

Volunteer Farmerettes Jean Wolley (left) and Alice Blake start chores at 6 A. M.

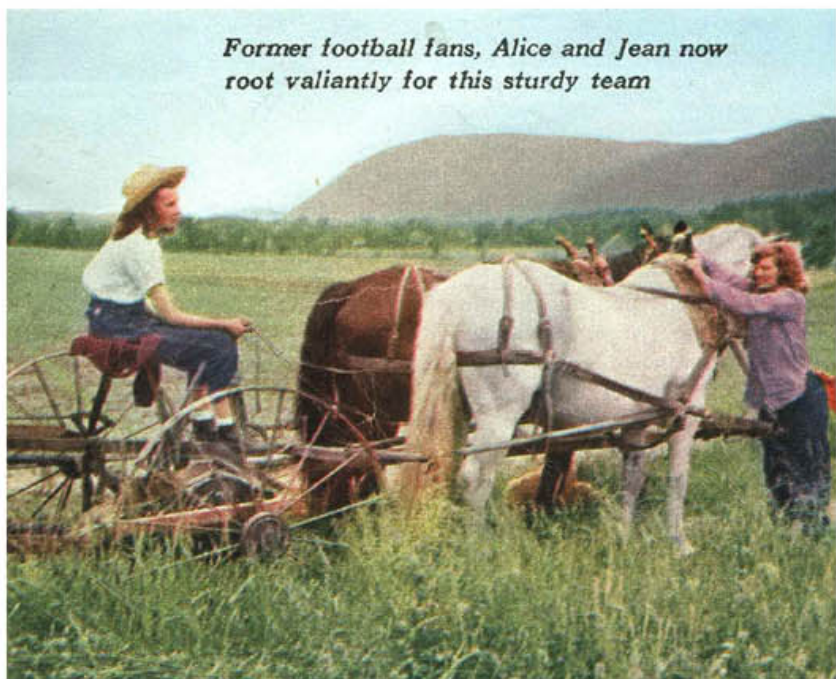


Making hay for Uncle Sam



Blisters bloomed the first week Alice and Jean pitched hay, but that didn't stop the gals

Former football fans, Alice and Jean now root valiantly for this sturdy team



Farmer Pearson, Middlebury, Vt., leaves light chores like weeding for Jean, Alice, and Mrs. Pearson



THOUSANDS of teen-aged youths across the nation are leaving their city homes to go down on the farm. It's the biggest back-to-the-land movement in American history, and it plays a vital role in our war effort by helping keep Uncle Sam's breadbasket full. Every city kid who takes a turn at pitching hay or milking cows replaces one farm hand who is wearing a uniform in Australia, or Iceland, or Ireland.

We chose a pair of city-bred girls as typical of their countless sisters and brothers who've exchanged concrete pavements for clover fields. They're both 18 years old—Jean Wolley, a freshman at Pembroke College, Providence, R. I., and Alice Blake, of Newton, Mass. In June they signed up with the New York office of the Volunteer Land Corps, headed by Columnist Dorothy Thompson and backed, among others, by Authors Stuart Chase and Louis Bromfield. Said Jean to the Land Corps interviewer, "I've been restless ever since Pearl Harbor. If I'd been a boy, I'd have gone straight into the Army." Said Alice, "My boyfriend is in service already. I'll work on a farm to help feed him."

Previously both Jean and Alice had limited their farming to cultivating window boxes and back-yard garden patches. But they were promptly hired at \$21 a month, plus "keep," to do light chores and help the two remaining hired men on Keith Pearson's 205-acre dairy farm near Middlebury, Vt. Up at sunrise, they handle pitchforks, scythes, harnesses, split wood, clean manure cellars, tumble hay, drive a team, hoe gardens, can fruit and vegetables. Farmer Pearson is lucky they aren't too proud to ask questions. That avoids boners. On a near-by farm, two volunteers decided to clean a furnace on their own, ended up by heaving live coals onto a wooden cart.

Volunteer Land Corps started out servicing New England farms, planned soon to help similar organizations service farms throughout the nation. American youths, significantly, aren't regimented or drafted into Nazi-style labor battalions. Our farmers and farmerettes are strictly volunteers. Sole requirements for volunteers are that boys be 16 or over, girls 18 or over; both must be husky, healthy, and willing. One worried mother asked if her boy would have supervised play periods. When Junior got to work he found that after a day on the farm nothing looks so good as bed.

P.S. Just before going to press, we had a note from Alice Blake. Said she was so enthusiastic about farming that she planned to enter Massachusetts Agricultural College this autumn.

MAKING HAY



With Mrs. Pearson, Alice, ex-jitterbug, gets hot on KP duty



Alice, the Pearsons, and Jean are served vittles by Helen Robertson, N. Y. volunteer Alice and Jean find time to knock off work for a dip in the old swimmin' hole



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(continued)

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THE NATIONAL PICTURE MONTHLY

September, 1943: p. 4

Land Army Makes War On Hunger

**60,000 city women must don denim
to help meet record food goal**

With many of the experienced farm hands in the armed forces or already migrated to better-publicized defense jobs, the average American farmer is finding life down on the farm tough ploughing. In every case he's working desperately to overcome the critical labor shortage while attempting to comply with the government request for maximum food output in '43.

Farm operators are fast turning to urban folk for seasonal and year-round assistance since this year's goal requires 38 per cent more food than was produced during the 1935-'39 period. To meet this ever-increasing need, the Department of Agriculture recently organized the U. S. Crops Corps, in an effort to sign up every available volunteer: man, woman, boy and girl. One of its units, the Women's Land Army, is currently campaigning for 60,000 town and city women—50,000 for part-time chores; 10,000 for full-year work.

These farmer aides are transported with government help for work on dairy, poultry and truck farms and receive wages comparable to the prevailing local rate. By harvesting, grading, and packing produce; feeding and caring for livestock; and driving tractors, cultivators, plows and hay loaders, girls in the WLA will help U. S. farmers raise the nation's biggest food crop.

Prior to hiring out female farmer aides, the Women's Land Army puts recruits through an intensive three to six week training period. Photographed at a typical instruction center—the State Institute of Applied Agriculture in Farmingdale, New York—the women pictured here prove that girls who hail from desk jobs in metropolitan areas can tackle farm chores successfully.

That inexperienced urbanites with perseverance and good health can be trained as valuable farm helpers was actually determined last year. The entire McIntosh apple crop of Connecticut was saved by a crew of volunteer pickers from cities, schools and factories. And the potato harvest in Baldwin County, Alabama, was similarly kept from rotting in the field. According to a U. S. Department of Agriculture bulletin on the subject:

"It's a story of bankers pulling beets, of schools, stores and big business closed for farm work, of a preacher leading a group of 40 boys in the field, of farmers pooling labor and equipment and of Victory Farm Work days for every able-bodied city person."



ROOKIE REUBENS FINDS MANAGING A TEAM ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT CHORES ON A FARM. WORKING IN PAIRS MAKES CULTIVATING EASIER AT THE BEGINNING

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Land Army

Now, as then, it's a story of country-city cooperation, of patriotic people helping to feed their neighbors and themselves. To show the non-rural group of CLICK's feminine readers what getting down to earth means, our photographer visited the Women's Land Army. If after looking at these pictures you're eager to join up and are 18 years or more, the WLA urges you contact your county agricultural agent, U. S. Employment Center, or local OCD.



TENDING A FLOCK OF SHEEP TAKES AN EXPERIENCED HAND BUT CATHIE HARRISON, 19 YEAR OLD WLA WORKER CLAIMS IT'S LOTS SIMPLER THAN FEEDING THE HOGS



WHEN A TRACTOR STALLS, land army women must do their own emergency repairs. Trained to service heavy farm machinery, these feminine farm helpers are excellent for work requiring manipulative speed and finger dexterity. They are proving themselves well-fitted for almost any man-sized farm job.



SPLITTING LOGS HELPS TOUGHEN HANDS unaccustomed to strenuous work. WLA recruits find this necessary build-up makes milking cows by hand much easier. A recent analysis of the assets of women in application to agriculture reveals that female accuracy and patience are a boon to chores on a farm.



ON A POULTRY FARM a new worker can learn many routine tasks such as feeding birds and caring for the brooders and incubators above.

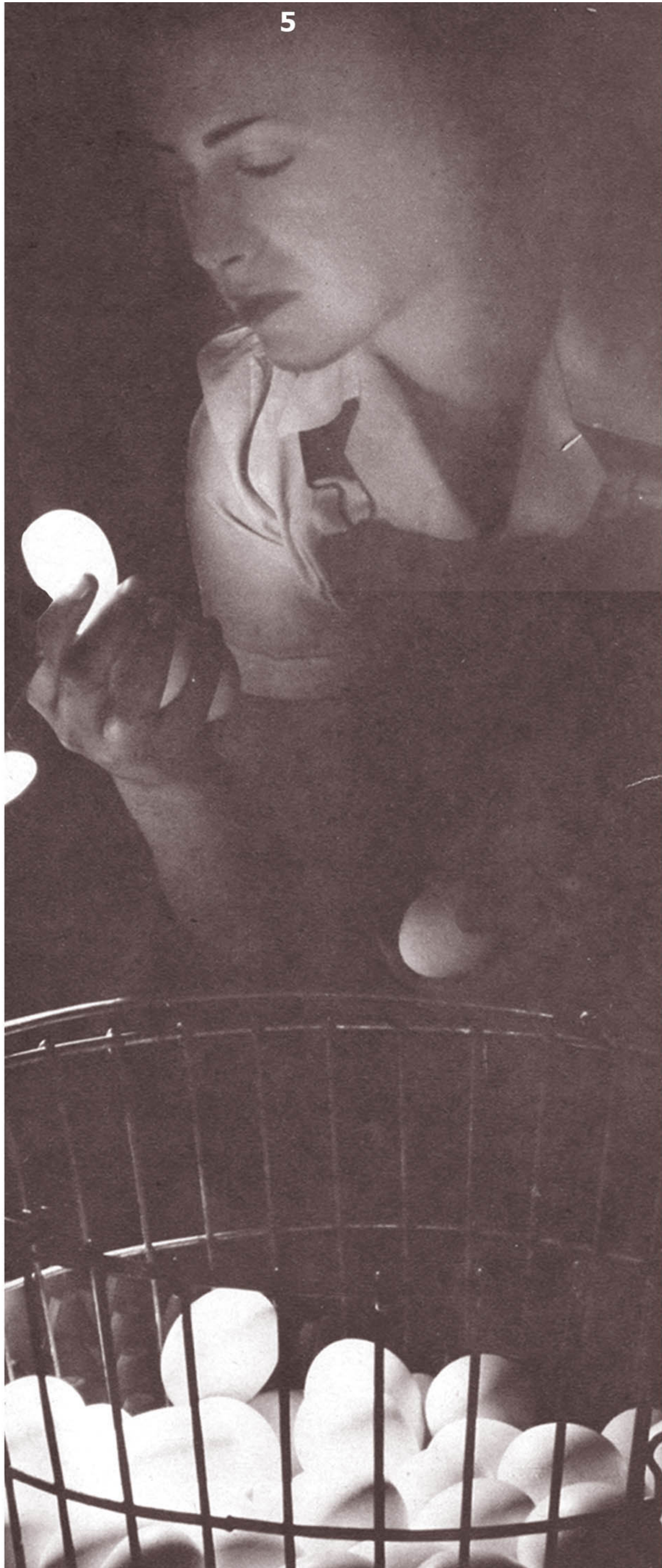


MIXING FEED FOR THE ANIMALS is gruelling work. Putting aside feminine egos while on the job, farmer aides must wallow in swine pens, run manure spreaders, curry beasts, clean troughs and whitewash barns. Long fingernails are cut short but girls usually insist on polish.



AFRAID TO FEED ANIMALS AT FIRST, CITY GIRLS SOON LOSE SQUEAMISHNESS; APPROACH BEASTS READILY

CONTINUED



RIGHT: CANDLING, crating and grading eggs requires the delicacy and conscientious effort that the frailest girls can do well.

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DAIRY DUTIES BEGIN AT 4:30 every morning. After cows are milked (either by hand or machine) farmer aides weigh and record pound-age per animal. Milk is then poured through a strainer, as below, and kept in huge cans until ready for the pasteurizer in background.

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