



Missouri: The WPA Guide to the "Show Me" State

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Once considered a "foolish boondoggle" of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration, the Federal Writers' Project was initiated to allow employment opportunity to those associated with the arts during the Great Depression. The American Guide Series became the most successful venture, offering jobs to writers nationwide as each state endeavored to produce a comprehensive guidebook. Under the direction of Charles van Ravenswaay, former director of the Missouri Historical Society, *Missouri: A Guide to the "Show Me" State* was first published in 1941. Now, in a classic reprint, Missouri Historical Society Press restores this guidebook to its original splendor and returns it to the bookshelves.

With a current road map included with the book, travelers can compare sights and tours described in the antiquated guide and see how they have developed or disappeared. As Walter A. Schroeder and Howard W. Marshall describe in the updated introduction, "The unmarked, dirt road, impassable when wet,' that we encounter in reading the WPA guide is no longer a hurdle to be negotiated in order to reach an out-of-the-way site." Due to nearly thirty thousand additional miles of paved roadway and endless gas station and motel chains, every corner of Missouri is now easily accessible. And, as Missouri Historical Society President Robert R. Archibald states in the foreword, "If you are the kind of traveler who has no intention of stirring from a comfortable chair near the reading lamp, this reprint is really all the equipment you require for a fascinating journey through the Missouri of the past."

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