

With Food Supply Expected to Be Tighter Than Ever, Women's Land Army Faces Its Greatest Challenge

City Girls and Women Urgently Needed for Every Sort of Farm Job

Women have done an outstanding job in this war, and nowhere have their efforts been more important than in helping with the farm harvest.

Until complete victory is won, there must be no letup on the home front. In this critical year of war, the high rate of food production must be continued. At the same time, the farm labor shortage will be even more serious in many areas.

The answer is for town and city people—especially women and youth—to step into the breach, as they have done for the past three years. Farm people themselves are working harder and longer hours than ever before. But they need extra helpers, especially during the harvest season. That group of women doing emergency wartime farm work comprise the Women's Land Army. Their patriotic efforts have saved farm crops in thousands of cases.

The Women's Land Army is a movement rather than an organization. It is mainly a seasonal army. In each state, it is under the direction of the state extension service, with headquarters at the state agricultural college. Most states have a Women's Land Army supervisor who works closely with the county agricultural agents and their farm labor assistants. In most localities, the county agent administers the emergency farm labor program . . . recruiting and placing workers on farms. Last year, these local placement offices . . . 12,000 over the country . . . placed about 350,000 women in farm work, and about as many other women were recruited directly by farmers or found their



Probably the greatest need for seasonal help is in harvesting perishable vegetables and fruits. It is particularly important that all of the tomato crop be brought to market, as this vegetable is a cheap and abundant source of vitamin C.

ing, milking, feeding livestock. They handle just about every farm task, many of which they have never done before, putting in long hours at the double job of housework and farm work.

Typical is one midwestern farm woman who, during corn planting time, drove a tractor from 4 to 8 a. m. each day, and then did the farm chores before starting her regular housework, which she does without benefit of electricity and running water.

Town Women Prove Capable.

Even though town women were at first accepted reluctantly by many farmers, they have now proved themselves in farm work. Their help is especially valuable at harvest time, for crops like apples, peaches and other fruit; for beans, tomatoes, potatoes, peanuts and cotton. Teachers and college girls often spend two or three summer months in farm work. Business women work part of their vacation time, evenings and week ends harvesting tomatoes, beans and carrots, detasseling corn and picking apples, peaches and grapes.

Homemakers also answer the local call for peak-season harvesting. For example, in an Oregon county last year, 500 homemakers helped save the bean crop. Each day they boarded the "Housewives Special"—buses leaving for the field at 8:30 a. m. and returning at 3 p. m. This gave them time to do the family breakfast before leaving and to market for supper in the late afternoon. In Washington, as in other states, women joined groups of "twilight pickers" . . . working evenings in the big berry crop. And in a California county, women working 7 to 11 p. m. as peach cutters to help save 20,000 tons of peaches by drying were known as the "Victory Shift."

Women's underlying motive for doing farm work is, for the most part, patriotism—a deep desire to help . . . to have a part in feeding our soldiers and our allies—and an intense conviction that no food should go to waste. As a 60-year-old woman said, after picking 3 tons of beans, "I'm glad to do it . . . you see, I have a son in the air corps."

Of women who do farm work, by far the greatest number live at home and work by the day, or part-time, on farms nearby.

Spend Vacations on Farms.

Some women, especially college girls, teachers and business women, spend part of their vacation time in labor supply camps, working on surrounding farms. For one week, two weeks, or the entire summer, they cultivate and pick vegetables or harvest fruit. Many Smith college students, as a part of their college's summer plan of "work or study" formed groups which lived in one household in the farming area where they worked.

Camps for women workers are operated in many states. Last year, New York state's WLA camps included about 3,000 New York City women and girls on their vacation time. Life in camp is not all work. Women find it interesting and broadening, with the companionship of women from many different places. As one worker said, after an eve-

ning of recreation in camp, "We're all friends, and that's what we're fighting for, isn't it?"

Even more interesting than picking cherries was the "contact with different people," wrote another camp worker on returning home. Her fellow campers included an Italian teacher, a woman who had fled from Germany, college students, a librarian, a magazine writer, a governess, and a mother of 12 children.

In some cases, women live right on the farm for the summer. They do such work as taking care of the garden, planting, hoeing and harvesting onions, carrots or other vegetables, or helping do a hired man's job. Typical of such workers are a serviceman's wife who has full care of the poultry flock on a large general farm, and a woman who has charge of the milk room on a dairy farm.

Some women serve as "hired hands." They milk, take care of the poultry flock, feed livestock, and work in the field. Of the approximately 9,000 women placed for year-round work in 1944, many of them were wives of men employed on the same farm.

How to Get a Farm Job.

A woman who can work for the entire summer or for several weeks, should consult her county extension agent or local farm employment office immediately. These offices usu-



A student from William and Mary college spends part of her summer vacation picking, grading and packing peaches in a Virginia orchard.

ally are located in the county court-house or federal (post office) building. If she cannot find this local office, she may write to the Women's Land Army supervisor at her state agricultural college, or to Women's Land Army, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

A woman who can work for only short periods of time should stand by for the call in her community. It will come through her local newspapers and over the radio. She will then be told when and where to

Business women and housewives of Sinal, S. D., shock oats on farms near town during the harvest season.



Her husband is fighting on some Pacific Island, and she is doing her bit on the home front by working on a Connecticut dairy farm. Her duties include milking, cleaning the barn, and caring for the calves.

own jobs. These women received prevailing farm wages for the amount and type of work done. Besides these a great many farm women worked on their own and neighboring farms.

Who Are WLA Workers?

All women who help in the wartime production of food, feed, or fiber are a part of the Women's Land Army. Women from farms, cities and towns . . . farm women who work longer hours than ever before . . . women from offices, factories and stores . . . women whose husbands are overseas . . . housewives, college girls and teachers . . . They are women of all ages who spend all summer, all year, or only a few hours, a week end or a vacation period—helping bring through the farm crops our country must have.

North, south, east and west, women do all kinds of farm work. Singly and in groups, they pick beans, tomatoes and other vegetables. They detassel corn, shock grain, pick potatoes, pick and pack berries, apples, peaches, grapes, other fruits and nuts. They work in cotton, grain, tobacco and flax; drive tractors, farm trucks and combines; milk the cows and care for poultry flocks. In brief, as and where needed, women help plant, cultivate, and harvest the food and fiber crops and care for the livestock—all so necessary in the war effort.

Farm wives and daughters—hundreds of thousands of them—do a magnificent job, helping with hay-



Red Raskall

By CLARK McMEEKIN

W.N.U. SERVICE



THE STORY THUS FAR: While voyaging from England to America, Lark Shannon's ship goes down. She is saved by Galt Withe, a bound servant, but made prisoner at the inn to which he takes her. She escapes, and is found by her sweetheart, David North, who is disguised as a gipsy to get a line on Dr. Matson, a slave pirate. Lark and Galt fall into the hands of Dr. Matson, but escape at night, and after weeks of hardship, arrive in Norfolk where Lark expects to meet David. Finally she meets him at a state fair, but he is with Mara Hastings, who had previously told Lark he was her fiancé. Lark rides Red Raskall, a fine horse she managed to hobble after the shipwreck, and wins the race.

CHAPTER XIX

Lark stood quietly waiting. She had hoped that Matson would not single her out by coming over to speak to them. She felt that people were staring at her curiously as he made his way directly toward the spot where she and Galt were standing. She wished now that she had gone out of the room immediately, for though she was delighted that David had won his case she had no feeling of triumph or revenge.

"Miss Shannon," he bent forward, bowing from the waist, "may I congratulate you?"

"On what, sir?" She laid her hand on Galt's arm and stood erect and poised beside him.

Suddenly, as Matson turned, there was a silver flash like a bird flying through the air. Lark's eyes caught it but, for a stunned second she didn't realize its significance. Then, as Matson doubled over in agony, trying to draw out the knife that was buried, hilt-deep, in the breast of his jacket, realization came to Lark, realization and remembrance.

"Galt," she screamed, "Galt! Galt! Matson's wounded!" Her scream was lost in the general uproar. The judge was down from his desk, bending over the crumpled form, shouting for a barber-surgeon to be summoned. One of the farmers' wives had fainted and had to have a feather buried under her nose. The court room was in pandemonium.

Matson was dead now, past any human help, and the sergeant-at-arms bawled "gangway" and carried the body into the judge's small inner sanctum.

A black-coated preacher in the crowd said, "Lord, have mercy on his soul!" spectators echoed "amen."

"Galt," Lark said, "I've got to get outside, away from all this. I can't stand it. I just can't."

He nodded and took her arm, wedging a passage through the milling, hysterical crowd.

Outside, in the court-house yard, Lark said, "Galt, what do you think we should do? We know it was Mother Egypt who killed Matson. Must we tell the judge that?"

"No," Galt said thoughtfully. "I don't think we ought to tell him. This is the way I look at it, Lark. Matson got what was coming to him. It was fair justice. Remember Dosta. Remember my father and dozens of others, likely enough, that we don't know about. I look on this as rightful punishment. It's best we just forget it."

"I'll try, if you say so, Galt."

Galt said, "I'm hungry, Lark, aren't you?" and led her toward one of the Negro women who called her wares in the soft Gullah speech.

It was then that Lark noticed that the old lady who had spoken to her in the court room was beckoning imperiously from the near-by table where she sat alone.

When Lark hesitated for a moment she saw that a Negro butler was coming toward them with a message. With Chesterfieldian politeness he conveyed his summons. Lark and Galt followed him to his mistress, who nodded with satisfaction and told them to sit down beside her.

"Too bad about that shocking scene in the court room a while ago," she said, "but the man richly deserved his punishment. Of course I saw which gipsy flung the knife, just as you did, and it wouldn't surprise me any if Ben Tavner saw it, too, but he's a wise man, in spite of the fact that he's a judge. I think we'll all just forget it. That's the agreement you two young people came to, isn't it?"

Lark and Galt nodded.

"There's not much my old eyes miss," Madame Farrington boasted, "or my ears, either. You'd be surprised how much gossip I've picked up about the two of you, for instance. My sympathy's with you. It was because of that that I came here today. A little bit, perhaps, it was due to curiosity, too. We Virginians are inordinately interested in anything that concerns a thoroughbred. The whole countryside's been agog these past weeks over Jarrod Terraine's loss of Greatways on that bet. For the horse which would have saved him to turn up now when it's too late seems very unjust and very cruel."

"We tried as hard as we could," she explained quickly, "to return the horse sooner. We knew he belonged to Squire Terraine and we've been trying for weeks to return him."

"Yes," Madame Farrington said, "I believe you. Plascutt Dawes started the ugly rumor that you had heard that Jarrod had lost his place and had been hiding at Matson's rendezvous up the coast until the Terraines left for Kentucky."

"But why then," Lark asked an-

grily, "should we ever have come here at all? If we wanted to steal the horse, surely this would have been the last place we would have come to?"

"Plascutt says you wanted to hold him up for a huge reward, more than double the value of the horse. There's no telling what lies a man will tell, or what shabby tricks he'll stoop to, when he once makes up his mind that he wants a particular horse."

Galt said frankly, "We were aiming to get the reward, the amount Squire Terraine posted. It seemed fair and right to us."

"Jarrod Terraine would have paid you, too, without any argument," Madame Farrington said with assurance. "But Plascutt Dawes, he's a horse of another color!" The old lady laughed at her joke and the two young people smiled politely.

A vivacious-looking black-haired girl excused herself from the group of fashionable young people who were gathered under a striped marquee and came toward them.

"I want you to know these young friends of mine," Madame Farrington said to her granddaughter. "They've taken pity on a lonely old



The two young people smiled politely.

woman and let her reminisce to her heart's content."

Sherry smiled and held out her hand. "I've heard a lot about you both," she said. "I saw you ride at the Fair. Congratulations!"

"There's the bugle"—Madame Farrington's voice was eager as a child's. "Give me your arm, young man. Help me up the steps. I don't want to miss a word of this trial. Take me up near the front so I won't miss a single trick!"

When Lark and Galt, deep in conversation with Madame Farrington, entered the court room, Minnie nodded with satisfaction.

"My young protagers got class," she commented to her neighbor whose fried chicken and home-brewed ale she had been sharing. "See they're already been took up by the grandest old lady in the county, wouldn't surprise me none if she axed 'em to lead the next ball she held."

Minnie said, "Hush, now. Things is about to get going," as Judge Tavner rapped with his gavel to quiet the general hubbub. Presently the formalities were completed, and the two lawyers who were to have charge of the case of Dawes versus Shannon and Withe took over.

Plascutt was called on and stated that he considered the thoroughbred horse, Lancer, to be without doubt his property since he was in possession of a document from Jarrod Terraine deeding Greatways and all his property, real and personal, tangible and intangible, enumerated and unenumerated, to him.

Lark's lawyer interrupted to ask if Mr. Dawes had claimed the very clothes on the backs of his old friend, Mr. Terraine, and his daughter, Mistress Dana?

"I am a reasonable person," Plascutt stated with an air of offended dignity, "and would not consider forcing such a claim. I allowed the Terraines to keep all small family effects, traveling clothes, a trunk of heirlooms, and certain inherited portraits. I considered that I acted generously as well as justly in this."

A murmur of "for shame" went round the court room and Plascutt, Junior, blushed and shifted uncomfortably in his chair beside his mother who looked straight ahead with her nose in the air.

Minnie said, "Judge, could that document be examined by anybody, me, for instance?"

"Why, yes, I suppose so. It is properly a public exhibit."

Plascutt produced it with some reluctance, and it was handed down the line.

Minnie said, "Squire's writin' looks mighty shaky here, a whole lot shakier than on a piece I've got receiptin' the transfer of a couple

of acres from him to me that same week. D'ye s'pose Mr. Dawes could of made Squire drunk afore he signed this here, Judge Tavner? There was talk goin' round he filled him up afore he provoked him into agreein' to the substitute race."

"Objection!" Plascutt's lawyer yelled.

"Objection sustained," Judge Tavner ruled, with a twinkle in his eye. He knew that Minnie had already made her point with the jury.

Lark was called to the stand next and established the identity of the horse. She told how she had been familiar with him on the boat before the storm and recognized him at once when she had found him in the quicksands on Ghost Island.

She was excused from the stand and Galt took her place. He stated that the horse had left the island with the ponies and returned to it from time to time. He said that he had seen the handbill offering a reward for its capture and return to Squire Terraine, and that he and Lark had, after a good deal of difficulty, managed to secure the horse and to hide him with the eventual plan of taking him to shore and returning him to his owner.

"When you found his ownership had changed hands, why did you not give him at once to Mr. Dawes?" Plascutt's lawyer demanded. "You and your companion were clearly evading the law by harboring property which did not belong to you."

"Here, here, now!" Minnie heaved herself to her feet. "Judge, I've got a word or so to add to this case. Any time a long-nosed, thin-shanked slyster begins to sling mud about Minnie Buxtree's friends—"

"Whether or not these young people happen to be friends of yours has no bearing whatsoever on the case, Miss Buxtree," the judge said severely.

"Don't call me Miss Buxtree," Minnie said serenely, "or I'll think you don't like me. I'm Minnie to my friends and admirers, and there're plenty of them in this here court room."

She let her eyes wander slowly over the room, pausing for a moment on several prominent masculine figures, as the judge, on whom her gaze lingered for an appreciable moment, said hurriedly.

"Well, Minnie, I guess we've all known you for a good many years. You have a reputation for . . ." (he paused for a second to check his words carefully) "loyalty and good sense. If you choose to take the stand and tell us what you know about this affair, the court will listen to you. You were a passenger aboard the Tempora, I believe, and doubtless befriended the young lady who, I understand, was crossing by herself which is a somewhat unusual procedure."

Minnie swished her silken petticoats through the crowded aisle and hauled herself onto the platform with the greatest of pleasure. It was obvious to the crowd that she was in her element now as the center of attention.

She bowed to Judge Tavner, to the two lawyers, and to the court room in general, settled her flounces and began. "Judge," she said, "Ladies and Gents. I have a word to speak as character witness for this young couple. Galt Withe was named as codefendant. Now what that means I don't know, no more than most of you do; but I don't like the sound of the word. No decent man would want to have it tagged to him, and he's decent, hard-working and self-respecting. You can tell that by the looks of him."

She pointed to Galt who blushed furiously and looked self-conscious and uncomfortable.

"Him, and this gal here, did everything within reason, and beyond it, to return the horse to its rightful owner, and when they found he'd removed himself across the mountains, they carried out his expressed desire in racing the horse against that fish-horse, Thunder Boy."

"Just a moment, Miss Buxtree," Plascutt's lawyer interrupted. "You say 'expressed desire.' Just what do you mean by that term?"

"I mean I heard the first bet talked about and entered into on that old tub of a Tempora," Minnie said with great satisfaction. "I'd gone down to the hold for a bit of a private chat with my feller Dan, and, not finding him there I stayed to hear the argument between the two gents as you would have done yourself. My two ears wuz aflapping and I heard every word said Mr. Dawes wuz mad as a hornet and Squire was a-shouting like a bull of Basham. I could tell you all about that bet if you'd like me to."

"The bet has no bearing on this case," Plascutt was on his feet immediately. "The question the judge asked you, my good woman, was whether or not you had befriended this young woman on the boat. Was she one of your bound girls? Did you connive with her to steal the horse so that she might have money to pay you back for the passage you had advanced to her. I recall seeing her in the horse's stall, chatting familiarly with one of the common grooms. Possibly all of you were working on a plan to steal the horse from Terraine when the boat landed. The storm and shipwreck played into your hands very nicely and presented the opportunity you may have been looking for."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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Bishop Learns Swearing And Pumping Has Meaning

In the old days of sailing ships, a bishop was crossing to America. The vocabulary of sailors has always been a lurid one, and the swearing habits of the crew hurt the good bishop deeply, writes W. J. Brown in "So Far . . ." One night at his prayers, he was interrupted by a burst of profanity of more than ordinary color and intensity, and was moved to complain to the captain.

The captain replied: "Bishop, you may not know it, but this ship has sprung a leak. Those men you can hear swearing are at the pumps. While they're pumping and swearing you can reckon you're all right! But if they stop pumping and start praying you can reckon it's all up!"

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