

Old, Lonely Negro Woman Is Refused Home Relief

Family Broken Up, She Can't Get Aid Because She Hasn't Birth Records; Lives Alone and Begs on Streets to Live

By Angelo Herndon

"Lord knows, if I don't need home relief, nobody does. I ain't had a cent of my own since I've been in New York."

In this simple and quaint little statement is a story filled with years of human suffering and mental worry. It is the story of how Mrs. Texas Griffin, 68-year-old Negro mother, has fared since she came to New York nine years ago from Charleston, South Carolina.

Mrs. Griffin lives at 12 W. 117th St. in a small room that cost \$3.50 a week. She has six children living in New York, but none of them are able to help her. They are all on relief.

Up until a year ago she got aid from the Welfare Department, but was dropped because the son she had been living with also had to apply for public assistance.

For a long time she lived with one son and then another until the situation in her family became so critical that she had to move out.

FAMILY BREAKS UP

As would be expected, violent arguments developed over the distribution of the inadequate relief funds, which made it necessary for Mrs. Griffin to ask for aid herself.

It takes a lot of time, energy and courage to break through the red tape and technicalities behind which some relief officials like to hide, even when a human life is at stake. But Mrs. Griffin, with a bad leg, withstood this pressure for more than a year.

"Sometimes I wanted to kill myself or do anything to get out of my misery and suffering," she said as a flood of tears began pouring down her hunger-drawn cheeks. She crouched up in a chair and started off in a monotone:

"I didn't mean to hurt my children. The home relief told me to sue them for non-support. I thought they tell the people what's

right. They broke up my family and now some of the children won't speak to me."

The Family Court dismissed the case against the children that she took to court. The judge sent a letter to relief officials requesting them to do something for Mrs. Griffin. The request from the judge has been ignored as well as similar requests from the Workers Alliance and other interested groups.

HAS TO BEG IN STREETS

The Alliance reports that it has filed at least a dozen applications for Mrs. Griffin with the relief heads and that all of them have been rejected as promptly as they have been filed.

A. N. Stanton, head of the department of intake at the West 124th Street station, explained that Mrs. Griffin had made the remark that she would like to have some cash to spend for herself. Who wouldn't? The little blue cards tucked away neatly in his files give this as the reason for denying relief to the aged mother. And the down town office claims that Mrs. Griffin is getting aid from one of her sons. But no evidence of any kind of aid could be found when I visited her home. She begs for money, food and clothing on the streets of Harlem.

Mrs. Griffin charges relief officials with being cruel and cold blooded in their treatment of her. She said they told her to make out as many applications as she wished, she would never get relief until she

decided to go back and live with one of her children.

"But they have broken up my family and turned my children against me. Now what do they want me to do—kill myself from worry? Well, before I do that, I'll write President Roosevelt and tell him how they treat me. He won't let me die, I know."

Being shunted around from pillar to post and forced to beg on the streets, Mrs. Griffin sought another way out of this involved rigmarole.

She made an application for Old Age Assistance under the Social Security Act, but because all Southern states do not keep a record of births she could not prove her age and citizenship. She was informed by Miss Julia M. Cassidy, Administrative Supervisor for Old Age Assistance, that nothing could be done until such information were available.

She Broke the GL



Master of Soviet glider-sport E. Zelenkova watch the take-off at in a flight that saw both Zelenkova and Kirpikova set national women's record.