CHAPTER IV
TYPES OF WAR GARDENS
How Different People Planned to Plant and Win the War

ON plaster and ash-filled ground only a few feet above the rumbling subway in New York City was a war garden. From this little vegetable plot in Bryant Park, where land is valued at something like $20,000 a square foot, to the tiny garden along the railroad right of way near the tops of the White Mountains, is a far, far cry. Yet both spots had their war gardens. The one in Bryant Park was a demonstration garden, started solely for educational purposes. Here representatives of the National War Garden Commission preached the gospel of gardening and freely gave helpful advice and garden primers to passing inquirers. On the other hand the tiny garden on the cloud-capped slope of the White Mountains was wholly utilitarian. A patriotic hand had planted it, and loving fingers tended it, in the hope that it would bring forth, perhaps, a few dollars' worth of food; in the belief that its product would lessen, though ever so little, the pressure on our commercial food supplies, from which alone our allies could draw sustenance.

The same spirit of helpfulness, of readiness to "do one's bit" animated countless other Americans. So the war garden was found in tiny clearings beside the
logging camps of Louisiana, in irrigated plots among the arid sands of New Mexico, in the rugged iron lands of Minnesota, and on the open, fertile stretches of the Middle West. Even the lighthouse-keeper at Santa Cruz, California, planted a little garden under the shadow of his protecting shaft. From coast to coast, and from lake to gulf, little areas that had been barren as the desert suddenly blossomed like the rose. Behind each of these innumerable gardens was a heart animated by the desire to serve God and country.

When the National War Garden Commission sent forth the slogan "Plan to Plant and Win the War," the majority of gardens started in response were of the individual type. Like stars in a mighty flag, they dotted the rolling landscape from ocean to ocean. There were few town and village homes that did not have some space available for war gardening. Even in densely populated cities, a goodly proportion of the inhabi-
tants each had at command at least a few square feet that could be cultivated. And urban dwellers by the hundred thousands found vacant lots near their homes which could be utilized for food production. This great host of individuals, each working like his fellows for a common purpose, carried on what, in the aggregate, was a vast farming operation.

In no previous war did women play so great a part as they did in the world war. Not only did hosts of them make munitions in factories, but other hosts joined the men in the production of that other sort of munitions—the kind that grows in gardens. With the women who served as nurses, ambulance drivers, canteen helpers, and munition makers, should also be ranked the women gardeners. In thousands of instances women gardeners cultivated entirely, even to the extent of doing the digging, the home food plot, while in thousands of other instances they shared with the men the task of caring for the war gardens.

Thousands of letters have come to the National War Garden Commission from women gardeners. In order that the fine service rendered by such women may not be forgotten, some of these communications are included in this record. A letter from Mrs. T. J. Ulery,
of Seattle, Washington, whose husband wore his country's uniform, well shows the spirit that animated these women gardeners:

"Thanks for the war vegetable gardening booklet you sent me in the spring," she says. "My husband is in the navy and I have two small babies, but that did not keep me from raising a garden. We have a plot fifty by two hundred feet, and every inch is in something. I wish you could see it. I weigh ninety-eight pounds but I am going to do my bit. Now I wish you would send me your home canning and drying book."

From Mrs. G. P. Dutcher, of Arlington, Massachusetts, came this other typical communication: "I was seventy-eight years old on March thirty-first. I expect to raise what beans I need for a family of three for the next year. I did it last year and did all my own planting."

We see the significance and worth of this woman's service when we realize that a day's rations for one million United States soldiers includes 75,000 pounds of beans, and that we raised an army of approximately four million men! This enormous demand for beans had to be met from commercial supplies that could be increased, because of labor shortage, only slightly above the pre-war production. So we had the army
A patriotic and healthful way of spending their vacation was discovered by this group of school teachers and office workers who early in the summer of 1918 went up to northern New Hampshire and raised vegetables to supply the table of a large summer hotel, "The Balsams," at Dixville Notch. This shows them in front of the comfortable cottage which they occupied. Their three-acre "war garden" was close by. They alternated by twos as housekeepers.
bidding against the civilian population, with the resultant tremendous increase in price. Assuredly this old lady was doing her share toward remedying the situation. And that is exactly what was done by the cultivator of every war garden.

Few of the women gardeners had reached their allotted three score years and ten. Most of our women gardeners were younger, and among these younger women soldiers of the soil none performed a more interesting or valuable service than the eight school teachers and office workers who ventured, like the pioneers of old, into a new country, blazing the way for those who should come after them. Their chosen field of garden effort was the raising of vegetables for a summer hotel.

Up at the Dixville Notch, in the White Mountains in northern New Hampshire, is a magnificent summer hotel, The Balsams. It was customary to ship in from a considerable distance the bulk of its vegetable supply.
Last summer the eight young women referred to cultivated a three-acre garden at Dixville Notch, on the property of the hotel corporation. They lived in one of the company's attractive little houses which looks out over a great expanse of country. From Brooklyn, New York, Lakewood, New Jersey, Rockland, Maine, and Keene, New Hampshire, came these young women farmers. They were farmers in more than name; for in addition to cultivating their large vegetable garden, they found time to assist the neighboring men farmers in making hay, cultivating potatoes, and performing other farm labor.

The desire to serve, not the wish to have a good time, led these young women to engage in this work; and so successfully did they perform their tasks that the hotel management promptly arranged to continue and expand the work in future years. Thus, in addition to upbuilding themselves physically in the most gratify-
ing way, these young women opened the way for others of their sex to perform service at once essential and useful. How useful may be judged when we realize that but for their work it would have been necessary to haul hundreds of bushels of garden-stuff long distances over the steep mountain grades. The car-space and fuel thus saved were applied to the hauling of shells and cannon and other supplies that our soldiers so much needed. If "they also serve who only stand and wait," how much greater is the service of those who labor while they wait.

Since the labor of these young women marks a new phase of food production, in this country, a phase that is certain to appeal more and more to tired school teachers, clerks, and other indoor workers, it may not be amiss to tell in detail of the life of these girls at Dixville Notch.

Their home was in a cozy little cottage, from the windows of which one could look off in any direction on most beautiful mountain scenery. It was situated only a few miles south of the Canadian border, in a region whose towering mountains are pine-clad and gemmed with clear, cool lakes and embroidered with foaming mountain brooks. The girls received regular monthly wages from the hotel, but provided their own
meals, with the privilege, however, of purchasing supplies from the hotel at favorable rates. Two at a time they kept house, while the other six looked after the gardens. None of these girls had had any previous experience worth mentioning in the cultivation of the soil. Yet they made very rapid progress in the art of gardening.

Their success was undoubtedly due to the fact that they stuck to a few staple crops and did not attempt too diversified gardening. They raised peas, lettuce, radishes, carrots, beans, and other common vegetables. Upon beginning their work they received instructions from the hotel farmer, Henry Bemis, who looks after some of the larger tracts of land owned by the hotel management, which are given over almost exclusively to the raising of hay for the dairies. Such instruction was not long necessary, however, as the young women farmers speedily acquired considerable skill.

Even gardening and haying did not occupy all their time. One rainy day, when no gardening could be done they went to a neighboring farm where there were several thousand bushels of potatoes which had begun to sprout. The visitors started “sprouting” with a will and at the end of the day had averaged twenty-five bushels each. They were told that ten bushels had
AN ARMY GARDEN AT THE RED CROSS THRESHOLD

The Camp Dix soldiers carried their farming operations to the very door of Red Cross headquarters. In this picture Major General Scott, Camp Commander, (near center awning) is inspecting the work of cultivation as conducted by Lieutenant John F. Bonner, farm officer, (at extreme left). General Scott took a deep interest in the Camp Dix war garden.
always been regarded as a fair day's "sprout." They continued at this task until the entire lot of potatoes was finished. Then they assisted other farmers whose potatoes were sprouting; for labor had become as scarce on New Hampshire farms as it was on farms everywhere else.

Thus these women not only blazed a trail for their sisters, but proved what thousands of other women are proving in industry—that woman not only is not an inferior workman, but that her nervous make-up enables her to work faster than man. These women gardeners did their share in the fight for freedom—not merely that political equality for which men and women struggled on the fields of Europe, but that greater freedom, human equality. Even to that cause has the war garden contributed materially.

If the work of these young women proved anything, it was that in union there is strength. The strength that comes from union it was found advantageous to utilize in many another
war garden, by operating it on the community plan. Instead of allowing each gardener to till his own land, it was better, where possible, to have a large area properly plowed and harrowed and then allow the gardener to care for his individual plot. The advantages of such community action proved great. The land was uniformly and properly prepared and at small expense. Community gardening made for both better gardens and better communities, for the spirit of emulation at once led each gardener to do his best, while common toil for a common end made for better understanding and better acquaintanceship; and sympathetic understanding is the rock upon which democracy is founded.

Much of the gardening done by employés of factories and business houses was of the community sort. Unused tracts of land lying near mill or shop, and not needed for business purposes, were divided among employés for gardening, after being properly plowed and
A PRIZE-WINNING GARDEN

First award was given to this vegetable plot in the contest among the six hundred war gardeners of the Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, New York. Condition of plants, orderly arrangement and cultivation shown were among the factors considered in judging the merits of the various gardens.
harrowed. Often it happened that the land available would not accommodate all the men applying for plots, and in such cases employers frequently leased additional near-by lands and turned them over to their employés. The mutual interests so engendered created a more friendly feeling of coöperation not only among the men themselves, but also between the management and the employés. This was particularly true where, as happened in many cases, the heads of large concerns became fellow-gardeners with their employés. Burns has told us the secret of democracy in a single sentence: "A man’s a man for a’ that!" When men get together and work together for a common end, they learn the fundamental lesson of democracy. Thus the community war gardening which sprang up in so many parts of the land accomplished more, far more, than the production of so much provender, useful as that strictly utilitarian end undoubtedly was. Unquestionably, community gardening will continue. It will be the peace-time descendant of the war garden.