The Depression hammered creative artists of all kinds—painters and sculptors, musicians, writers, and actors. Two-thirds of the American Federation of Musicians lost their jobs. Performance venues suffered a steep decline. Half of Broadway theaters went dark. Prices paid for paintings plummeted 66 percent. A majority of graphic artists hired by magazines were thrown out of work. Newspaper and book sales plunged.

Franklin D. Roosevelt’s favored approach to helping the unemployed was to move them off “the dole” and into government-sponsored work relief. So in 1935, he authorized the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to hire jobless Americans to build visible, useful projects in their communities—projects like roads, bridges, schools, airports, and dams.

Americans understood physical labor. But many were strangers to the effort involved in painting, writing, or playing an instrument. “Are artists workers?” they asked. “Why not?” was FDR’s reply. “They are human beings. They have to live.” Work-relief administrator Harry Hopkins put it even more
plainly: “Hell, they’ve got to eat just like other people.” The two men launched the Federal Art Project, Federal Music Project, Federal Theatre Project, and Federal Writers’ Project, collectively known as Federal Project Number One, with the same basic goal that guided other WPA units—to employ the jobless in work of lasting value to the American people.

During their four-year tenure, these projects dramatically expanded Americans’ access to the arts and created distinctively American art forms. They also became a lightning rod for criticism of FDR and the New Deal. And they set a precedent for government patronage of the arts.

Federal Project Number One stands as a testament to the vaulting ambition and expansive values of the New Deal. It seemed to proclaim that just because people stopped attending concerts or buying novels in times of extreme want didn’t mean these weren’t vital to well-being. Invited to hear a free symphony concert or write an original play, Americans could hope for more than mere survival. They would not live by bread alone.
The Federal Music Project

The New Deal strove to bring live music to Americans who had not been able to afford the price of admission. FDR and work-relief administrator Harry Hopkins envisioned performances not only in traditional symphony halls but also in parks, schools, train stations, and other public spaces that could house a crowd.

The Federal Music Project (FMP) embraced this challenge with gusto. Its musicians offered symphonies in concert halls, performed open-air concerts at ballparks, marched in parades, and regaled elementary students with cowboy songs. By fall 1936, they had entertained more than thirty-two million Americans, most of whom enjoyed their music for free or paid bargain-basement prices for tickets—a quarter or two for adults, a dime for children.

The project’s musicians performed Beethoven, Brahms, and Mozart; staged Gilbert and Sullivan musicals; played Gershwin and swing music; and produced opera. They created thirty-four local orchestras and preserved American folk music. They copied musical scores and distributed them to public libraries and universities. Six thousand music teachers offered free music lessons and music appreciation classes to millions of children and adults. Classes were so popular that the demand for used pianos skyrocketed.

Congress stopped funding the FMP in 1940. By then the project had introduced millions to live performances of classical music and taught many more to play an instrument and appreciate composition.
The Federal Art Project

Artists, work-relief chief Harry Hopkins declared, have to eat too. With this in mind he instructed the Federal Art Project (FAP) to employ as many jobless artists as possible creating “art for the masses.” Hopkins, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Holger Cahill, FAP’s director, also hoped that “real depictions of real people in real settings” would sustain the American spirit and create a uniquely American style.

It was a massive undertaking. From 1935 to 1940, the visual-art project hired nine thousand unemployed painters, sculptors, printmakers, and graphic designers, engaging them in the ambitious task of integrating art into Americans’ daily lives. Making a real mark on their communities, these artists:

- created 2,566 murals for hospitals, town halls, schools, railway stations, and other public buildings;
- painted 108,099 freestanding canvases for government offices and other public spaces;
- designed thousands of bold posters promoting public health, historic sites, travel, and New Deal programs;
- staffed more than a hundred community art centers in every region of the country;
- taught hundreds of thousands to paint, sculpt, and create graphic designs, as well as to interpret and appreciate both fine art and American folk art; and
- documented American designs, folk art, and historic buildings, and preserved decaying historical records.

Their work allowed the nation to participate in the expressiveness of art, as both makers and appreciators. It also documented America’s artistic heritage for future generations.

**WPA Murals**

Nothing symbolizes New Deal art so much as the wall-length murals created by Federal Art Project workers, sweeping panoramas that became dramatic focal points for airports, hospitals, prisons, schools, public libraries, city landmarks, and other public buildings across the nation.

New Deal muralists rejected the comfortable, laudatory message of traditional murals commemorating historic events or celebrating national heroes. Instead they captured the toil and sweat of everyday life, the struggle progress demands, and the dreams that democracy offers to working people. They brought to life “muscular men at work in field and factories, women tending hearth and home,” contemporary street scenes, and “magnificent machines,” as author Nick Taylor put it.

Edward Laning’s *The Role of the Immigrant in the Development of America*, for example, transformed the 110-foot-long, 8-foot-high main wall of the dining room at New York City’s Ellis Island into a gripping portrayal of immigrants’ contributions to the nation, as well as the discrimination they overcame and sacrifices they made to build lives in America. Other murals, such as Philip Guston’s *Work—The American Way*, immortalized the heroic effort brickmasons, garment workers, surveyors, and drill operators exert to do their jobs. Still others,
especially those painted by Ben Shahn and Jack Levine, documented the poverty, despair, corruption, and loneliness the Depression brought to urban and industrial America.

Together, the murals depicted America’s struggle to make democracy real for all its citizens.

**WPA Posters**

Graphic artists hired by the Federal Art Project (FAP) produced a treasure trove of posters promoting New Deal initiatives and advertising concerts funded by the Federal Music Project and performances staged by the Federal Theatre Project. Their bold, colorful art deco designs encouraged Americans to explore national parks and historic sites, visit the Philadelphia Zoo, delve into art galleries, guard against venereal disease, enroll in the Civilian Conservation Corps, enlist in the Coast Guard, and celebrate the Four Freedoms laid out by Franklin D. Roosevelt in his famed 1941 State of the Union speech.

The work was so effective that when Congress refused to continue the FAP, it transferred the graphic arts section to the Office of War Information to create posters urging Americans to save tin, plant victory gardens, and buy war bonds.

**Index of American Design**

In what became one of their most valuable and long-lasting legacies, New Deal artists set out across the country to document centuries of American folk, decorative, and popular art and design. The result is the magisterial Index of American Design, now housed in the National Gallery of Art.

To assemble the compendium, Federal Art Project designers, artists, and researchers traveled to thirty-five states to locate, paint, photograph, catalog, and describe the dolls, andirons, quilts, furniture, pottery, and other everyday items Americans used throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They took note not only of toys, door knockers, weather vanes, and painted figures guarding cigar store entrances, but also of the tools early American home builders, blacksmiths, and farmers used to ply their trades. By 1943, when Congress cut off funding for the Index, its team had produced a compendium of eighteen thousand exquisitely composed, true-to-life watercolor renderings of traditional craft objects—leaving the nation with an invaluable record of its artistic heritage, and offering latter-day artists, designers, and historians a compelling visual experience of the American past.

**Historic American Buildings Survey**

The Federal Art Project (FAP) devoted the same attention to American buildings and crumbling, moldy historic documents as it did to American cultural artifacts. Its Historic American Buildings Survey (now housed at the Library of Congress) duplicated architectural plans of the nation’s most important structures. Teams photographed and diagrammed each building, taking pains to draw the diagrams to scale so that the building might be restored or rebuilt if destroyed by fire or natural disaster.

FAP professionals were equally attentive to detail in preserving vital and property records. The preservationists, archivists, and teachers of the Historic Records Survey inventoried and duplicated decaying military, birth, and death records; deeds; maps; old newspapers; and census reports, saving an irreplaceable resource for historians and genealogists.

In 1943, its last year of existence, the Federal Art Project graphic arts section was transferred to the Office of War Information (OWI), where it produced posters aimed at inspiring unity in the war effort. This 1943 poster issued by the OWI and created by Austrian-born American artist Henry Koerner urges Americans to turn in used cooking fats to their local butchers for conversion to glycerin, an ingredient in explosives. National Archives

**A drawing of the Isaac Bell House in Newport, Rhode Island, from the Historic American Buildings Survey. The survey, part of the Federal Art Project, re-created architectural plans for important historic structures like the Bell house, designed by the prominent Beaux-Arts architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White in 1885. The survey is now housed at the Library of Congress. LOC**

**A 1930s poster advertising an exhibition, at a Philadelphia department store, of the Index of American Design. A team of Federal Art Project workers had traveled the country to produce the compendium of paintings documenting American crafts. It is now housed in the National Gallery of Art. LOC**
The Federal Writers’ Project

During the Great Depression, tens of thousands of writers, clerks, and researchers—some of whom lived hand to mouth in the best of times—battled long-term unemployment and the despair it fostered. Between 1935 and 1943, the Federal Writers’ Project (FWP) hired ten thousand unemployed novelists, poets, academics, copywriters, journalists, librarians, preachers, recent college graduates, and writing teachers—in other words, white-collar workers who thought they could write. Together, these writers produced more than 1,200 works ranging in length from pamphlets to 1,100-page handbooks. More than 3.5 million Americans would read their work.

To put a diverse roster of writers to work, the FWP focused on nonfiction projects that Americans might find useful. Creating master research works took more time than staging a play, performing a concert, or painting a mural, however, and the FWP soon faced the criticism it was too slow to produce. Besides this, not all FWP employees could write compelling prose. Many FWP projects did not stand the test of time.

Its four most comprehensive projects, however, made a lasting impression on Depression-era America and provided indispensable research material for writers, academics, anthropologists, and poets for generations to come. American Stuff: An Anthology of Prose and Verse soon became the definitive resource for the study of American literature. The FWP’s oral history interviews of more than two thousand former slaves in seventeen states provided unparalleled insight into the complexity and tragedy of slavery. The Life in America series preserved American folklore and launched pioneering studies of dozens of urban and rural ethnic communities. And the project’s exceedingly popular WPA American Guide series introduced millions of Americans to the history of local communities and either gave away or sold 3.5 million copies of its books.

Moreover, FWP paychecks allowed Ralph Ellison, Zora Neale Hurston, John Steinbeck, Studs Terkel, Eudora Welty, Richard Wright, and dozens of other master writers to finish works that would change the course of American literature.

The American Guide Series

To reach a general audience, the Federal Writers’ Project (FWP) sent field teams to forty-eight states, thirty major cities, the territories, and dozens of national historic sites to produce engaging, detailed, and richly illustrated travel guides. Its photographers explored major cities and worked alongside writers who, using materials collected by FWP researchers, reconstructed the community’s history and provided interesting tidbits about its contemporary life. FWP drivers motored from one city to another to carefully noting mileage, street signs, difficult turns, and landmarks. FWP draftsmen used the drivers’ information to create maps that showed travelers how to get from one historic site to another and one city to another.

The travel guide series, historian and architecture critic Lewis Mumford noted, was “the first attempt, on a comprehensive scale, to make the country itself worthily known to Americans.” Time magazine agreed, arguing that the guides were “the biggest literary job ever undertaken” and corrected the general public’s tendency “to whizz over the surface of their country, picking up such information as they can get from signboards, gasoline station attendants, road maps, [and] Chamber of Commerce handouts.”

American Literary Masterpieces

Despite its emphasis on nonfiction, the Federal Writers’ Project (FWP) changed American literature forever. Regular paychecks received by soon-to-be literary giants—such as John Steinbeck, Richard Wright, John Cheever, Saul Bellow, Claude McKay, and Ralph Ellison—gave them the sustenance they needed to write some of the major novels of the twentieth century. Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath, Wright’s Native Son, and Ellison’s Invisible Man would have taken much longer to complete, indeed might not have been completed at all, had their authors not been on the FWP payroll. Zora Neale Hurston published three books while working for the Florida travel guide project, Their Eyes Were Watching God, Tell My Horse, and Moses, Man of the Mountain.

Eudora Welty’s work as a photographer on the Mississippi guide provided both income and inspiration for her Mississippi-based masterworks. And the great oral historian Studs Terkel perfected his signature interviewing style while working for the FWP to create the seminal works Hard Times, Working, and The Good War.

As the literary critic Alfred Kazin noted, the FWP “began by reporting the ravages of the Depression and ended by reporting on the national inheritance.” Its projects (and other work by writers it sustained) told American stories and enlivened American literature.
The Federal Theatre Project

When Harry Hopkins authorized the Federal Theatre Project (FTP) in August 1935, more than two million theater workers had been thrown out of work, half of Broadway theaters had closed, and regional theater was in shambles. By the time Congress shut down the FTP nearly four years later, it had employed more than seventeen thousand theater workers and put on plays enjoyed by more than a million Americans per month.

Directed by the exuberant Hallie Flanagan, the FTP sought to produce theater “so excellent in quality, so low in cost and so vital to the communities involved” that the dramatic arts would continue to thrive across America without federal support. To meet this goal, the FTP reached out to new audiences and offered both popular and new plays targeted to specific communities. It staged productions in schools, hospitals, community organizations, and any theater spaces it could afford to rent.

Ten million Americans huddled around their radios to experience theater through the innovative Federal Theatre on the Air. Inspired by these successes, dozens of cities and towns launched their own community theater programs.

In introducing the federal program, Hopkins had assured theater professionals that they would have artistic freedom: “What we want is a free, adult, uncensored theatre.” Flanagan took this promise to heart, creating five programs that encouraged American theater to take on broader themes than ever before, while making it accessible to populations that had never been able to meet the usual ticket price. Within six months:

- the Negro Theatre staged classic and contemporary plays with all African American casts;
- the Tryout Theatre helped playwrights audition their new plays before major producers;
- the Experimental Theatre staged “new plays in new manners”;
- the Popular Price Theatre produced works by emerging playwrights; and
- the Living Newspaper, the most controversial FTP program, made current events come alive on stage.

FTP actors performed plays in French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Yiddish. A dozen cities developed their own African American theater companies. FTP puppeteers entertained Civilian Conservation Corps camps.

The FTP’s bold experimentation and its frank, sometimes satirical depiction of current events soon drew congressional scrutiny and accusations that it promoted a radical agenda. In 1939 the red-baiting House Un-American Activities Committee exploited the politics of a few actors to denounce the FTP. Despite Flanagan’s spirited defense of “the widest and most American base that any theater has ever built upon,” Congress eliminated its funding.

Yet in its short life, the FTP stimulated wide American interest in theater, gave opportunities to directors and actors who would transform American stage and screen, encouraged new formats, widened the subject matter treated onstage, and played a key role in bringing art into people’s lives. The actor-director John Houston called it “the most creative and dynamic approach that has yet been made to an American National Theater.”

Living Newspapers

No New Deal arts program generated more furor or congressional disapproval than the Federal Theatre Project’s Living Newspaper unit. Designed to spur audiences to debate current policies, playwrights combed news reports, presidential statements, and newsreel footage to reenact and comment upon the controversial decisions of the day.
For example, when *Triple A—Plowed Under* combined the Supreme Court’s invalidation of the Agricultural Adjustment Act with an unemployed, desperate mother’s murder of her toddler son to indict rural poverty, young audiences packed the theater and critics penned mostly stellar reviews.

Not all provocative stagecraft escaped censorship, however. When *Living Newspaper* actors wanted to feature a goose-stepping Benito Mussolini in *Ethiopia*, a play criticizing Italy’s invasion of the African nation, FDR intervened, saying foreign leaders should not be parodied on the American stage. Yet most productions continued unabated, stimulating rural and urban audiences, and introducing a new form and minimalist staging to the theatergoing public.

**Voodoo Macbeth and the Negro Theatre**

To fully include black Americans in federal theater, project leaders decided that instead of merely staging the few plays featuring African American characters, the program would mount dramas treating themes broadly relevant to African American experience and cast black actors in roles traditionally performed by whites. This was a revolutionary approach. Suddenly, African American actors could interpret characters written by William Shakespeare, T. S. Eliot, and Oscar Wilde, along with characters developed by African American playwrights.

The first play staged by the Federal Theatre Project’s (FTP) Negro Theatre unit was a dramatic adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, directed by a young Orson Welles (who later would receive international acclaim as an actor and director). On opening night, as ten thousand bystanders crowded the Harlem streets surrounding the Lafayette Theatre, ticket holders packed the theater. Rather than experience the barrenness of the Scottish moors, they were transported to Haiti, where voodoo priestesses replaced witches, military uniforms replaced kilts, and drums replaced trumpets. When the curtain went down, the audience exploded in thrilled applause, and critics raced to file mostly admiring reviews.

**It Can’t Happen Here: Theater on a National Stage**

Nobel Prize–winning author Sinclair Lewis’s novel *It Can’t Happen Here* came out in 1935, just after the alarmingly precipitous rise of Adolf Hitler to absolute power in Germany. The novel features a charismatic American senator, Buzz Windrip, who wins the presidency and imposes authoritarian rule, using the army to silence his critics. Hollywood optioned *It Can’t Happen Here* but on further consideration deemed it too controversial for the movies. Lewis then transferred rights to the Federal Theatre Project (FTP), which would assure the work reached a truly vast and diverse American audience.

FTP head Hallie Flanagan hired eighteen directors in eighteen cities across the nation to create their own backdrops and open *It Can’t Happen Here* simultaneously on a single night. Louisiana backed out, worried the audience might recognize their own elected officials in President Windrip (Louisiana senator Huey Long, like the Windrip character, was campaigning for the presidency on a populist platform offering citizens generous stipends). When Saint Louis tried to soften the script, an angry Flanagan canceled its production. Tensions mounted.

On October 27, 1936, a week before the presidential election, the curtain went up on *It Can’t Happen Here* in Birmingham, Boston, Bridgeport, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Miami, Newark, New York City, Omaha, San Francisco, Tacoma, Tampa, and Yonkers. The play was a smash. Actors took a dozen curtain calls in New York’s Adelphi Theatre. Critics extolled its message that alert citizens generous stipends). When Saint Louis tried to soften the script, an angry Flanagan canceled its production. Tensions mounted.

On October 27, 1936, a week before the presidential election, the curtain went up on *It Can’t Happen Here* in Birmingham, Boston, Bridgeport, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Miami, Newark, New York City, Omaha, San Francisco, Tacoma, Tampa, and Yonkers. The play was a smash. Actors took a dozen curtain calls in New York’s Adelphi Theatre. Critics extolled its message that alert citizens are critical to the defense of civil liberties.

But Congress was not pleased. Members could not decide whether the play was for or against their own elected officials in President Windrip (Louisiana senator Huey Long, like the Windrip character, was campaigning for the presidency on a populist platform offering citizens generous stipends). When Saint Louis tried to soften the script, an angry Flanagan canceled its production. Tensions mounted.

On October 27, 1936, a week before the presidential election, the curtain went up on *It Can’t Happen Here* in Birmingham, Boston, Bridgeport, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Miami, Newark, New York City, Omaha, San Francisco, Tacoma, Tampa, and Yonkers. The play was a smash. Actors took a dozen curtain calls in New York’s Adelphi Theatre. Critics extolled its message that alert citizens generous stipends). When Saint Louis tried to soften the script, an angry Flanagan canceled its production. Tensions mounted.

On October 27, 1936, a week before the presidential election, the curtain went up on *It Can’t Happen Here* in Birmingham, Boston, Bridgeport, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Miami, Newark, New York City, Omaha, San Francisco, Tacoma, Tampa, and Yonkers. The play was a smash. Actors took a dozen curtain calls in New York’s Adelphi Theatre. Critics extolled its message that alert citizens generous stipends). When Saint Louis tried to soften the script, an angry Flanagan canceled its production. Tensions mounted.

On October 27, 1936, a week before the presidential election, the curtain went up on *It Can’t Happen Here* in Birmingham, Boston, Bridgeport, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Miami, Newark, New York City, Omaha, San Francisco, Tacoma, Tampa, and Yonkers. The play was a smash. Actors took a dozen curtain calls in New York’s Adelphi Theatre. Critics extolled its message that alert citizens generous stipends). When Saint Louis tried to soften the script, an angry Flanagan canceled its production. Tensions mounted.

On October 27, 1936, a week before the presidential election, the curtain went up on *It Can’t Happen Here* in Birmingham, Boston, Bridgeport, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Miami, Newark, New York City, Omaha, San Francisco, Tacoma, Tampa, and Yonkers. The play was a smash. Actors took a dozen curtain calls in New York’s Adelphi Theatre. Critics extolled its message that alert citizens generous stipends). When Saint Louis tried to soften the script, an angry Flanagan canceled its production. Tensions mounted.

On October 27, 1936, a week before the presidential election, the curtain went up on *It Can’t Happen Here* in Birmingham, Boston, Bridgeport, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Miami, Newark, New York City, Omaha, San Francisco, Tacoma, Tampa, and Yonkers. The play was a smash. Actors took a dozen curtain calls in New York’s Adelphi Theatre. Critics extolled its message that alert citizens generous stipends). When Saint Louis tried to soften the script, an angry Flanagan canceled its production. Tensions mounted.

On October 27, 1936, a week before the presidential election, the curtain went up on *It Can’t Happen Here* in Birmingham, Boston, Bridgeport, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Miami, Newark, New York City, Omaha, San Francisco, Tacoma, Tampa, and Yonkers. The play was a smash. Actors took a dozen curtain calls in New York’s Adelphi Theatre. Critics extolled its message that alert citizens generous stipends). When Saint Louis tried to soften the script, an angry Flanagan canceled its production. Tensions mounted.
against fascism. The political press remained convinced FTP had some secret reason for staging the play so close to the election. Yet Americans saw the play in droves and continued to support the FTP.

Congressional critics took note of the public’s appreciative response and, after voters resoundingly reelected FDR, held their tongues. Three years later, however, when the House Un-American Activities Committee attacked the FTP, committee members argued that Flanagan’s support of the play proved her commitment to subversive material.

**Stars of Stage and Screen**
The Federal Theatre Project helped launch the careers of some of America’s most renowned directors, actors, and playwrights. Orson Welles, for example, went on to win acclaim as a multitalented theater and screen director and actor whose film credits include *Citizen Kane* and *The Third Man*. Movie director Elia Kazan would make the classic American films *On the Waterfront*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* starring Marlon Brando and Vivien Leigh, *East of Eden* with James Dean, and *Splendor in the Grass* starring Natalie Wood and Warren Beatty. Actor Burt Lancaster would headline such films as *From Here to Eternity*, and Sidney Lumet would star in *12 Angry Men*, among other films. Playwright Arthur Miller, meanwhile, would produce such celebrated works as *The Crucible* and *Death of a Salesman*.

A statement by the Hollywood Democratic Committee supporting Franklin D. Roosevelt in the election of 1944, his last. The traditionally left-leaning movie industry in Hollywood supported FDR. His administration helped launch the careers of some stars with Federal Project Number One jobs, and itself made skillful use of both feature films and newsreels as vehicles for government messaging, especially during World War II. University of Wisconsin-Madison
Congressional Conservatives Attack

By early 1938, congressional politics and personal tragedy had conspired to undermine the arts program known as Federal Project Number One. Harry Hopkins, grieving over his wife’s sudden death and battling stomach cancer, resigned his position as administrator of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which oversaw the arts units. Franklin D. Roosevelt, meanwhile, shifted his attention away from relief efforts to defeating anti-New Deal Democrats up for reelection, the vast majority of whom kept their seats. When Congress returned, a few ardent New Dealers proposed making the Federal One programs permanent as part of a to-be-created Bureau of Fine Arts. The press and most representatives disagreed. The bill was defeated by a wide margin.

Two members of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), J. Parnell Thomas and Martin Dies, seized on the negative press to argue that all the Federal One programs—the Federal Theatre Project (FTP) and Federal Writers’ Project (FWP) especially—harbored communist and other subversive artists. They launched hearings investigating federal support of radical art. Using real and (mostly) manufactured evidence, HUAC indicted Hallie Flanagan’s Living Theatre program and much of the fiction written by FWP authors. When the House Appropriations Committee met in early 1939 to allocate funds for the 1940 budget, it refused to fund the FTP and limited FWP funding to completion of its travel guide series. FDR, focused on securing funds to continue the WPA itself, did not contest the decision.

That night FTP actors performed Pinocchio before a group of New York children. As the play ended, the puppet, rather than coming to life, lay in a wooden box engraved with the words, “Born December 23, 1935; killed by an Act of Congress, June 30, 1939.”