

Ouachita Mineral Survey to Be Started Monday.

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Camden, Jan. 5.—O. F. Suggs of Little Rock, supervisor for the state mineral survey, opened headquarters for the Ouachita county project here today. Eighteen Ouachita county residents will be employed under direction of Dr. George C. Branner, state geologist, with Robert C. Beckstrom, in charge. R. E. Vandruff, field engineer, will be in charge of field operations here. Work will start Monday.

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 1938 and eight counties have been completed.

Of the 733 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 walk 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, 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.

Lignite from the Ouachita field northwest of Camden in distilling tests, show that it contains an average of about twenty-five gallons of oil from a ton of lignite. Because of the large supply of oil, gas and coal in Arkansas, this fuel has never been utilized, except locally and in a small way. The largest known field in the state is in Ouachita county, north of Camden, where it covers more than 60 square miles; the beds have a maximum thickness of 6 feet.

When the extent of these and other minerals have been ascertained, mapped and described by the Survey, this information, combined with the report of the analysis of samples from the laboratory tests will be sent by the state Geological Survey to those who make inquiry concerning the mineral deposits of Ouachita county.

Mr. Suggs is receiving valued cooperation from the citizens of the county, who show much interest in the work as the survey progresses. County Judge England Pluckett has furnished the project workers with a truck and the oil and gasoline necessary for transporting them to and from location. It was also due to the efforts of Judge Pluckett that sufficient money was donated to insure the installation of a ground water testing station in Ouachita county. The Camden Chamber of Commerce, through Secretary W. C. McClure has provided offices and necessary equipment for the use of Mr. Suggs and his co-workers of the project.

Judge Pluckett and Mr. McClure have asked Mr. Suggs to furnish their respective offices with samples of the minerals of the county and all available information pertaining to their present and potential use and development. Newspapers of the county are wholeheartedly cooperating for the advancement of the work of the survey.

The state offices of the Mineral Survey are at 117 N. Victory street, Little Rock. Robert C. Beckstrom is the state supervisor and R. E. Vandruff is the technical supervisor of the state Mineral Survey.

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