations such as Scottsbluff and Devil's Tower appear beyond human scale in the photographs of them, but the captions and written text reveal that they are ineradicably labelled for and distinguished by the human efforts which occurred on them. On the other hand, the text also explains how people's attempts to monumentalize the land can come to nothing: in Nebraska, travellers past and present inscribe their names on rock face only to have storms erase their markings from the soft stone. This symbiosis is expressed most poignantly in the final photograph of the book, "Along the Trail" (Figure 8). In a sense, the land has defeated the occupants of these graves; but, in making their journey, these travellers have certainly left their mark on the landscape, as is shown by this photograph and by the profusion of gravemarkers noted throughout the text. The final comment in the guidebook's main section conveys the same balance of sacrifice and conquest: "Those who write of the Lewis and Clark expedition are apt to stress the discomforts and dangers the party experienced, forgetting that these were the price, fully anticipated and gladly paid, of fulfilling a dream centuries old—that of finding a central route across North America"(161).

Perhaps because Kellock was a scholar of the West, perhaps because human suffering was here displaced to the past, in this third volume she managed to confront the relationship between (predominantly white) progress and (predominantly red) loss much more squarely than in the previous volumes. As a result, *The Oregon Trail* contains far fewer suppressed contradictions. Despite the fact that it is dealing here with one of America's most monumental achievements—the conquest of the West—the text and illustrations keep their sights firmly on the human participants, winners and losers. Kellock called *The Oregon Trail* "the first tour-book in which American history is told in . . . geographical rather than topical or chronological sequence"; she obviously felt that she had managed to balance history and geography or people and landscape for the first time.⁴⁹ She also managed to present a vista from which the nation as a whole could take strength by recognizing its achievements while acknowledging its cruelties and failures.

conclusion

Various commentators have shown that, as much as hard economics or welfare measures or industrial policy, the whole issue of how people perceived America was crucial to the nation's struggle to revive and recover itself in the 1930s. In that process, the Federal Writers' Project was a key player: publishing about 400 guidebooks and pamphlets, it was one of the most prolific producers of cultural

images in the period.⁵⁰ Over the years, the tendency has been to treat the Project's mass of descriptions as one more-or-less homogeneous portrait, about which various generalizations have been made. In the 1930s, the guidebooks were accused repeatedly of peddling either Communist or New Deal propaganda; by 1939, Robert Cantwell judged them "a majestic roll call of national failure"; in Alfred Kazin's opinion in 1942, they constituted America's self-celebration; and in 1973 William Stott wrote that they display "a phenomenal democracy of retrospection."⁵¹ However, at least in the Highway Route series, the presentation of America is more complex and evolving and sometimes contradictory than any of these assessments suggests.

In the struggle to define America, the Highway Route series attacked an already established symbol of Depression America, the road. Up to the late 1930s, the American highway had been predominantly envisioned as the path of desolation; the Highway Route series, in contrast, presented America's major roads as avenues toward progress and indicators of historical achievement. From the road, the guidebook reader notes examples of individual adventure and vigour and ingenuity, rescued for the record from the oblivion of everyday affairs, past and present. In *U.S. One*, the cumulative effect of all these examples is an America crowded with monuments to the efforts of ordinary Americans, contributors to their country's progress. In *The Ocean Highway*, with its focus on the South, however, the scene begins to look less all-inclusive than that. It becomes noticeable that the emphasis on man-made monuments obscures and even excludes certain categories of individuals; cumulative development is a clear pattern in the South only if the most underprivileged people—the Blacks—are set aside. Finally, in *The Oregon Trail*, the image of American progress is maintained as the dominant impression of the passing scene, but now the poignancy of the image is acknowledged: for every white advance or victory, there was red retreat and loss. The image does not come full circle—nowhere does the series foreground the defeated or the displaced for long—but the confident, optimistic view of America is ultimately tempered with sympathy.

This portrait of roadside America owed its dimensions to Katharine Kellock, who in turn was influenced by her professional belief in individual self-help and her education in Progressivism; from her perspective, the Depression was a momentary aberration in a dominant trend of social and economic progress. The series does very occasionally take notice of financial crisis: one sentence in *The Ocean Highway*, for example, mentions the Virginian farmers' pickets of 1936. Quantitatively, however, such details are so minimal that they underscore the triumph of social and economic well-being. As the series unfolded, Kellock increased her efforts to show Americans that their landscape had a history and that that history, taken in the long term, spelled progress. In doing so, she also gave them confidence in their future. Robert Nisbet has explained that, in all ages from classical Greece onwards, "the past . . . is vital to the idea of progress . . . It was only when men became conscious of a long past, one held in common through ritual and then history and literature, that a consciousness of progressive movement from past to present became possible, a consciousness easily extrapolated to the future."⁵² With immediate application to the American citizen of the 1930s, Malcolm Cowley said: "By that past he is reassured of his

present importance; in it he finds strength to face the dangers that lie in front of him.”⁵³ By guiding readers down roads leading to a vigorous past, Kellock was also pointing the way toward a vigorous future.

It was in this complex and evolving image-building that the Highway Route series made its contribution to the New Deal. These guidebooks never did peddle the New Deal propaganda of which Dies and Woodrum both accused them; indeed, the record shows that Kellock was very careful to prevent boosterism of New Deal projects in her publications.⁵⁴ However, she did bring to her task a background and vision typical of the optimistic New Dealer, and the world which the guidebooks body forth is equivalent to the world envisaged by the Roosevelt administration, in outline and in detail. At the most general level, the guidebooks insist on the variety, interest and potentiality of the country. They also imply that movement around the continent need not be the desperate wandering of homeless families—Rorty’s “drift of human atoms”—but can be a planned, informed journey instilling in the traveller confidence in his nation. More particularly, the guidebooks reveal an industrially buoyant society of vigorous individuals, unified into a nation by roads criss-crossing the country and binding communities together. The difference is that the rhetoric of the guidebook—the rhetoric of visible, verifiable detail—translated this New Deal vision from the realm of possibility to the realm of actuality. From the viewpoint established by Kellock in the Highway Route series, the landscape itself, the immediate environment, engendered confidence in America and gave the lie to fears about economic crisis, loss of individualism and threats to democracy.

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FIGURE EIGHT: Along the Trail

notes

This paper was presented in an earlier draft at the Canadian Association for American Studies Conference, McGill University and the English Departmental Seminar Series, University of Alberta. The author would like to thank both audiences for their very helpful responses and suggestions.

1. Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1984), 157.
2. Daniel Aaron, *Writers on the Left* (New York, 1961); William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (New York, 1973); Richard H. Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years* (New York, 1973).
3. The Federal Writers' Project was created in 1935, as part of the Works Progress Administration, and was administered from Washington, D.C., with state projects in all 48 states; from 1939 to 1943, the Project was decentralized and turned over to state control. There are three histories of the Project: Jerre Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project, 1935-1943* (Boston, 1972); Kathleen O'Connor McKinzie, "Writers on Relief, 1935-42," Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1970; and Monty Noam Penkower, *The Federal Writers' Project: A Study in Government Patronage of the Arts* (Urbana, Illinois, 1977). None of these studies deals at length with the content of the guidebooks.
4. Kellock used various titles for the series, but "Highway Route" was one of the earliest and most appropriate labels. The series was unusual in the Project's output: the Project's usual procedure was to divide the country into discrete states, regions, cities, and population groups, and devote a guidebook to each. While these guidebooks often involved road tours, they gave a more prominent place to essays on the culture, demography, archeology and economics of the area in question. The Highway Route series, however, followed roads running north to south, east to west across the continent and so linked regions and states together; and the descriptions of these roads concentrated on specific scenes and sights. This approach was entirely of Kellock's devising and, as national Tours Editor, she had sole editorial control over the series. For Kellock's own estimate of the Project's work, see Katharine Kellock, "The WPA Portraitists of the United States," *The American Scholar*, 9 (Autumn, 1940) 473-82.
5. Phil Patton, *Open Road: A Celebration of the American Highway* (New York, 1986), 52-53, 73-77; John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1985), 126 ff.
6. Nathan Asch, *The Road: In Search of America* (New York, 1937), 140. David Peeler discusses peripatetic 1930s' authors in "Unonesome Highways: The Quest for Fact and Fellowship in Depression America," *Journal of American Studies*, 18 (August, 1984) 185-206.
7. James Rorty, *Where Life is Better: An Unsentimental American Journey* (New York, 1936), 56.
8. John Dos Passos, *U.S.A.* (1937; rpt. England, 1966), 1183, 1184.
9. John Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath* (1939; rpt. New York, 1958), 165.
10. Roy Emerson Stryker and Nancy Wood, *In This Proud Land: America 1935-1943 as Seen in the FSA Photographs* (Greenwich, Connecticut, 1973), 14.
11. Ulrich Keller, *The Highway as Habitat: A Roy Stryker Documentation, 1943-1955* (Santa Barbara, California), 25.
12. Stott, 62.
13. There is no biography of Kellock, and information about her career is scattered. Biographical sources are Fourth U.S. Civil Service Region Investigations Division: Report of Special Hearing, 10 February 1944 (Library of Congress Manuscripts Division, Katharine Kellock Papers; this archive is subsequently abbreviated "KK Papers"); Memo, Kellock to John Newsom, National Director, n.d. (KK Papers); "About our Authors," *The American Scholar*, 9 (Autumn, 1940): 510; Mangione; McKinzie; and Penkower. The most extensive information about her visits to the Soviet Union appears in an F.B.I. report on Kellock, 19 May 1943 (KK Papers).
14. Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981), 3ff., 37-38, 130.
15. For example, Memo from Kellock to Henry Alsberg, National Director, 16-19 Jan. 1936 (KK Papers) shows that, in visiting the South Carolina project, Kellock had little sympathy for the State Director's aim of rehabilitation; she reserved her zeal for professional competence, efficiency and "executive ability."
16. Letter from Kellock to Grace Kellogg, Washington, D.C., editor, 27 Oct. 1936 (National Archives Records Service, Record Group 69, Federal Writers' Project, Box 98; this archive is subsequently abbreviated "FWP, Box . . ."); Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Irene Fuhlbruegge, New Jersey State Director, 6 May 1936 (FWP, Box 108).
17. Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington* (Chicago, Illinois, 1968), 285-317.
18. Alfred Haworth Jones, "The Search for a Usable American Past in the New Deal Era," *American Quarterly* 22 (December, 1971): 716-17.
19. Confidential Memo from Kellock to Alsberg, 20 January, 1936 (KK Papers).

20. Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Esther Marshall Greer, Missouri Acting State Director, 25 May 1937 (FWP, Box 90).
21. "Supplementary Instructions #11E to The American Guide Manual: Complete Summary of Tour Form, 17 October, 1938" (FWP, Box 69).
22. Originally, Kellock planned fifteen volumes in the Highway Route series, criss-crossing the entire country (Memo from Kellock to Alsberg, 12 September, 1938; FWP, Box 182). The demise of the Federal Writers' Project as a national undertaking in 1939 stopped her project short at three volumes. Although Kellock was retained by the reorganized Writers' Project after 1939, she lost her position as Tours Editor and, with it, much of her power.
23. The best account of the link between progressivism and the New Deal is Rexford G. Tugwell, "The New Deal: The Progressive Tradition," *The Western Political Quarterly* 3 (September, 1950) 390-427. The best general accounts of the New Deal remain the classics: William E. Leuchtenberg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal 1932-1940* (New York, 1963); and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt*, 3 vols. (Boston, 1957-60).
24. Memo from Kellock to Alsberg, 7 July 1938 (FWP, Box 182).
25. Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Bertrand M. Wainger, New York State Director, 28 October 1938 (FWP, Box 113).
26. Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Wainger, 6 October 1936 (FWP, Box 113).
27. Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Mabel Montgomery, South Carolina State Director, 28 November, 1938 (FWP, Box 122).
28. Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration, *U.S. One: Maine to Florida* (New York, 1938), 126.
29. Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Fuhlbruegge, 24 May 1937 (FWP, Box 108); Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Wainger, 30 July 1936 (FWP, Box 113); Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Greer, 24 November 1937 (FWP, Box 113).
30. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York, 1981); John Berger, "Uses of Photography" in *About Looking* (New York, 1980), 27-63; Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York, 1977).
31. Rexford Guy Tugwell, Thomas Munro and Roy E. Stryker, *American Economic Life and the Means of its Improvement*, 3rd ed. (New York, 1930), 124, 134.
32. Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (1938; rpt. Westport, Connecticut, 1971), 357.
33. In the files of the New York City Unit of the FWP, there are copies of the Bayonne Bridge photographs rejected by Kellock; none of them strikes this contrast so forcefully (New York City Municipal Archives).
34. Patton, 71.
35. Sontag, 69.
36. The Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration, *The Ocean Highway: New Brunswick, New Jersey to Jacksonville, Florida* (New York, 1938), xv.
37. For example, letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Montgomery, 8 May 1936 (FWP, Box 122); letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Carita Doggett Corse, Florida State Director, 12 July 1937 (FWP, Box 85).
38. Karal Ann Marling, *The Colossus of Roads: Myth and Symbol along the American Highway* (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1985).
39. Marling, 101.
40. Sontag, 108.
41. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York, 1969), 226; Stott, 215.
42. Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Vardis Fisher, 28 February 1939 (FWP, Box 202).
43. The Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration, *The Oregon Trail: The Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean* (New York, 1939), 1.
44. A very insightful contemporary discussion of attitudes toward the frontier was Curtis Nettels, "Frederick Jackson Turner and the New Deal," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 17 (March 1934): 257-65; two more recent discussions appear in Charles C. Alexander, *Nationalism in American Thought 1930-1945* (Chicago, Illinois, 1969) and Ray Allen Billington, *The American Frontier Thesis: Attack and Defense* (Washington, 1971).
45. Quoted in Alexander, 4.
46. Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Agnes Wright Spring, Wyoming State Director, 8 December 1938 (FWP, Box 132).
47. Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Fisher, 28 February 1939 (FWP, Box 202); Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to T. J. Edmonds, Oregon Acting State Director [via E. J. Griffith, WPA State Administrator], 23 March 1939 (FWP, Box 118).
48. Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to J. Harris Gable, Nebraska Acting State Director, 22 March 1938 (FWP, Box 105); Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Mark Christensen, Wyoming State Director, 26 April 1938 (FWP, Box 132).
49. Memo from Kellock to Alsberg, 12 September 1938 (FWP, Box 182).
50. Arthur Scharf, "Selected Publications of the WPA Federal Writers' Project and the Writers' Program" in Mangione, 375-96, lists 396 published titles, including some series under single titles.

51. Robert Cantwell, "America and the Writers' Project," *The New Republic*, 26 April 1939: 324; Alfred Kazin, *On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern Prose Literature* (New York, 1942), 502; Stott, 114.

52. Robert Nisbet, *A History of the Idea of Progress* (New York, 1980), 323.

53. Quoted in Alexander, 36.

54. For example, Kellock reduced the description of Timberline Lodge, a WPA project, in the Oregon copy, explaining that "it might bring unpleasant repercussions if we gave a WPA accomplishment undue space" (Letter from Kellock [signed Alsberg] to Edmonds, 24 June 1938 [FWP, Box 118]).