MINERAL SURVEY IN OUACHITA COUNTY

On February 1st the WPA Mineral Survey began work in Ouachita County with O. F. Suggs as county supervisor of the project. This statewide survey is being conducted in those counties known to contain valuable minerals and is sponsored by the state Geological Survey. The work was started in 1908 and eight counties have been completed.

Of the 355 square miles of Ouachita County's area, 455 square miles will be covered by the Survey and will be confined to approximately 14 townships in the northern part of the county. The seventeen men employed for this work were selected from certified registrants of the WPA in Ouachita County.

Work was started in the northeastern corner of the county near Bearden under the direction of Mr. Suggs. These workers walked over the area to be surveyed section by section, making note of all outcropping minerals and taking samples to be sent to the laboratory in Little Rock where their value and use will be determined.

The field sheets of the workers contain a record of the location and extent of all deposits mapped, of the surface and ground waters, of the electric power transmission lines, the gas and oil lines, railroads, highways, bridges, dams and other cultural features. This information will be used in making corrections on county maps now in use.

The work of this Mineral Survey is not confined to prospecting for mineral deposits. Much valuable work is also done by the inspection of deposits already known. If, in the past, a certain deposit has been mined or quarried, the Survey determines the extent and quality of remaining material and makes an accurate record of its location and accessibility.

The principal minerals of Ouachita County are clay and lignite. Near Lester, in the center of the county is a deposit of high-grade fire clay suitable for the manufacture of fire brick. Kaolin is known to exist in large quantities in some sections of the county, the Ouachita river valley is rich in deposits of pottery clay.

Lignite or "brown coal" is a mineral fuel, harder than peat but not so hard as bituminous coal. When first taken from the earth it is soft, easily cut and resembles clay. When dried and retorted it yields a gas of high candle power. When powdered it is used in the manufacture of briquettes.