

# Guide to Hoosier State reflects 1930s lifestyle

In 1935, Congress passed an act authorizing the Works Progress Administration. Part of the economic recovery program of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, it was referred to in respectful or sarcastic tones (depending upon the political perception of the persons speaking) as the WPA.

**AN OFFSHOOT** of the make-work program that is not very well known was the writers' program. The Indiana version of that program produced *Indiana: A Guide to the Hoosier State*, published in 1941.

Actually it is organized as a guidebook for tourists. That's where one will find an interesting 1930s description of Bloomington. For the enlightenment of the reader/tourist, Monroe County is 752 feet above sea level and had then a population of 20,870 persons. Its most outstanding features — said the WPA writers — were

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## Looking back

*By Rose McIlveen*

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the state university, large furniture factory and its status as "a center of oolitic limestone quarrying with companies valued at more than \$50 million.

The first paragraph of description is unremarkable. What follows may make contemporary Bloomingtonians smile. For example, there is a sentence which reads, "The presence of the State University, accounts for the gaily dressed groups of