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THE HISTORY OF
THE ATLANTA FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT,
1937-1939

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

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C.L. Draper

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ABSTRACT

The Atlanta Federal Theatre Project was established in 1937, not only to employ out-of-work theatre personnel in that area of the South, but also to build a strong community-based theatre that would outlive the Federal Theatre. Did the Project reach its goal, and did it have any lasting influence on theatre in Atlanta?

The Depression, Southern culture, and the national FTP all influenced the Atlanta Project. However, the national FTP was most influential as it set the goals and standards for the Project. The goal of building community-based theatres was one shared by every Project established under the Federal Theatre Project. Although Atlanta did not have a tradition of theatre, it was thought that a community-based theatre could be established in this growing city.

The Atlanta Federal Theatre Project operated for two years, 1937-1939. Within these two years those who worked on the Project tried, to the best of their ability, to provide professional theatre for the people of Atlanta, and to provide jobs to actors, directors, and stagehands in that area of the South. Though they succeeded in employing over ninety people, and in producing thirty-six plays, the Project supervisors were not able to attain the goal of establishing a strong community-based theatre in Atlanta.

Without the emergence of a community-based theatre in

Atlanta, the influence of the FTP on Atlanta theatre was limited to the time in which it operated. After the FTP closed its various Projects in 1939, theatre in Atlanta reverted back to its former state and the Atlanta FTP was virtually forgotten.

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INTRODUCTION

The Federal Theatre Project, a division of the Works Progress Administration, was established in order to employ theatre professionals thrown out of work by the Depression. In August 1935 Hallie Flanagan was sworn in as the national director of the FTP. It was her task to organize the estimated 30,000 unemployed theatre personnel across the nation into a working body of people. In order to do so it was important to build strong community-based theatres in each of the four regions of the country: West, Midwest, East and South.

According to Flanagan, the South presented a dilemma: rich regional material suitable for the theatre was abundant, but the region contained far fewer theatre professionals than in other areas of the country. As a result, Flanagan and her group decided that all theatre personnel in the South would be brought together in the cities where community support was offered in the form of sponsors. Originally, those cities were New Orleans, Dallas, Jacksonville, Tampa, Miami and Birmingham. However, in the fall of 1936 the best of the Birmingham personnel were transferred to Atlanta at the invitation of the Atlanta Theatre Guild, and the Birmingham Project closed. The Atlanta Project--first under the direction of Sara Thomas, and later Albert Lovejoy--produced thirty-six plays between January 1937 and May 1939. Before the establishment of the

FTP, Atlanta had relied on commercial entertainment and amateur theatrics. The Federal Theatre Project was the first substantive movement towards a community-based theatre in Atlanta.

A study of the Atlanta Project necessitates a study of material not only about the Atlanta Project itself, but also material on the Depression, the South, and the national Federal Theatre Project. A large number of books about the Depression are available to the scholar. These books approach the subject from different perspectives, including political, economical, and social perspectives. In order to form a complete picture of the state of the country during the Depression, a study of literature written from all these perspectives is necessary. Significant examples of books written from the political, as well as social, point of view are David Shannon's Between the Wars, a study of the administrations between 1919 and 1941; The Great Depression, a collection of articles, reports, and essays written in the decade of the 1930's; and Fon W. Boardman's The Thirties, America and the Great Depression, a year by year account of the Depression as it influenced politics and society. Lester Chandler's America's Greatest Depression, 1929-1941 and Robert Patterson's The Great Boom and Panic, 1921-1929 are economic histories of the Depression containing important financial figures and estimates.

The Depression affected various sections of the country

in different ways. Several works contribute significantly to an understanding of the Depression's effect on the South. W.T. Couch's Culture in the South consists of a series of essays on different aspects of Southern life during the Depression. The Mind of the South by W.J. Cash, gives a background of the Southern region from its beginnings up to the Depression.

Not only is knowledge of the politics, the economy, and the society, important to the study of a particular period, but so is information on the culture of the society; including its literature and art. The term art is applied here to include not only painting and sculpting, but also photography, film, and music. Examples of the latter three forms of art, as they existed in the 1930's, can be seen and heard in a video tape made by the South Carolina Committee for the Humanities entitled One-Third of a Nation: The Depression in the South. This tape consists of photographs, film clips, and original songs issuing from the South during the Depression.

Another art form, and the one most significant to the study of the Atlanta FTP, is theatre. Histories of the American theatre can serve as an overview to the situation of the American theatre in the early twentieth century. Glenn Hughes' book, A History of the American Theatre, 1700-1950, recounts the history of the American theatre by approaching it in blocks of time, usually decades, and

looking at the major events. By approaching history in this way Hughes makes clearer the significant changes in American theatre throughout the years. The decade this study is most concerned with, however, is that of the 1930's. It is important to study works specifically on the American theatre as it existed during the Depression. Jay Williams' Stage Left, while not exclusively about theatre in the 1930's, gives an impressive summary of that period in its study of theatrical groups that were considered political leftists, including the Federal Theatre Project.

A number of significant books have been written on the Federal Theatre Project itself. The significance of each lies in the time that it was written and in the perspective of the author. Willson Whitman's Bread and Circuses, A Study of Federal Theatre is a unique perspective of the Project since it was written two years into the FTP. Hallie Flanagan's Arena was published the year after the Federal Theatre ceased to exist. Since Flanagan headed the project this is an excellent source for the people, places, and events associated with the FTP. Tony Buttitta's Uncle Sam Presents is a memoir by a man who was a writer for the Federal Theatre Magazine. Since the magazine was published in New York the book mainly concerns itself with people and events connected to that city. Jane Dehart Mathews' The Federal Theatre, 1935-1939 is an acclaimed objective history of the Project, researched and published thirty years after

the Project closed.

Numerous articles on the Federal Theatre Project appeared during the four years it existed, including a number that give various summaries and critiques of the Project. Some of the most significant of these are Hallie Flanagan's descriptions of the FTP, its goals, and the work done, including "Men at Work: South," in Federal Theatre Magazine (April 1936); "Federal Theatre Project," in Theatre Arts Monthly (Nov. 1935); "Theatre for the People," in American Arts Monthly (Aug. 1936). Though Flanagan's articles, and most articles by other writers, were supportive of the Federal Theatre Project, a few voiced an opposing opinion, such as Harrison Fiske's "The Federal Theatre Boondoggle," in Saturday Evening Post (1 Aug. 1936).

Though extensive information exists on the efforts of the national Federal Theatre Project, little information is found on the individual projects including the Atlanta Project. Research material on the Project consists of newspaper accounts, archival material, and transcripts of interviews with Atlanta Project participants. Reviews and press releases on the Atlanta Project appear in the Atlanta Constitution newspaper. However, the press releases, written by Atlanta Project officials, are necessarily biased, and, while they contain some pertinent information, more attention must be paid to other sources. Archives, such as those of the Atlanta Historical Society, provide

some information on the theatre buildings in Atlanta as well as copies of playbills from the Project. The Federal Theatre Archives at George Mason University, in Fairfax, Virginia, houses transcripts of interviews with a number of the people associated with the Atlanta Project as well as a few production records and photographs.

An examination of these significant materials, as well as the less significant works listed in the bibliography, is necessary to a study of the Atlanta Federal Theatre Project. Examining the information contained in these works establishes the context in which material on the Atlanta Project can be studied and discussed.

This study of the Atlanta Federal Theatre Project is not only a history of the Atlanta Project, but also a study of the context within which both the Atlanta Project and the national FTP were organized and operated. The first chapter of the thesis examines the United States and the South during the Depression. The politics, economy, society, and theatre of the 1930's are introduced to establish the climate in which the FTP operated. In the second chapter, a brief study of the FTP, its goals as established by Flanagan, and its actual accomplishments prepare the context for a closer examination of the Atlanta FTP itself.

Having established these contexts, the third chapter examines the Atlanta Project, its personnel, its productions, and its place in the the Atlanta community. A

production list is enclosed. The fourth and final chapter attempts to ascertain the role the Atlanta Project played in influencing contemporary and modern Atlanta theatre.

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN THE U.S. AND THE SOUTH

1. THE ECONOMIC DEPRESSION IN THE U.S.

The primary goal of the Atlanta Federal Theatre Project, as it was established in 1937, was to employ unemployed theatre professionals in Atlanta and the surrounding region. This goal was necessitated by the Depression, which had begun in 1929 and had thrown many Americans out of work, including a large number of theatre professionals. Before the Depression, Atlanta was a thriving, growing city. Its location on the Southern Railway boosted commercial trade and the industrial development brought in more people and money. After the stock market crash in 1929, industries and the Railway closed and thousands were unemployed. Theatre professionals in Atlanta and the South were badly affected as the few professional theatres in that region closed and the majority of relief work employed blue-collar workers. For many of these professionals the only recourse was to be added to relief rolls, until the Federal Theatre began operating in 1935.

The Federal Theatre Project began during a decade that saw the highest unemployment rates in the history of the country, a President who was both fiercely admired and

fiercely hated, the growth of metropolitan centers, and the popularization of the dime novel. America was a complex and diverse country during the Depression. If the country was diverse, the reasons given for the Depression have been no less so. Even now, some fifty years later, the Depression is often difficult to understand because of the various and complex explanations given by historians. However, most agree that the stock market crash of 1929 is the starting point for any analysis of the Depression.

During the 1920's, stocks were offered to the general public for the first time. The stock market became a main topic of conversation. Banks and stockbrokers lent money and took commissions on stocks they sold for customers. By 1925 the volume of trading on the New York stock exchange broke all records. In 1921, 173 million shares were traded. In 1928, 920 million shares changed hands--the big "bull market" had begun. In 1929, 1,125 million stock issues, comprising a billion shares, were traded. The total market value of these shares was 89 billion dollars (Patterson 12). Speculation had become the dominant factor in the buying and selling of stock. It was believed that no matter how much one paid for a stock, someone else would eventually pay more.

On September 3, 1929, stock prices reached a high point. Two days later there was a sharp drop in prices that slowly decreased until late October. On October

28, panic struck the market as stock prices plunged. The following day huge blocks of stock were thrown on the market. Thousands of investors, big and little, were wiped out (Boardman 17).

Though many people have believed that the crash was the primary cause of the Depression, a number of historians have suggested that it was a result of a weak economy. According to the Federal Reserve Board Index, industrial production had been declining since June of 1929. Money in residential construction had also declined. The auto industry's growth had slowed considerably. The government's tax, farm, and tariff policies supported the unsound distribution of the national income and undermined foreign trade. And, lastly, the banking system was weak and uncoordinated. Many banks failed before the Depression began (Boardman 23).

After the crash, the economy rapidly spiraled downward. Banks continued to fail and would do so until Roosevelt declared the Bank Holiday in 1933. Many industries cut hours or wages and finally closed altogether. Farmers were perhaps the hardest hit of all. While the prices on their products dropped, their taxes and debts remained high. Eventually they began to let their produce rot rather than sell it at a loss; at the same time people in the East starved.

By 1932 unemployment was up to around twelve million, or twenty-four percent of the total labor force. In July of

that year, President Hoover, who had insisted that the Federal government not spend money on individual relief, instigated the Emergency Relief Act that would lend up to three hundred million dollars to the states. It was too little too late, both for the economy and Hoover's political career. In the elections that year Franklin D. Roosevelt defeated Hoover and was chosen as president. When Roosevelt finally took office in March 1933, he began implementing the various programs that came to be known as the New Deal. During the Hundred Days of Congress (March 9--June 15,1933) Congress pushed through millions of dollars worth of legislation to help bolster the economy. Some of the most important acts were the Emergency Banking Act, which reopened thousands of banks; the Agriculture Adjustment Act (AAA), which paid subsidies to farmers; the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which employed thousands in the South; and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), which would eventually become the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

Both FERA and the WPA were under the direction of Harry Hopkins. The WPA was originally intended to provide jobs for those on relief rolls and were essentially blue-collar jobs, such as building and ditch-digging. Innovations made in the WPA in 1935, however, created Federal One, which employed out-of-work artists in such projects as the Federal Writers Project, the Federal Artists Project, and the

Federal Theatre Project. Never before had the government taken such an interest in the arts. But, as Hopkins argued, if the aim of the WPA was to give employment that would be socially beneficial, then what better task could it have than to get artists off the relief rolls and allow them to make a contribution in accordance with their own particular skills and talents (Mathews 4).

When Federal One was established, the New Deal was already taking effect. The economy stopped spiraling down and slowly began climbing back to stability. To be sure, it would take a number of years and a world war to raise it to its previous level, but at least some progress was being made.

2. POLITICS DURING THE DEPRESSION

As the economy shifted and changed so did the politics of the nation. People were dissatisfied not only with Hoover and the Republicans, but with the whole American government and the established economic system. Revolution was not only being discussed by unemployed factory workers, but by Midwestern cattle ranchers and farmers as well. These people were not Socialists or Communists; most would have been offended if identified as either. For instance, an Oklahoma rancher walked into a government office in Oklahoma City and told the official there of his coming involvement in the revolution. The rancher was going to

take twenty cowboys, capture a fort, supply his own army with weapons, and then cut off the West from the East. This revolutionary was a Baptist and a Democrat (Shannon, The Great 120).

It was not that Communists and Socialists did not try to take advantage of the Depression to bolster their ranks; they did. The Socialists became linked with the labor movement. They organized several strikes, many of which turned into riots. The number of these strikes compared to the number of unemployed is small. The Communists also failed to achieve real success; their converts numbered in the dozens or hundreds rather than in the thousands. The mass movement both groups expected never materialized. Most of the gains made by either party were with intellectuals who identified themselves emotionally with the workers.

When Roosevelt was elected President in 1932 and implemented the New Deal in 1933, the Socialists and Communists lost many supporters. People found other channels in which to work for reform, especially supporting the Democrats with a strong vote. Roosevelt, the Democrats, and the New Deal thus became the dominant political forces in America for the next decade.

3. CULTURE DURING THE DEPRESSION

The time for revolution passed with the launching of the New Deal. However, there was still a strong national sense; a preoccupation with primarily American concerns. This national idenity characterized many of the writers and artists of the period. Though many were political to some extent, it was far more important to them that they try to reflect the realities of American life in their work. To this end, many used ordinary men and women as their subjects.

The major novelists of this period were John Dos Passos, James T. Farrell, and John Steinbeck. Dos Passos's trilogy, USA, is a left-wing history of the U.S. from the early twentieth century to the initial years of the Depression. Farrell also produced a trilogy, the Studs Lonigan books, which portray the troubles and deterioration of a Chicago working class Irish-American family. The best known work of this period is Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath, which movingly portrays the plight of the migrant farm worker caught in a heartless system of exploitation (Shannon, Between 202).

Graphic artists also concentrated on the distinctively American scene. Morris Kantor and Raphael and Moses Soyer painted the common people and scenes of downtown New York, while Reginald Marsh painted similar subjects. One of

Marsh's best known works is "The Bowery", a lithograph depicting a street in the Bowery crowded with men who are either talking among themselves or simply standing and staring. Edward Hopper's work also evoked the loneliness and anonymity of the American scene. "Nighthawks," for example, depicts a group of city people caught in the glaring light of an all night diner with no apparent doors (Shannon, Between 202).

Not all art was of this quality. Mass culture still reigned, but as people had less money to spend on entertainment, publishers, producers, and radio sponsors sought new ways to make money. Publishers found an ideal solution with inexpensive paperbacks; the detective novel, for example, reached a new height of popularity. Radio, the cheapest form of entertainment, became more popular. But the most popular form of entertainment was the movie. The film industry helped destroy vaudeville and wrought havoc on the American theatre.

4. THEATRE DURING THE DEPRESSION

By the start of the twentieth century, American theatre had developed into a "show business," and was primarily centralized in New York, from whence road shows took plays to the rest of the country. In the decade before the 1920's a rising dissatisfaction with the commercialism of the New York stage and a need for a native American theatre led to

the establishment of little theatres. Between 1911 and 1912 three such theatres--the Wisconsin Players, the Toy Theatre in Boston, and the Chicago Little Theatre--were established. Though none of the three survived more than four years, each made significant contributions to American theatre. The Wisconsin Players provided an early channel for native playwrights. Both the Toy Theatre and the Chicago Little Theatre introduced important innovations in experimental staging, including the use of minimal settings and various lighting effects.

Many of the ideas and innovations of these and other early theatres were incorporataed into the art theatre movement that emerged between 1916 and 1922. Two of the most important, the Provincetown Players and the Theatre Guild, succeeded in reaching the ideal of the art theatre: the synthesis of the various elements of theatre into a harmonious art form (Cheny 15).

Established in 1915, the Provincetown Players eventually moved from a living room, to a shack on a wharf, to a theater in Greenwich Village as their success increased. They produced plays by American writers, mainly a newcomer named Eugene O'Neill, and used experimental staging techniques with designs by Robert Edmond Jones. By the early 1920's the group was becoming more professional, though not commercial. Their growing professionalism caused some of the founding members to quit, which left a gap in

the managerial board. The Provincetown Players quickly reorganized, but when O'Neill left in 1925 its major source for good new plays was gone. The Players expired after a move to the Garrick theatre in 1929.

The Theatre Guild, established in 1918, originally intended to produce only American plays. But good American plays were scarce and so the Guild relied on European plays in order to create a sound subscription audience. Guild productions, however, were not conceived with box-office receipts as a continuing and primary priority. The Guild risked failure several times with plays that the Guild executives believed contained a message. In 1923, for example, the Guild produced the first full length Expressionistic play in America--Elmer Rice's The Adding Machine. Two years later they opened a permanent theater and established their own acting company. By 1930 they were firmly established and survived far beyond the Depression.

The advances made in stagecraft and playwrighting by these two groups and others were not generally matched outside New York. With the advent of the talking picture, theatres around much of the country began to suffer. Many theatres became movie houses. With the 1929 crash, many of those that had not previously converted did so or closed down completely. The Depression caused the death of stock companies and vaudeville, while road shows were virtually non-existent. Producers went bankrupt and thousands of

actors and other theatre artists signed up for relief. Even though Broadway theatres kept producing, the number of plays declined, and Broadway alone could not hire all the unemployed stagehands and actors in New York. For many of these artists, as well as others across the nation, it would be five years before their talents and skills were put to use in the theatre. Meanwhile they took what jobs were available, including ditch digging and road building. Finally, in 1935, many of these out-of-work actors, directors, designers and technicians were employed by the Federal Theatre Project.

5. THE ECONOMIC DEPRESSION IN THE SOUTH

When the FTP was started in 1935 the country had witnessed the worst of the Depression. It had seen the downward spiral of the economy and the rise of unemployment, and then it had seen the implementation of the New Deal, which arrested the plunge of the economy and made jobs available. But in certain parts of the country things were not so quick to turn around. The South in particular had a more difficult time than any other region of the country. The South, during the 1920's, had grown rapidly. Industry boomed because of low labor costs, favorable tax laws, and the proximity of raw materials. Birmingham became an important center of the iron and steel industry and a number of plants were established in Tennessee and West Virginia.

The textile industry was growing and cotton was still king (Couch 89). Yet incomes in the South were lower than the national average by one-third (Couch 94). This was due in part to the lack of unions in industry and in part to the large numbers of tenant farmers and share-croppers. Even before the Depression the bulk of the population had incomes that were barely above subsistence level. It is no wonder that when the Depression started many did not feel it, while those who did went from bad to worse (One-Third tape).

In 1929 Southern and foreign cotton crop prices dropped from twenty cents to twelve cents a bale. In 1930 they dropped to eight cents, and in 1931 the prices dropped to five cents on the New York cotton exchange and lower than that in the South (Cash 360). As prices dropped the farmers became less able to pay their debts and the banks in the South began to fail as quickly as those in the Midwest. Planters and farmers abandoned their land to move to the cities; usually they also often failed to find work there because urban industry similarly suffered from the crash.

People began to cling to their jobs tenaciously in the textile and steel mills where just a few months before the crash there had been violent labor strikes. In spite of the cutting of both wages and hours mills began to close. The housing industry was also affected by the Depression. In newly built suburbs houses were standing empty, while in the cities the slums were growing as families moved in together.

All commerce in the South suffered, especially in those centers along the Southern Railway--Richmond, Charlotte, and Atlanta.

It is likely that when the New Deal began no section of the country greeted it with more enthusiasm than did the South (Couch 364). With the instigation of the New Deal, cotton prices began to rise, mills ran with more regularity, and business began to increase. Social Security and other relief efforts gave people hope. Yet the South received less WPA wages than did any other section of the country. In most cases the wages were less than thirty dollars a month, varying up to fifty dollars a month, which was about half of that paid in the East. The reasons for this discrepancy are varied: the Democrats knew that the South would vote Democratic and did not need to pay them to do it; the South had a tradition of low wages; and Southern politicians did not want to spoil those on relief for private employment. Even so, the amount made on relief usually exceeded what a typical tenant farmer or sharecropper made (Couch 366).

Even with the flow of relief money into the South, the Southern economy was slow to rise. Part of the reason was the poverty in the South before the Depression. Another reason was a rising antagonism towards the New Deal by management, and an antagonism towards management by the working class. This not only affected the economy, but also

affected the order of society in the South.

6. SOUTHERN SOCIETY DURING THE DEPRESSION

During the Depression, for the first time since Reconstruction, the traditional values and organization of the South came into question by Southern people. Since the first settlement of the South the majority of the population had been a religious, agrarian people. Urbanization had an effect on these people as traditional agrarian concepts became no longer suited for their new urban society. One of the results of this was the decline of Prohibition. Another result was the lack of extensive religious revivals during the Depression. It became harder for people to believe that all their ills were a direct result of God's will (Couch 369).

Social awareness began to grow in the South with the advent of the New Deal. Social Security was being adopted in the South, as were old age pensions in many Southern industries. Child labor began to disappear as labor laws became more strictly enforced. Mandatory education also affected child labor. Some states went so far as to enact laws reducing the hours of labor in the industries. Eventually unions would form in many Southern plants, but membership would remain low for years. This was due in part to a fear of losing jobs during the Depression and in part to the structure of Southern society.

Before the Depression a class system operated in the South with roots that could be traced back to the end of the Civil War. At the top were the wealthy planters and businessmen, and at the bottom were the poor white and black tenant farmers. But the belief prevailed before the Depression that anyone, with the exception of blacks, could become as wealthy as the wealthiest planter. Connected to this was the idea that the Southern-born wealthy were related, however distantly, to many of the people in the working class. That is why when a crisis arose in the South all would rally around these wealthy few and recognize them as their leaders. But as the 1930's progressed and conditions in the mills worsened, a struggle between owners and unions became manifest and employees gradually came to hate and distrust management. Much the same thing happened on the farms as absentee landlordism became common. Many landlords would take all the relief money and dole out what they saw fit to the tenants (Couch 385).

The black Southerners suffered worst under these conditions. Not only were they cheated out of more money than white farmers, but often their very lives were endangered. In the first half of the 1930's the number of lynchings increased dramatically. During an economic upheaval such as the Depression many seek a convenient scapegoat. In the South blacks have traditionally been the scapegoats and the Depression years were no different. It

was generally believed that white tolerance of blacks rose during the Depression, but in hindsight that is probably not true. However, lynchings did decrease during the last half of the 1930's. This may be due in part to the very slight upswing in the economy, but even more to the enlightened findings released by the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching and the Commission on Interracial Relations (Couch 370). But no significant changes occured to lessen the economic burden of the black sharecropper, tenant farmer, or industrial worker. One distinctive change did occur within the Southern black communities--a change in politics.

The South, on the whole, was a staunch Democratic front for more than a century. Southerners were swayed somewhat in the 1920's by the promises made by the Republican party, but in the elections of 1932 they supported Roosevelt and the Democrats with an overwhelming majority. The election of 1932 was the first time since the Reconstruction that Southern blacks voted Democratic. They did so for much the same reasons as the rest of the country--a general dissatisfaction with Hoover, rather than because they saw Roosevelt as a liberal. But, by the 1936 election, Roosevelt had the Southern blacks solidly behind him.

For white Southerners the 1936 election was the beginning of a decades-long process that signaled the end of the "solid Democratic South" (Greehaw 49). As Roosevelt

became more liberal in his policies the white Southerners began to turn away from the Democratic party. It would not be until long after WWII, however, that a decisive change in the voting habits of white Southerners would occur.

7. SOUTHERN CULTURE DURING THE DEPRESSION

The political situation in the South did not affect Southern literature as much as literature in the rest of the country. Since the 1920's, when Southern literature began to flourish, there was an effort by authors to deal more with the realities of Southern life and less with a stereotypical sentimental view of the South. By the end of the 1920's both Thomas Wolfe and William Faulkner were well-established authors. Erskine Caldwell's notorious Tobacco Road began the 1930's. At the same time, Southern journalism was also developing. Editors made an effort to improve their papers and magazines by allowing less sentimentalism in their articles and including more reporting of the actualities of Southern life.

The other fine arts did not fare so well. With the rich material of Southern culture to draw from, it is somewhat surprising that more artists did not come from the South. As it was, the ones who did were generally less prominent than those from other parts of the country. A general lack of popular interest in sculpting and painting existed in the South until the 1930's. The two art forms

were viewed as things apart from Southern culture and not as natural media. The Federal Artists Project helped make the Southern people more conscious of art (Ezell 318).

Music fared somewhat better because it was a traditional part of Southern life. Traveling musicians had always had a hospitiable welcome in the Southern communities, and in many cities symphony orchestras were established. However, composers of classical music did not flourish as much in the South as did composers of country music. When the Grand Ole Opry started on radio, "hillbilly" music gained national popularity. The South was also the birthplace of ragtime and the blues (Ezell 312).

The traveling road show was as welcome as the traveling musician and had instilled in many a desire to see theatre as a permanent fixture in their towns. The little theatre movement of the 1920's found some support in the South, and small community theatres were set up in many cities. College drama also made a contribution, especially at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where Professor Frederick H. Koch took over the drama department in 1928. Koch encouraged his students to write plays using the material around them. The drama bureau at this university set up Paul Green's Lost Colony, an outdoor drama rooted in Southern history, which drew in thousands of audience members (Ezell 320).

During the Depression many Southern theatres closed

their doors as people became less able to afford them. Only the well established little theatres in Texas and Florida remained opened. Many others would not open again until help, in the form of the Federal Theatre Project, came to their aid.

8. SUMMARY

Since the South had never supported theatre as an art form, the Federal Theatre Project had a more difficult task establishing itself there than in any other region of the country. In sections of the Midwest, where an agrarian society had also developed, the lack of theatre was also a problem, but with an important difference--the large cities in this area had developed a strong interest in theatre, and with the aid of the FTP they could take theatre to these rural areas. But, in Southern cities such as Atlanta, where community theatres had failed to gain wide support before the Depression, this type of networking was impossible to establish until the FTP could first find the key to gaining the community's support.

If the task of developing theatre in the South and other regions of the country was important, the task of employing thousands of out-of-work theatre people across the country was imperative. In fact, the employment of these people in areas where their talents could be used was the main goal of the Federal Theatre Project. At the same time

other artists would be employed by the Federal Writers Project, the Federal Artists Project, and the Federal Music Project. All the Arts Projects were developed under Federal One, the section of the WPA that Harry Hopkins worked diligently to establish. Since they fell under his supervision, it was Hopkins' responsibility to find qualified leaders for each of the Projects. His choice for the director of the Federal Theatre Project was Hallie Flanagan, a woman who was dedicated to the idea of building strong community-based theatres in every region of the country, including the South.

CHAPTER II

THE FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT: AN OVERVIEW

1. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE FTP

It is estimated that by 1930, over 30,000 theatre personnel were unemployed. Of this number, only a few hundred lived in the South. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the Southern Federal Theatre Projects were the last to be organized. The Atlanta Project was not established until 1937, and then only after the Birmingham Project had failed. With such a small number of theatre professionals living in the South, many would have been tempted to ignore that region of the country. But, Hallie Flanagan, the director of the Federal Theatre Project, believed that a government sponsored project should benefit all people who supported the government, and that a national theatre had to include every region of the nation.

In 1935 Harry Hopkins convinced Hallie Flanagan to head the Federal Theatre Project. His choice was questioned by many who had no knowledge of Flanagan's work, but Hopkins defended his choice by calling Flanagan a woman possessing "an extraordinary ability to fire the imagination and energy of others, a sensitivity to current problems, and a broad knowledge of drama and the theatre" (Mathews 14). Her background included work as a production assistant to George

Pierce Baker at the 47 Workshop in 1923, the establishment of an experimental theatre at Vassar in 1927, and a comparative study of European theatre done with the first Guggenheim grant ever given to a woman.

Her observations of European theatre, specifically the Russian theatre, convinced her that a creative theatre had to respond artistically and socially to a changing world (Mathews 17). In Russia she attended workshops and plays directed by Vsevolod Meierhold in which problems of Russian society were enacted, and in which the use of constructivist staging transformed actors and audiences into one (Mathews 19).

Flanagan's studies also convinced her that any person working in the field of the theatre should learn as much as possible of history, language, religion, and science so that he or she can integrate the past with the present. She believed every play dictates its forms for acting and design, and every form has an ancient prototype (Flanagan, Arena 4).

In 1934, just one year prior to her Federal Theatre appointment, she continued her studies in Italy, Sicily, Africa, and Greece. She was particularly impressed with the ancient Greek theatre, which produced plays of its own time and place with the support of the government. The conclusions drawn from these studies would have profound effects on the Federal Theatre Project.

The incorporation of these ideas into a program such as the Federal Theatre was difficult in a country that was experiencing economic and social upheaval, yet Flanagan was determined to try. She expressed her hopes for the FTP in a letter to the head of the New York WPA project:

> While our immediate aim...is to put to work thousands of theatre people, our more far reaching purpose is to reorganize and support theatrical enterprises so excellent in nature, so low in cost, and so vital to the communities involved that they will be able to continue after Federal support is withdrawn...
> We need the support of people who share our belief that the theatre horizon is not contracting, but widening to include the Santa Fe Desert, the Rocky Mountains, and the valley of the Mississippi... to include consciousness of the social scene as well as the social register; widening, in short, to include the impossible--that same impossible which has led our contemporaries to soar to the stars, whisper through space, and fling miles of steel and glass into the air (qtd. in Williams 222-223).

The first duty of the Federal Theatre Project was to create jobs. By the summer of 1936 over twelve thousand men and women were working in FTP shows that played for audiences of over three hundred thousand in over thirty states (Mathews 297). Many of these theatre artists eventually went back into private enterprise long before the Federal Theatre ended.

The second FTP goal was to build regional centers of theatre surrounded by a network of community-based professional theatres. With this goal in mind Flanagan divided the country into four regions: West, Midwest, East and South. Each region would have a regional director who reported to Flanagan and each community would have a local

director who would report to the regional director. The regional directors included Charles Colburn as the director of New England, Elmer Rice as the director of the New York City project, E.C. Mabie as the director of the Midwest, Gilmore Brown as the director of the West, and Fredrick Koch and John McGee as the directors of the South (Mathews 39-40). Later, John McGee invited Josef Lentz to come to work for the FTP, and Lentz became the regional director for the South with an office in New Orleans (Lentz 1).

Within each of these regions local FT companies formed. The formation of a local company did not depend on community demand--that could be stimulated, or the company moved if an appropriate response was not forthcoming. Before beginning work in any city or town, a committee was formed of people involved with any little theatres, drama professors or directors of college and school dramatics, and ministers or other leading citizens interested in the project. If the community showed enough interest, a local director was named. Wherever possible, the local directors were theatre people (Whitman 24). This basic organizational pattern of the FTP remained constant throughout the four years the project existed even though the regional and local directors changed from time to time.

2. REGIONAL PROJECTS UNDER THE FTP

In terms of sheer number of plays produced and the support that those plays received from the community, the most successful of the regional projects was the Western Project, especially California. Between December 1935 and February 1939, 398 plays were produced in California, as opposed to the 242 plays produced by the New York City Project. In fact, the Federal Theatre director often had to urge restraint in California, but the enthusiasm of the West Coast workers persevered (Flanagan, Arena 272).

The center for Southern California was in Los Angeles where one four-story building housed a design shop, a workshop, a costume shop, and business office. By December 1935 the L.A. unit boasted eight production units and a research bureau. The same system was established for Northern California in San Francisco. Both projects extended along the coast to San Diego, San Bernardino, Oakland, Portland, and Seattle.

Within its first year, California had a self-contained, efficient, operating theatre which included musical shows, classics, experimental theatre, Negro theatre, religious drama, children's theatre, marionette theatre, and theatre research (Flanagan 280). More importantly, this project developed strong community support. The FT cooperated with the L.A. Police Department in performing plays in various high schools in an effort to reduce juvenile delinquency. A

museum of modern theatre design, including a photographic gallery, was established in L.A. for the community. The support from both the press and the audience was extraordinary .

Unfortunately, certain members of the community formed committees to complain of supposedly Communistic plays and immoral actors. These sorts of attacks occurred in every region and eventually helped close the national Project. In California, however, a six-month investigation was conducted by the WPA that found that there was no proof of any of the charges. However, the complaints continued until mounting political censorship caused the Southern California Project to close in February 1939. All other projects in the West--all of which depended on the Los Angeles center for supplies--suffered until the end of the Project in June.

During the time the Western region flourished it came the nearest to succeeding in being the type of theatre Flanagan wanted with the Federal Theatre. It developed a strong regional center with surrounding community theatres. It adapted itself to the contemporary world by producing modern and experimental drama. And the Western Project found material in the region itself, which resulted in the production of several historical plays on the West. Neither the Midwest, East, nor South developed as successfully as a region. In the East the tendency of the Project workers to regard their employers as enemies of the working class, as

well as a continuing and often successful attempt by government officials to censor FTP work, hindered the development of a strong region. In the Midwest, the WPA bureaucracy in each state kept that region from developing by refusing to allow the FT touring companies to cross state lines. In the South this same state bureaucracy and a general lack of community support also retarded the development of a strong regional theatre.

Although the East did not develop as strongly as a region as the West, they did achieve a higher artistic success, particularly in New York. In New York, the continued use of new stagecraft techniques, and works by new playwrights, were combined with the directing and acting talents of such people as John Houseman, Orson Welles, and Gordon Grahm.

Grahm directed the Living Newspapers in New York as well as productions in other parts of the country. The Living Newspapers used not only news for their story source, but also history, economics, human-interest stories, charts and graphs, statistical surveys, and cartooons (Flanagan, Arena 71). The story was then enacted using lights, sound, and in some instances a slide projector, to enhance the production.

Occasionally, staging of this sort would be used by other units across the country, but not as often or as successfully as it was in New York. In the South, for

instance, productions of the Living Newspapers were never as well received as they were in the East. The South, with its limited experience with theatre, was not prepared for anything like the Living Newspaper, or, for that matter, the Federal Theatre Project.

3. THE FTP IN THE SOUTH

According to Flanagan, "the South presented perhaps the most fascinating problem in the setting up of Federal Theatres: rich dramatic material and...fewer theatre professionals in need than elsewhere" (Flanagan, Arena 81). Accordingly, at the beginning of the project, the decision was made to concentrate personnel in the South in central cities: New Orleans, Dallas, Birmingham, Jacksonville, Tampa, and Miami. The program for the South, as designed by McGee and Lentz, with the aid of theatre director Fred Morrow, and touring and booking agent Herbert Ashton, was planned as one schedule. This permitted the use of some of the same plays, equipment, and personnel in different areas.

The FTP in the South developed slowly. In reporting on her two week tour through the South in the spring of 1936, Flanagan noted that the major part of the work being done was in North Carolina where a New York company was based and was preparing to tour the South. The FT was also working with recreational and adult education groups in providing dramas for under-privileged groups (Flanagan, "Men" 12). In

Louisiana Le Petit Theatre de Vieux Carre sponsored the Federal Theatre. In Florida all the projects were working on a historical play, Who Made Florida? (Flanagan, "Men" 13).

The Birmingham Project, though the last to be organized, had two producing units. The Negro Theatre, formed by the FTP, was the first to start producing with Home in Glory, Swamp Mud, and Accident Policy. The Repertory Company produced After Dark and Mr. Petruchio, an original play, before the company failed (FT Magazine 22). In December 1936 they were invited to join the newly formed Atlanta Federal Theatre Project. In September of that year Birmingham was named the center for the Department of Research and Publication for the South. It was their task to compile lists of plays, recommend scripts for the Federal Theatre, and make available its research files to recreational, educational, and civic organizations (FT Magazine, Nov-Dec 26).

In 1937 budget cuts and reorganization hampered further development of the Southern region. The Texas Project closed, leaving producing projects in only three states as well as the recreation and research projects. The South was also hampered by a lack of cooperation by the Federal and state governments, which stopped the establishment of touring companies based in the larger cities across the country. These companies were intended to tour cities in

the South to promote an interest in the theatre. At the same time more personnel would be loaned out to the companies already in existence so that they could expand their operations. This plan could not work, however, if the state and city WPA directors would not cooperate, and in states where relief efforts were political issues the cooperation was not forthcoming. In Florida, for example, the state administrator vetoed all requests for additional personnel, refusing to believe that there were not enough local people available to meet the Project's needs (Mathews 184-185).

The Federal government, far from helping the situation, made it worse by involving the touring and loaning process in even more bureaucratic paperwork and this part of the Project was never implemented. As a result, the Southern region, as well as the other regions across the nation, suffered the loss of what could have been a great theatrical enterprise. But, by 1938, the year in which this touring and loan program was delayed, Hallie Flanagan was not so concerned with expanding the Project as she was with keeping what she had from being destroyed.

4. THE END OF THE FTP

In 1938 accusations of Communism within the Federal Theatre Project were becoming more serious as a number of those in Congress began to heighten their opposition to the Project. Behind this attack on the theatre was a

conservative assault on the New Deal. Because of its nature, the Federal Theatre Project was attacked on two levels: a fraction of the plays were Socialistic or radical and so were labeled Communistic; and the FTP was tied to Roosevelt's relief plan that suffered from a continual threat of erosion by Roosevelt's political opponents (Williams, 240).

The various accusations finally coalesced in an investigation by the House Committee on Un-American Activities chaired by Martin Dies. The Federal Theatre was charged with serving as a branch of the Communist organization. Witnesses were called to attest that the Worker's Alliance, an organization closely allied with the Communist Party, had gained control of the FTP (Mathews 201). Some twenty-eight plays were alleged to be Communist propaganda; these included George B. Shaw's On the Rocks, Paul Green's Hymn to the Rising Sun, and the Living Newspaper's One-Third of a Nation.

Flanagan also came under attack for her apparent Communist beliefs. Her book, Shifting Scenes of the Modern Theatre, written after her year's study in Europe, was accused of eulogizing the Russian theatre. A copy of the play Can You Hear Their Voices, which Flanagan produced at Vassar, was submitted as further proof of her Communist sympathies (Mathews 201-202).

The hearings began in August, yet despite these attacks

on herself and her Project, Flanagan was not called to testify at the hearings until October 1938. Flanagan denied the charges and answered every question while interjecting comments on the Federal Theatre's accomplishments. Realizing that his opponent could neither be tricked or forced into admitting a Communist position, Dies called for an adjournment. Flanagan was not allowed to testify further.

On January 3, 1939, Dies filed the report on the findings made by the House on Un-American Activities. The Federal Theatre received mention only in a single paragraph. However, the damage was done; in the eyes of many of the public the Communist label attached itself to the Federal Theatre Project.

In 1939, when the House Subcommittee on Appropriations began investigating the spending policies of the WPA, the outlook for the FTP was bleak. The goal behind these investigations was to completely dismantle the WPA projects. After the Dies Committee's accusations, it was easy to withdraw money not only from the Theatre Project, but all the Arts Projects. On June 17, 1939 the House voted to accept the Appropriation Committee's relief bill, which would continue the Writers', Music, and Art Projects on a local basis, but would wholly abolish the Theatre Project. The bill was passed on June 30 in the Senate and the President had no choice but to sign since withholding his

signature would stop the entire system of work relief. Federal Theatre Projects across the country were ordered to close immediately.

5. THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE FTP

When the Federal Theatre Project closed it had achieved one of its goals; thousands of theatrical personnel had received employment for at least three years. Those still working for the FT either found other work or went on other forms of relief.

The second goal of the Federal Theatre was never fully realized. Instead of strong regional centers surrounded by community theatres, large metropolitan centers grew, leaving smaller centers in their shadow. However, the FTP was not a complete failure. Theatres closed because of the Depression or the movie industry were reopened with the aid of the Federal Theatre. In rural areas of the country many people were able to witness their first live performance thanks to the FTP.

This was especially true in the South where sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and even industrial workers, had neither the money nor opportunity to attend the theatre. Not only could adults see live FTP theatre, but their children could be entertained as well as educated with WPA drama, music, and puppetry.

More importantly, in the South the Federal Theatre

helped establish an interest in both professional and community theatre. In rapidly growing Southern cities such as Atlanta, the stimulation of this interest was vital if theatre was to thrive among people who had previously known only vaudeville, burlesque, and road shows.

CHAPTER III

THE OPERATION OF THE ATLANTA FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT

1. ATLANTA THEATRE BEFORE THE FTP

The Atlanta Federal Theatre Project operated from 1937 until 1939. In that time it produced thirty-six plays, including three world premieres, a vaudeville show, and a number of established Broadway shows. At the same time, the Atlanta FTP succeeded in accomplishing its first goal, to hire unemployed theatre professionals in the area. However, its second goal, to establish a strong community-based theatre in Atlanta, was not realized. Instead theatre in Atlanta reverted back to what it had been in the early 1920's, before the Federal Theatre Project.

Atlanta considered itself to be a cultural center by the early twentieth century despite the fact that the only legitimate theatre Atlanta knew consisted of touring companies and rare amateur productions. That it was a cultural center may have been true musically, but theatrically the city needed great improvements. However, Atlanta was still growing, and held a potential in its growth for the establishment of a strong community theatre. The FTP hoped to use that potential to build a professional theatre.

In Novemeber 1936, at the request of the Atlanta

Theatre Guild, the Federal Theatre established a company in Atlanta. The two groups began what Flanagan called "an experiment in community co-operation" (Arena 89). It was hoped that by working with the Guild in presenting plays the Federal Theatre could fulfill both its goals in Atlanta--to employ out-of-work theatre people and to build a strong community-based theatre.

A community theatre did not exist in Atlanta in the years preceding the Depression. The community depended on New York theatre and large theatre buildings housed touring road companies and vaudeville. The Atlanta Theatre opened in 1911 and in the next decade became the leading outlet for the legitimate stage in Atlanta (Writers 140). Road shows and some stock companies kept the house open throughout the year. Stars such as George Beban, Robert Mantell, and Minnie Maddern Fiske appeared at the Atlanta.

The Atlanta Theatre lost stature in the 1920's with the rise of several larger theatres. The Howard Theatre opened in 1920. It was the home of the Howard Orchestra conducted by Enrico Leida and a ballet company with Virginia Futrelle as prima donna (Writers 140). This was the first of five theatres built in Atlanta during the Twenties. The Metropolitan, the Georgia, and the Capitol theatres also came into existence. Then, in 1926, the management of the Atlanta Theatre built the Erlanger, which assumed the presentation of the road shows and the stock companies from

the Atlanta. The Atlanta Theatre became the home for burlesque and boxing (Jones, "More" 4). Other theatres featured both stage and screen entertainment. Vaudeville was presented at several houses, and each theatre maintained its own orchestra.

With the advent of the Depression "all legitimate houses [in Atlanta] were dark, stage shows were discontinued and orchestras were dismissed" (Writers 141). While professional theatre virtually disappeared in Atlanta at this point, amateur theatrics seemed to find a new impetus during the Depression. College dramatic groups from Emory University, Agnes Scott College, and the Atlanta University were very successful. New community theatres organized during this decade included the Atlanta Children's Theatre Guild (1934), the Children's League of Studio Arts Club (1935), the Atlanta Players Club (1935), and, most significantly for the FTP, the Atlanta Theatre Guild (1936) (Writers 141).

2. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ATLANTA FTP

Julian Harris, an Atlantan sculptor and architect, attended the Texas World's Fair in 1936, where he saw a production of The Drunkard. Harris had been working to promote all the arts in Atlanta since 1935, when he was named President of the Association of Georgia Artists. Harris himself had a degree in architecture from Georgia

Technical Institute and had studied sculpture at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He and a group of friends were interested in the theatre, but had no idea what play they wanted to produce. Harris felt The Drunkard was the play they needed to start a theatrical enterprise in Atlanta. But he had no money with which to produce the play. Harris remembered, however, that the Federal Theatre Project was interested in setting up local companies and so he contacted a fraternity brother, Gilbert Boggs, who worked for the WPA in Georgia. Boggs contacted the Washington office of the FTP and found that in order to set up a local company a sponsoring organization had to provide a theatre space and some personnel. Harris and his friends quickly organized themselves into the Atlanta Theatre Guild and received permission from the owners of the Atlanta Theatre to use their facilities for both companies. The Guild won its petition with the FTP.

Very little information exists on the members of the Guild's managerial board. The board consisted of Julian Harris as the art director, Sam Morrison, Sr. as the membership chairman, Paula Causey as production director, and Sara Thomas, who began as the publicity director and eventually became the supervisor of the local Federal Theatre group. The supervisor was originally Will Price, but after accusations of alcoholism Price was demoted and Thomas replaced him; shortly after that Price left to work

on Gone With the Wind in Hollywood. Thomas was quickly instructed in the basics of technical theatre--how to set up a lighting board for three acts, how to paint a flat, and how many gallons of paint it would take--so that she could approve all FTP expenditures.

The Federal Theatre company was composed of "a small nucleus of professionals and a big nucleus of stage hands and some loaned people from New York" (Lentz 2). The stagehands belonged to the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and received union pay scale. The actors received a maximum of eighty-five dollars a month. Some of the Atlanta FT company were from the closed Birmingham Project, though both Julian Harris and Josef Lentz, the Southern regional director, told interviewers that Birmingham was not transferred to Atlanta (Harris 12; Lentz 2). Gordon Grahm, a director with the New York Project, recalls that it was chiefly because of the failure of the Birmingham Project that the FTP agreed to sponsor Atlanta, and that all FTP personnel who chose to do so could transfer from Birmingham to Atlanta (Grahm 1-2). Hallie Flanagan stated that the Birmingham personnel moved to Atlanta at the Guild's invitation (Arena 89).

The Guild and the FTP arranged a schedule by which they could alternate productions. The group of amateurs, with Causey directing, produced a play with the FTP paying for all expenses. Then two weeks later the FTP professionals

would produce a show, occasionally using some amateurs in larger productions.

3. THE ATLANTA FTP'S FIRST SEASON

By the end of the first season the Federal Theatre in Atlanta had succeeded in one of its most immediate goals: they employed most of the out-of-work theatre professionals in the area. The number in the company grew from twenty-four to ninety-two during the first season ("Heaven to Return" E6). The second goal, however--to build a strong community theatre--was far from realized. Nevertheless, some important first steps were taken this year, most notably the production of a number of plays involving regional themes and community people.

The first season began on January 19, 1937 with the opening night of the Guild's production of The Drunkard. The newspapers called it a "seasonal event of some importance" as the Atlanta Theatre "came into its own again" with a production of legitimate drama ("Theatre Guild" 8). The reviewer, Frank Drake, said of the play, "the ridiculous platitudes of the old-time stage play brought chuckles and roars from the audience" (2).

The first Federal Theatre play, Around the Corner by Martin Flavin, opened on February 8, 1937. The review of the show in general was favorable except for what one reviewer called a weak third act. Ralph T. Jones, a regular

reviewer for the Atlanta Constitution, concluded that "the lack of success, if any, must be laid entirely at Atlanta's door. . .it was cruel to see the number of vacant seats" ("Size" 10).

The vacant seats apparently worried the Guild also. Jones reported that the Guild released a statement asking for meaningful criticism of their stage productions after their second production, Faint Perfume by Zona Gale. Jones had only two criticisms to make of the Guild's third production, Lawrence and Armina Langner's Pursuit of Happiness: the program did not list the dates for the production, and the Connecticut characters spoke with Southern accents ("Criticism" 6).

Jones had no criticism, however, for the next FT play, Altars of Steel, produced in April 1937. This production was by far the most critically acclaimed of the Federal Theatre plays produced in Atlanta, as well as the most controversial. The director was Gordon Grahm, from the New York FTP, the designer was Josef Lentz, the regional director of the FTP, and the cast included over one hundred actors from the Federal Theatre, the Guild, Birmingham, and volunteers from various schools and colleges in the city. The author was Thomas Hall-Rogers, a Southerner. The play deals with regional themes that have nothing to do with traditional sentimental Southern themes. The action of the play takes place in both the plant and the offices of a

Southern steel mill. The play concerns itself with the exploitation of Southern resources, including labor, by absentee owners. The plot revolves around a law-suit brought against a trust magnate of a steel mill after several employees are killed by an explosion at an open hearth. In the final scene a news broadcast announces a verdict of not guilty despite rumors of political bribery. The play included sixteen scenes done without a break in the action or an intermission (Jones, "Altars" 11).

The design by Josef Lentz gave the impression of a large steel mill. Lentz promised and delivered a set to Flanagan that cost under five hundred dollars (Flanagan, Arena 88). The background was a cloth cyclorama, which was 85 feet long from grid to floor, sewed by Lentz himself. Large platforms, fifteen feet high, were made from plywood with light underpinnings. These were the largest pieces of scenery and cost about forty dollars, not including labor. The rest of the set--the large doors of the steel mill and the gears, which were placed in the boxes around the audience--were cut in profile from corrugated paper. Most of the modern lighting equipment had to be borrowed from New York. Lentz also designed the sound for the show. He went to a steel mill and recorded the noises, then dubbed in music and other sound effects (Lentz 4).

The massive production caused one reviewer to write:

> Atlanta has never before seen a play staged and produced at all comparable with this. Atlanta has never seen a play with such daring handling of a theme packed full of controversial dynamite. In fact, it must be that it requires some such organization as the federal government to have the courage to produce it (Jones, Altars 11).

Along with praise came the condemning accusations of Communism. In defense of the play Lentz maintained that "anything that was a departure from the old cut-and-dried theatre at that time would have been labled the same" (Lentz 8). Anonymous protests were sent to the police department accusing the play of being dangerous and incendiary. Two policewomen watched the play in order to review its social and political content for municipal authorities. They praised the play, saying that "a person would have to be very narrow minded to find anything objectionable with the play" ("WPA" 1). In general the reviews of the play were favorable, and argued against a Communist label being attached to the play. The March of Progress said it was "intensely interesting. . .It deserves a national tour," while Mildred Seydell of the Atlanta Georgian called it "magnificent, gripping, perfectly cast," and as "dangerous as Uncle Tom's Cabin" (Flanagan, Arena 89). Tarleton Collier took issue with Seydell, calling the play "a document as fundamental in its facts and just about as Communistic as a health talk" (Flanagan, Arena 90). The run of the play was extended to two weeks and then had to close due to tight scheduling.

The success of Altars of Steel indicated what could be done with topical regional themes. Gordon Grahm called it one of the greatest achievements of the Federal Theatre Project (Grahm 20). In spite of this success the Atlanta Federal Theatre produced only two other original plays, The Last Enemy by Frances and Robert Greene, and The Man in the Tree by John Woodworth. Neither of these had a specifically Southern theme and neither drew in large audiences. Less than one hundred people attended the opening night of The Last Enemy on May 12, 1937. Surprisingly, this was the FT production following the successful Altars of Steel. The reviewer, Lee Rogers, was appalled at the small numbers in the audience. He called the play a powerful plea for peace and though he thought it was not perfect, it was at least good. He added, "tonight and each succeeding night it should get better, if the house is better filled" (Rogers, "Federal" 10). The play closed after seven performances.

No mention of audience size is made in the review for the next production, the Guild's presentation of The Torchbearers by George Kelley, presented in May 1937. The play is essentially a commercial comedy centering on the experiences of an amateur theatrical group. It was "well received" by the audience (A.C.R. 20).

The next play done by the Guild, in July 1937, was also a comedy, Rachel Crother's Mary the Third. The reviewer applauded the actors and the set design by Harris. This was

the last play the Guild produced in conjunction with the Federal Theatre.

The exact cause of the "severance of connections with Federal Theatre" is not clear ("Theatre Guild" A13). Julian Harris remembered that there was a personality conflict between Paula Causey and Sara Thomas that became evident when Thomas began supervising the Project, and Causey formed her own competing Guild out of spite (Harris 5). However, since only one Guild was ever reported in newspaper articles, it seems likely that Causey merely took over the existing Guild. The Federal Theatre produced the balance of the plays listed for the Atlanta Project (Appendix).

The Theatre Guild regrouped and presented their first play in December 1937. In a press release Causey announced that the intention of the Guild was "to provide a non-profit community theatre for Atlanta" ("Theatre Guild" A13). By late 1938 they had enough support to move their productions from the Women's Club, which housed a small theatre, to the Castle Playhouse. The Guild sponsored acting classes and writing workshops, and twice a month they presented the plays written in these workshops.

The FT in Atlanta, while determined to produce plays, did not seem as interested in working with the community to provide an outlet for new playwrights and actors. Their involvement in the community consisted mainly of a touring company that visited the CCC camps in Georgia and Alabama in

the summers, a Christmas play presented in various community centers, and the distribution of passes to high school students for FTP plays (Weisberg 19). In Arena, Flanagan writes of community Theatre Project in several areas of Georgia including Atlanta. These theatres were sponsored by schools, churches, and civic clubs and were set up in old halls or abandoned factories. The aim of these theatres was not to produce plays, "but to get plays out of the people themselves" (91). It appears that the Federal Theatre production company had no connection with this part of the Project, and other than the reference by Flanagan no other information on these activities is apparent.

A production that the community did get involved with was the last of the first season. Julian Harris proposed the FT production of Heaven Bound, which he later contended had the best attendance of any production for the entire existence of the FT in Atlanta (Harris 7). Heaven Bound, written and directed by Nettie Davis, had been performed hundreds of times in the Negro Big Bethel A.M.E. Church. Harris saw the production and determined that it would work well in the Atlanta Theatre with the Big Bethel cast and the FT technicians. He staged it as he "thought a Negro would if he had the money," with a stairway that went from white to gold as it climbed to the gates of Heaven (Harris 7). The gates and the archway were gold with a cross lit with electric bulbs on the arch. Extending out from each side of

the stairs were cutouts of clouds, behind which sat the bulk of the Big Bethel choir. The plot consisted of heaven bound pilgrims being accosted by Satan on the stairs that led to heaven. Some souls he took for himself while others made it through the temptation. The whole was done with pantomine and song.

The reviews were all good in spite of the opening night accident that befell one of the angels from the back of the set. The actress, overcome by the heat of the lights, fainted and fell twenty feet to the floor, knocking down a spotlight in her descent. The curtains were closed for ten minutes, after which the play resumed. Originally billed for three days in August 1937, the play was performed for a week to a racially mixed and appreciative crowd. Then in January, 1938, the Federal Theatre produced it again for another week, using the same set and cast.

Heaven Bound marked the end of the first season for the Atlanta Federal Theatre. Except for Altars of Steel and Heaven Bound the season held no outstanding achievements. The Federal Theatre assigned a new production director to the Atlanta Project in order to try and rectify this situation.

4. THE ATLANTA FTP'S SECOND SEASON

John Cameron, the new director for the Atlanta Project, came from an essentially traditional background in American theatre. He began his career at age twelve at the old Vitagraph studios under the direction of Thomas H. Ince. He received his stage schooling with the Wright Players during a four year term. He spent three years on the staff of David Belasco and three-and-a-half years with Charles Hopkins. He directed plays in California and produced plays in New York. He also wrote and directed The Bride of the East, the first talking picture made in Arabic. Cameron spoke Arabic and a half dozen other languages ("Atlanta" A14).

Cameron began working with the FTP in New York and from there was sent to various projects as needed. Besides the Atlanta Project, Cameron also worked on the Indiana Project and the Federal Summer Theatre Workshop (Flanagan, Arena 155,209). He came to Atlanta in September, 1937, and remained for roughly half the season. Sara Thomas retained her position as the supervisor of the Project and assumed charge of the new promotion department.

Cameron did not direct the first play of the season, Boy Meets Girl by Sam and Bella Spewack. Clyde Waddell, who had been with the Birmingham unit before moving to Atlanta, directed this production. Cameron played the role of the producer in this play which was praised for its acting and

staging.

The plays Cameron staged for the Atlanta Project included O'Neill's Anna Christie, Excursion by Victor Wolfson, She Stoops to Conquer by Oliver Goldsmith, The Devil's Disciple by G. B. Shaw, a vaudeville show which toured the CCC camps in Georgia and Alabama, a minstrel show, and a religious Christmas play, The Advent and Nativity of Christ, adapted by Francis Bosworth. There was nothing outstanding about any of these productions, though they all received favorable reviews.

While Cameron was in Atlanta an event occured that affected the production schedule for the Project. The wrestling matches that were held in the Atlanta Theatre before the Project had begun were resumed in October, 1937. Consequently, opening nights changed from Tuesday nights to Thursday nights. Admission prices were also reduced while Cameron was the director. The new prices were 55¢ for floor seating and 30¢ for the balcony. The reductions may have been an attempt to make the theatre more accessible to less well-to-do individuals, thereby stimulating better attendance. The idea seems to have worked for a few productions; however, Sara Thomas believed that the Federal Theatre never did much more than break even in Atlanta, and Harris said that as far as ticket sales went the FT was a total failure (Weisberg 12; Harris 15).

It is unknown whether the low ticket sales or the

choice of productions was the reason for Cameron's dismissal, as is the date of his departure or his next assignment. However, in 1938, Albert Lovejoy moved to Atlanta and assumed the director's position until the end of the Project in 1939.

Very little information on Lovejoy exists. Flanagan, who names Lovejoy as the only director of the Atlanta Project, does not give any background information on him. Josef Lentz described Lovejoy as an "old time actor and director" and mentioned that he worked for one year at the Le Petit Theatre in New Orleans before going to Atlanta (Lentz 18). Though Flanagan never speaks of Lovejoy in connection with the Le Petit Theatre, she does list some of the shows done by the New Orleans Project, including The First Legion, Russet Mantle, Chalk Dust, Dr. Faustus, and Boy Meets Girl. Lentz said that with Lovejoy in control the Atlanta Project went "back to the same old thing. . .carbon copies of New York" (Lentz 18).

But Lovejoy did stage what was the third original play done in Atlanta by the FTP, The Man in the Tree. The play, written by John Woodworth, a member of the Oklahoma Federal Writers Project, received a great amount of publicity as the third world premiere presented in Atlanta. The reviews, however, were not entirely complimentary. The play is about a man in the 1830's who is accidentally transported to the 1930's. One reviewer called it "raggedly paced and slow. . .

and pointed in no particular direction" (H.D. 11). Another felt it was good entertainment but on the whole not as concise as it should be (Jones, Prod. Notebook).

Lovejoy also attempted to do some experimental staging with some of the productions, though for the most part they were done in the same style that had received praise in New York. His second production, The Adding Machine by Elmer Rice, used the same minimal setting and maximum lighting as the New York production because of its previous success.

Hallie Flanagan saw the Atlanta production of The Adding Machine and marveled at the small size of the audience. When she asked Lovejoy what he thought of Atlanta he told her that with all the work he had to do he had not the time to get to know his city. The stage manager said that Atlanta was not advanced enough for The Adding Machine (Flanagan, Arena 90-91). After the success of Altars of Steel, however, that notion is doubtful.

The rest of the season followed much the same pattern with Lovejoy directing and staging shows that were critical or commercial successes in New York. Perhaps Lovejoy felt that he found the key to Atlanta's theatrical taste, because the third season of plays offered nothing new in the way of experimental drama or original plays.

5. THE ATLANTA FTP'S THIRD AND FINAL SEASON

The third and final season of the Atlanta Federal Theatre began in October 1938 after a summer road tour to the CCC camps and one summer production, Fly Away Home, by Dorothy Bennet and Irving White. The Erlanger Theatre was now the home of the FT company. Administration officials decided the Erlanger had larger and more modern facilities than did the Atlanta Theatre. But the Erlanger was also the theatre where all the commercial touring companies performed. The Federal Theatre agreed to handle all the booking for these road shows, thereby shortening their own season considerably. Between October and the close of the Project in May 1939 the Federal Theatre produced only seven plays: High Tor by Maxwell Anderson; Lost Horizons by Harry Segal, adapted by John Hayden; The Best Cure by Ralph Belmont and Herbert Ashton; Journey's End by R.C. Sheriff; The Man of Destiny and Androcles and the Lion, both by Shaw; and The Fireman's Flame by John Van Antwerp.

Of the seven, none received outstanding reviews. In fact the reviewers seemed to become antagonistic towards the FT. When Lee Rogers reviewed High Tor he noted that the capacity audience applauded the scenery and lighting but that the performance dragged ("High Tor" 10). In his review for the two Shaw plays, Rogers stated that the audience had two men paramount in their imaginations during the performance. One was Shaw and the other was Uncle Sam who

"peels off greenbacks for the men and women who read these lines" ("Federal Players" 7). Even the compliments were backhanded as with the review of The Fireman's Flame which said it was "butchered into an amusing comedy" ("Old" 6)

Two reasons for this antagonism are apparent. One is that the Federal Theatre as a whole was suffering from charges of Communism and was fighting for its life in Senate hearings. The second is less obvious and is suggested by comments made by people associated with the Project. Sara Thomas and her assistant, Gilbert Maxwell, were both fired from the Project very early in the third season. It is the opinion of Maxwell and Lentz that Thomas was fired in a political move, though whose politics were involved is unclear. Lentz said friction between personalities within the state WPA and the local FT company motivated the changes (Lentz 6). Gilbert Maxwell said he was fired, because he defended Thomas and intensely disliked Lovejoy. The fact that a local woman had been fired and replaced by an outsider did nothing to promote a feeling of good will between the Project and the local newspapers (Maxwell 4).

No reports were published in the Atlanta Constitution on the end of the Project in May. The review of The Fireman's Flame is the last article to appear on the Atlanta Federal Theatre Project. There is no indication of why the Atlanta Project was ended on May 31 as Flanagan reports, when the Federal Theatre Project as a whole was not ended

until June 30. There was some indication within the FTP that the Project would be closed after the Senate hearings. Perhaps the members of the Atlanta Project felt it was useless to go forward with an endeavor that would soon end. Also, it is likely that the large cuts in the FT budget earlier in the year helped bring about the premature end of the Atlanta Project. Certainly there is evidence that the Atlanta FT was hurt by the cuts, as press releases began mentioning local sponsoring organizations for one, two or all performances of a production. The Jewish Veteran's Auxiliary sponsored one performance of Lost Horizons, the American Legion sponsored Journey's End, the Federation of Trade sponsored one evening of The Fireman's Flame, and both the Community Chest and an alumni organization sponsored the Shaw plays. It is ironic that just as more community support was forthcoming in the form of the sponsorships, the Project ended.

When the FTP closed, various units in the South "got hungry again," according to Lentz, although he had no real communications with the individual units (Lentz 19). The community did not take over when the Federal Theatre ended because the Federal Theatre Company had not established itself as a strong community concern. Therefore, the community felt no responsibility towards the continuation of this theatrical enterprise. Apparently other community theatres also failed to gain the support of the people as no

mention is made of the Theatre Guild, or any other group, in the Atlanta Constitution from 1939 to the early 1950's. This does not necessarily mean that the Guild did not continue, only that its activities received no press coverage. The Writers Project reported that, while there was an increase in movie theatres between 1939 and 1949, vaudeville and touring companies again comprised the only live theatre in Atlanta (142). Based on this limited information, it appears that the FTP in Atlanta failed in its second goal--to establish a strong community-based theatre that would continue beyond the Federal Theatre Project.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE ATLANTA FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT AND CONCLUSIONS

1. REVIEW OF THE ATLANTA FTP

In reviewing the relative successes and failures of the Atlanta Federal Theatre Project, it is important to remember that theatre in the South was both highly commercial and imported from New York. The theatre's possibilities as an indigenous art form were virtually unexplored in Atlanta, as well as in the rest of the South, before the formation of the FTP. Theatre had had little opportunity to develop in a region that had been primarily agrarian, and therefore a region with a scattered population. A sufficient concentration of people who share a sense of community must be present in order for theatre to develop. Atlanta may have been a large city at the time of the Depression, but the population of the city had only been growing since the relatively late industrialization in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Moreover, the population came from a non-theatrical agrarian tradition. Taking these factors into consideration, it is remarkable that the FTP succeeded in accomplishing anything of significance in the South.

When Josef Lentz was asked what the Federal Theatre could have done better in the South he had two ideas: there should have been more communication within the region and

with other regions, and more regionally rooted experimental theatre (21). However, he believed that the FT had accomplished two important things in the South: it had employed a large number of unemployed theatre artists, and it had made the Southern public more conscious of the theatre (20). Similar conclusions can be drawn for the Atlanta Project. At one point it employed almost one hundred people from Atlanta, Birmingham, and the surrounding area. And, although it had not always created noteworthy productions, at least it produced stageworthy plays that the public could see at a relatively low price.

But why did the Project itself fail to gain community support? Julian Harris asserted that this failure was due in part to the distrust Atlantans had towards the theatre. They had been "lied to and fooled" about the quality of plays performed in Atlanta before the FTP, and were therefore unwilling to attend anything unless they had received prior assurance from the press that the production was worth their attention (15). Yet, even with good reviews the audiences did not increase. This failure suggests that Atlantans needed more than the assurance of production reviews to bring them into the theatre. They needed a tradition of theatre that would have inspired curiosity about a production, regardless of reviews, and would have led them to investigate the play and judge it for themselves.

The Project's choice of plays also failed to establish the FTP in the community. The plays were most often those which had been popular in New York. Even though Atlanta had a tradition of dependence on the New York stage, the FT productions lacked the stars and the spectacle to which the populace was accustomed. One Atlanta Federal Theatre worker argued that the FT was giving the people plays that "made the [New York] Theatre Guild famous" (Flanagan, Arena 91). But, as Flanagan pointed out, "plays which made the Theatre Guild famous were adapted to a different time and a different audience" (Arena 91). Plays of and for the South were rarely forthcoming from the Atlanta FTP. Not one of the New York directors or supervisors bothered to find out about the city, its specific problems, strengths, and needs. As that same worker said, "We haven't got time to study the city. We're trying to give them good theatre" (Flanagan, Arena 91).

The attitude exhibited by this native New Yorker is indicative of a larger problem within the Project. The FTP personnel making decisions were not native to Atlanta, and in many cases not native to the South. Complicating the problem was the resentment felt by the community when their own members, Sara Thomas and Gilbert Maxwell, were dismissed from the Project by Lovejoy. Even Julian Harris, who implemented the Project in Atlanta, was dismissed (Harris 11). Though the quality of his work may have warranted the

dismissal it was bad public relations, especially since a New Yorker replaced him. Although Flanagan and the FT were no doubt only trying to present the highest quality of theatre they could--and that meant importing the people perceived as being best qualified for that goal--this importation of talent demonstrated a marked lack of concern for the community in which the FTP had to take root in order to survive.

Also failing to take root were the people working with the Project, including some of the orginal staff. After their dismissal from the FTP, Thomas, Harris, and Maxwell chose either to leave Atlanta or follow other careers. Of the original Atlanta staff, only Paula Causey, as director for the Guild, remained involved in Atlanta theatre. Julian Harris, though still living in Atlanta, became more and more involved in teaching architecture at Georgia Technological Insitute and in his work as a sculptor. Today his architectural sculptures enchance over fifty public buildings in Atlanta. Sara Thomas eventually married and for most of her life lived outside Georgia. Though her husband continued to work in theatre, she did not. Gilbert Maxwell, though still involved in acting, eventually settled in Florida.

Had the FTP and the people involved with it taken root in Atlanta the possibility of success still would have been limited by the lack of a regional theatrical center in the

South. No region in the country actually realized this potential. The major reason for this failure was the lack of cooperation between state and federal bureaucracies. In particular, the difficulty in acquiring permission from individual state WPA administrators to tour companies over state lines discouraged the South from developing a regional theatre. Without touring companies many people in the South never saw a FT production. Yet, this problem did not exist in Atlanta because the Georgia WPA allowed the Atlanta company to tour Alabama and North Carolina with a vaudeville unit. Vaudeville, however, is not the type of theatre that develops a serious audience. Since the Atlanta company was itself not very large, it had to limit its tours to the summer months; consequently it could tour only CCC camps, and most of the general public were left unaware of the FTP. Tours through the CCC camps did not allow a tradition of theatre to be built, nor did tours of this type allow the pattern of importing outside commercial entertainment, established before the FTP, to be broken.

Even though the Georgia WPA allowed these tours, the relatively benign relationship between it and the Atlanta Project was not the result of the state's care for the FTP. On the contrary, Lentz thought that the Georgia WPA "barely knew we existed" (7). Since the Georgia WPA administration paid so little attention to the Atlanta Project, it did little to encourage the continuation of the Project.

In its turn, the federal government--especially the Congress--had as much to do with the failure of individual projects, such as Atlanta, as it did with the failure of the Federal Theatre Project as a whole. The budget cuts and the attacks on the FTP by senators and congressmen, many of them Southerners, hurt not only the financial standing but also the community standing of the Project. As a result, no single director or supervisor can be blamed for the failure of the Atlanta Project to find long-term community support; the responsibility for this failure was shared by many on various levels of the WPA and the larger Federal government.

2. CONCLUSIONS

The Atlanta Project, though hardly wholly successful, was by no means a complete failure. The Project accomplished three significant advances for theatre in Atlanta. First, and perhaps most important, it helped the Atlanta Theatre Guild become established if only for a short time. Second, it opened both the Atlanta Theatre and the Erlanger to legitimate productions though the Atlanta eventually closed completely and the Erlanger again became chiefly a house for touring companies. Third, the Atlanta FTP premiered three original plays, Altars of Steel, The Last Enemy, and The Man in the Tree. The latter two plays were not strong productions, but Altars of Steel was one of the highlights of the FTP.

The limited success of the Atlanta FTP may have contributed to the fact that it was almost twenty years later before a strong professional theatre was established in Atlanta. Another contributing factor has been the prevailing attitude of Southerners towards theatre. A comment made in 1986 by Billy Hughes, the owner of the Fancy Dog Theatre in Atlanta, could just as easily have been made in 1937, except for the reference to television:

> Regionally the South is relatively new to the sophisticated concept of supporting an art form such as theatre without comparing it to the cheaper alternatives, such as T.V., movies, bars, etc. You get what you pay for (Crouch J8).

The fact that the South still equates theatre and entertainment is one of the reasons that there is still a lack of theatres in Atlanta doing challenging and stimulating work (Crouch J1). Of the twenty-six professional theatres in Atlanta only the Atlanta New Playwrights Project (1978), and the Academy (1956) are concerned with giving Atlanta new theatrical experiences. The Atlanta New Playwrights Project presents new plays and encourages other companies to do the same. The founder of the Academy Theatre, Frank Wittow, echoes the ideal of the Federal Theatre Project in his determination that his theatre "be an entity within the community and not merely an entertainment cultural outlet" (Kay, "Theater" F6). The other theatres in Atlanta primarily produce established plays, echoing the actuality of the FTP. The Theatre of the

Stars (1953), for example, the first professional theatre established after the failure of the FTP, is, as its name indicates, a star system operation; it presents top names from stage and film in popular musicals, comedies, or dramas (Kay, "Theater" F6).

Both Atlanta and the South now have a significantly greater potential for the growth of theatre than they did in the 1930's. The Federal Theatre had to contend with an agrarian population that had no theatre tradition. Today, people like Frank Wittow are trying to establish a strong tradition in theatre. The density of the population and the modern network of communications should allow theatre to flourish once people are made aware of the importance of theatre to their lives, community, and world. However, the growth of the population has not necessarily meant the growth of a strong community. The primary reason that Atlanta and other Southern cities have grown in population is the influx of industry and people. Those who come to a place only to work have no necessary sense of connection to the people with whom they live. A sense of community, then, becomes fragile; and, consequently, so does the means by which theatre must thrive. Therefore, the task of theatre becomes two-fold; it must somehow establish a sense of community among people, and at the same time it must establish itself within that community. Essentially, modern theatre must do what the Federal Theatre attempted and

failed to do.

If the task seems insurmountable, it is because it may well be. Certainly there are no polished solutions as to how theatre can achieve these two goals. If there were, then the various Projects would have survived the end of Federal Theatre. The solutions must be found, however, if theatre is to survive, not only in the South, but in the rest of the country, and not only as entertainment, but as a living art form.

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"Federal Players Make Costumes For $40." Atlanta Constituion 30 Jan. 1938: K5.

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W.R. "Amusing Comedy, By Candlelight, Is Presented By Theater Project." Atlanta Constitution 16 June 1937: 20.

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APPENDIX

PLAYS PRODUCED BY THE ATLANTA FEDERAL THEATRE

The Drunkard (Theatre Guild)	1-19-37/1-31
Around the Corner	2-8-37/2-11
Faint Perfume (Theatre Guild)	2-23-37/2-25
The Wind and the Rain	3-9-37/3-11
Altars of Steel	4-1-37/4-8
Pursuit of Happiness (Theatre Guild)	4-17-37/4-21
The Last Enemy	5-12-37/5-19
The Torch Bearers (Theatre Guild)	5-25-37/5-29
One More Spring	6-1-37/6-7
By Candlelight	6-15-37/6-22
Mary, the Third (Theatre Guild)	7-6-37/7-9
Tragicall Historie of Dr. Faustus	7-27-37/8-3
CCC Murder Mystery	8-9-37/8-22
Heaven Bound	8-10-37/1-8-38
Boy Meets Girl	9-14-37/1-14-37
Anna Christie	9-28-37/10-2
Excursion	10-21-37/10-25
She Stoops to Conquer	11-5-37/11-25
Shows of Yesteryear(Vaudeville)	11-20-37/10-21-38
The Devil's Disciple	11-22-37/11-27
Advent and Nativity of Christ	12-17-37/12-22
Atlanta Theatre Minstrels	12-31-37
The Man in the Tree	1-31-38/2-5
The Adding Machine	2-28-38/3-10
The Night of Jan. 16th	3-28-38/4-5
Help Yourself	4-23-38/4-30
Hell Bent for Heaven	5-18-38/6-4
Fly Away Home	7-26-38/7-29
4 Plantagenet Kings	10-9-38/1-4-39
High Tor	11-2-38/11-5
Lost Horizons	12-6-38/12-10
The Best Cure	12-28-38/12-31
Journey's End	1-24-39/2-4
The Man of Destiny and Androcles and the Lion	3-15-39/3-17
The Fireman's Flame	4-25-39/4-29

Plays and dates taken from production list from the Library of Congress Federal Theatre Project Collection at George Mason University Library, Fairfax, Virginia.

VITA

Cindi Lee Draper was born in Nashville, Tennessee on November 3, 1961. She attended elementary schools in Gallatin, Tn. and graduated from Gallatin Senior High School in June 1980. After attending Western Kentucky University for one semester, she chose to work full time and attend night classes at Volunteer State Community College. In the fall of 1982 she became a full-time student at Vol State and in the fall of 1983 she transferred to Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tn. In June 1985 she received her Bachelor of Science degree in Speech and Theatre and accepted an assistanceship to the University of Tennessee to begin work on her Master of Arts degree. This degree was awarded in August 1987.