

Recovery Program Gives Women Wide Variety of Employment

Jobs Now Held By Gentler Sex In 250 Different Occupations

Mrs. Woodward, Director of Women's Work in FERA and CWA, Tells of Unusual Pursuits Opened Up All Over the United States: Outdoor Toil Has Benefited Many.

By Frances Mangum.

Fifty years ago there was one job for a woman—making a home and rearing children.

Today women are employed in no less than 250 pursuits, ranging from scrubbing tombstones to checking up on divorced husbands.

Yesterday Mrs. Ellen S. Woodward, director of women's work of the Federal Emergency Relief and Civil Works Administrations, sat in her office and pointed out on a large map of the United States the extensive areas in which women are working at unusual and constructive jobs.

She spoke of the recent lean years during which millions of women throughout the country were forced to become breadwinners, but in many cases were unable to find employment and earn even a bare sustenance.

She told also of the thousands of highly educated women, specialists in certain constricted fields, who, suddenly losing their jobs, found themselves without any means of support.

"Out of this calamitous state of affairs there has sprung a new order," declared Mrs. Woodward, "a world of women who will work wherever work there is, who will search out jobs, and even create them!"

"Naturally the Federal Emergency Relief has not been able to take care of all the unemployed women in our country. It has, however, been able to give steady jobs to an amazing number of those on the relief lists."

Repair of Schoolhouses.

Delving into a stack of communications piled on her desk, Mrs. Woodward sorted out letters from Civil Works administrators in different States naming the projects on which women workers were engaged.

"Down South in many of the rural districts women are repairing run-down school houses, painting them inside and out," she said. "Some of them actually go into the woods, chop down trees, hew posts from them, and build fences around community property. Others are employed in scrubbing tombstones.

"All through the country are small graveyards run down and dismally dilapidated. Rural workers engaged in a thorough clean-up campaign are completely rehabilitating these places.

"In a great many sections of the country they are searching out and finding data on historical places and buildings. They see that such information is catalogued, and the places marked. This in turn gives work to cataloguers and markers.

"The tumble-down boundary posts that mark the State and county lines also come under their supervision. They reconnoiter the countryside, ascertain the location of these, paint and repair them, and thus help preserve them."

Engaged in Road Building.

Mrs. Woodward read aloud a report from the administrator in Alabama showing where women there were actually engaged on road work. They follow in the path of the men who are scraping and digging, and plant grass, shrubs and flowers along the roadside. In a great many States they are at work on planting projects in public parks.

"This out-of-doors work is a fine thing for a great many women who have been too closely confined to their homes," Mrs. Woodward pointed out. "We've had letters from many of them saying that after six or seven weeks of this sort of gardening, they seem to gain a new lease on life."

Mrs. Woodward told of the jobs under Civil Works which many colored women had obtained.

"In North Carolina," she said, "Negro women are at work digging the weeds out of golf courses. Farther South many of them have found employment in draining and cleaning swamps for mosquito control.

Chivalry Practiced.

"We had a letter from the administrator of a Southern State the other day citing instances which prove that chivalry still rules below the Mason and Dixon line. He says that in several districts men have been known to give up their jobs under Civil Works to women who were called upon to support families."

In cities women are employed on a wide variety of Federal relief jobs, according to Mrs. Woodward. "In some cities" she said, "they are carting away garbage, helping to locate old public records and prepare them for use, surveying vacant lots and back yards, and helping check up on divorced husbands who are not contributing to the support of their children in needy cases."

Regarding the women who have specialized vocations and who are out of work, Mrs. Woodward said that wherever it was possible they were put to work in congenial surroundings.

"I know of one elderly woman in Boston—and she is simply an example of many women all over the United States—who used to teach art," she said. "When she became old and not able to work every day, she lost her pupils and had no means of support.

Art Guide and Taxidermist.

"Through Civil Works she was placed as guide in an art gallery and has been doing splendid work. That is her field, she knows it, loves it, and is able to give visitors a far better understanding of pictures than the mere catalogue would ever do."

Mrs. Woodward referred to another case, that of a young woman taxidermist who was appointed along with a group of men to do work in a museum.

"Flattering comments from all over the country have come in regarding her work," she said.

Mrs. Woodward explained that the Civil Works projects were carried out through funds transferred from the Public Works Administra-

tion. Each State and territorial Civil Works administrator was authorized to add to his staff a properly qualified woman to give her full time to women's work. These women immediately set to work to find and create jobs for other women. So great has been their versatility that women now are employed on the greatest variety of jobs in the history of the world.



Federal relief and recovery projects have been the means of opening up many unfamiliar avenues of usefulness for women. At the top are seen a number of women employed in a planting project at Greensboro, N. C. Below is a scene in the public library of Okemah, Okla., where girls are engaged in cleaning and repairing books. At right is Mrs. Ellen S. Woodward, of Jackson, Miss., widow of a judge and daughter of a former United States Senator, director of women's work of the FERA and CWA.

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