

March 2, 1936

Miss Virginia A. Swaty,
725 Euclid Ave.,
Syracuse, N.Y.

Dear Miss Swaty:

I am very interested in learning from your letter of February 26 that you have completed a course in civil engineering and are getting ready to embark upon the task of using your training.

You ask what I think about a woman's chance in this so-called man's profession and what I consider the best way to enter the field. Before I try to answer this, I suggest that you read the chapter on Civil Engineering which I prepared for "An Outline of Careers for Women," which was edited by Doris E. Flieschman and published by Doubleday Doran. You will find some of the answers to your questions.

I might warn you that I am very radical on the subject! I think that women should enter the field of civil engineering and advance in it through their ability and without benefit of ballyhoo. Due to the fact that so few women enter the field, the ballyhoo is easier to get sometimes than to avoid. A slower start means a much more promising future. So much for philosophy.

As to the practical means of getting your first job, that is a more immediate and interesting subject. I started out with the theory that secretarial training-- shorthand, typing and bookkeeping-- would be an excellent wedge. I found it so and if I were starting out again I would add that equipment to my engineering training. A secretarial position with a fine engineer offers advantages in the way of apprenticeship and further training that are unexcelled. Depending upon the size of the office and the volume of stenographic work, there might even be time to keep your hand in on some of the drawing, cost estimating and designing.

Your field, particularly sewage disposal, is one of the most promising branches of civil engineering for its immediate outlook.

Miss Jane Rider who is also an associate member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, is a bacteriologist and was director of the laboratory for the State Health Department in Arizona. She performed the duties

Michigan Society of Women Engineers and Architects Records, Box 1 Folder 5, Folio Part 6, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

Miss Virginia A. Swaty-- 2

March 2, 1936

of the state sanitary engineer for that state. She is very able and might have more practical suggestions than I would have for entering the sanitary engineering field.

Sanitary engineering is the department of civil engineering in which the consulting engineer has the strongest position, and you might find that experience in a consulting engineer's office would be very valuable to you.

I shall be very interested in hearing from you how you get along and if at any time I can be of assistance, I shall be glad to hear from you.

Sincerely yours,

Elsie Eaves
Manager, Business News Department

ENR.VV

February 4, 1936

Miss Mary Esther Poorman,
1001 North Dearborn,
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Miss Poorman:

I was disappointed when in Chicago that the weather had things tied up so badly. I spent the whole morning waiting around just to make sure that I would get to see the man I had come especially to see. I had hoped to see him early and then have time to come over and call on you or arrange for luncheon with you and possibly Betty Ketchum. Perhaps I'll have better luck next time I come to Chicago.

I appreciate your letter and am interested in knowing that you are able to keep in touch with your technical work.

I had a call this week from a friend who is looking for a girl who has had engineering training and who possibly could translate technical German. The job is a librarian's job with the Western Electric Company and he wants the combination of library training or experience with the technical training. It would pay \$30 to \$35 a week, but I doubt whether it would be a good stepping stone.

If you are at all interested, let me know and I will send you the name of the man to write, or perhaps I had better send that on and you can write to him direct if you want more information:

Mr. I. M. Baker,
Western Electric Company,
Kearney, N.J.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Elsie Eaves
Manager, Business News Department

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American Society of Mechanical Engineers and Architects Records, Box 1, Folder 5, Folder Part 5, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

March 25, 1935

Miss Meredith E. Thoms,
3100 R Street,
Lincoln, Neb.

Dear Miss Thoms:

I am very interested in your letter of March 19 and shall be glad to offer any suggestions that I can which may help you in locating employment of the type you seek.

You have an extremely interesting experience record and should be able to create a very interesting job for yourself in the work that is going ahead.

It is a little difficult to advise on a specific method of going after a job without knowing what your requirements are. How much stability do you have to have in a job? Do you wish to use a job as secretary to an engineer or a contractor as a springboard into a position where you can make direct use of your engineering training? Do you read the engineering magazines so that you know what is going on in the engineering profession at all times? Do you want to stay in the field of engineering concerned with the utilization and conservation of water? You see it is necessary to describe fairly definitely what you want before you can develop plans for going after it.

Let me know what you really want to do most and I shall be glad to give you an opinion on how practical I think it may be and what would seem to be a practical method of going after that kind of a job.

Sincerely yours,

Elsie Eaves
Director of Market Surveys.

ENR-SLB

Wayne State University, Reuther Library, Folder 5, Part 5, Folder 5, Box 1, Records and Architects, Engineers and

3100 R Street,
Lincoln, Nebraska,
March 19, 1935.

Miss Elsie Eaves,
Director of Market Surveys,
Engineering News-Record,
330 West 42nd Street,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Miss Eaves:

Professor H. J. Kesner of the University of Nebraska suggested that I write to you for advice.

On the enclosed sheet you will find a brief record of my education and employment. I majored in structural engineering while in school, but since then have worked principally on irrigation and water power projects. I am now employed as a secretary at the University of Nebraska, but there is no chance for advancement.

I am anxious to obtain a secretarial position with an engineering or contracting firm. I appreciate that it is difficult to secure such work now, but I do think that my education should give me an advantage that the average secretary does not have.

Will you please advise me how to contact firms with which I might secure such employment? Any suggestions you may offer will be greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Meredith E. Thoms
(Miss) Meredith E. Thoms.

CA Betts, 1111 Interior Bldg, Wash DC
Prof Thorndike Saville, New York Univ NYC.

Wm Egan

April 28, 1938

Miss Virginia A. Swaty,
Sherwood Drive,
Westmoreland Heights,
Beardon, Tenn.

Dear Miss Swaty:

I am pleased to hear from you again and to know what you have been doing since you left Syracuse.

I shall be very glad to refer your letter to Mr. Schmitt, editor of Engineering News-Record, but I can forecast his answer now and what it will be until the advertising pages in Engineering News-Record are much more numerous than they are currently.

The American Society of Civil Engineers has recently had a change of staff on the publication "Civil Engineering," and while I imagine that their answer will be the same as the one I have just given, namely, no staff additions until the advertising volume is up, you could write to Mr. Sydney Wilmot, Manager of Publications, American Society of Civil Engineers, 33 West 39th St., New York, N.Y.

If you have been watching the construction report pages of Engineering News-Record you have seen that there is a lot of work opening up, particularly in highway construction, sewage disposal, buildings, both public building and housing.

I have no special personal knowledge of possible openings. I would have to go at the problem by studying the reports of active work and running down those that appealed to me. That, plus getting out as many lines as possible through professional acquaintances and associates.

I shall be very interested in how you succeed in this and shall be very glad to keep you in mind so that I can write you should I get information that would be particularly interesting to you.

Sincerely yours,

Elsie Hayes
Manager, Business News Department

ENR.VV

Lincoln, Nebraska,
March 10, 1937.

Miss Elsie Eaves,
Engineering News-Record,
330 West 42nd St.,
New York City.

Dear Miss Eaves:

So Here We Are! Back in Nebraska, right where we started.

Before leaving New York, I called Mr. Nussbaumer in Buffalo, who told me that conditions had changed since I had first talked to him and that he could offer me work for only a month. It seemed to me that it was scarcely worth while to go there for so short a time, so Mother and I went on with our journey as planned.

A stop in Philadelphia and a visit to Mr. Justin there put in in touch with a company there that wants a steno. with an engineer's education, to be paid as stenographer. There was no vacancy then, but one was expected within a couple of months. They told me I would have a chance to work into technical writing if I proved capable. It sounded rather good, except for the salary.

No prospects in Wilmington, Washington, or any of the other places. But, oh, what a lovely trip we had. It seems months since we started. Both Mother and I want you to know how much we appreciated all that you did for us.

I am sending a "Position Wanted" ad. to the Engineering News-Record today, and hope that it will bring some replies.

Sincerely yours,

Meredith Thomas

3100 R Street,
Lincoln, Nebraska.

November 25, 1938

Miss Meredith Thoms,
1618 - 12th Ave.,
Seattle, Wash.

Dear Miss Thoms:

I was delighted to hear from you and to know where you are. Your experiences in Washington sound very interesting and will all add up and be very helpful even though they are not immediately engineering experience. Don't get permanently sidetracked, though, for I am sure you will get a great deal of pleasure out of staying in engineering work and building on your fine training and experience.

The Boeing Aircraft plant must be very interesting. My boat for two years has been in the bay from which all the trans-Atlantic test flights were made and where they ended. This summer we had a procession of planes, including the pick-a-back plane and the big French Lieutenant du Voisseau de Paris which was so large that the Bermuda Clipper looked small nestled under its wing.

I visited the Carlins this fall and played with their very handsome 18-month old son. They will be very glad to hear from you and I am sure that they will wish you the same success that I do in making satisfactory professional connections on the Pacific Coast.

Please remember me most kindly to your mother.

Sincerely,

Elsie Hayes
Manager, Business News Department

EMR VV

November 10, 1938

Miss Jane Hall,
501 West 11th,
Rolla, Mo.

Dear Miss Hall:

In reply to your letter of October 31, I am very glad to answer your inquiries about my early interest in engineering.

As a child I grew up and went to school in Idaho Springs, Colo. where I exhibited an aptitude for mathematics which was a little better than the average for the small high school in that mining town in the Rocky Mountains. Walter Funk who was a mining engineer there, had me do some work for him computing intersections and areas for mining surveys in connection with applying for claim patents. I enjoyed the work very much and decided I would like to go on with engineering. The School of Mines at Golden is not co-educational so my family insisted on the State University where I studied civil engineering as being the nearest to mining engineering that I could get there.

I have never regretted studying engineering. I have found the associations from my work very delightful and have thoroughly enjoyed the work that has developed as a result of my training and early experience.

I never encourage a girl to study engineering, however, on the theory that if she wants to badly enough she will do it in spite of all discouragement. She needs that much determination to get along in engineering. It is slow of financial and professional attainments even for men and women still have an additional handicap of having to demonstrate their ability in competition with engineers whose ability is taken for granted.

An engineering education is a very fine training. Any student who makes the most of his opportunities while studying engineering

Miss Jane Hall-- 2

November 10, 1938

cannot help but find a useful and interesting job to do when he or she leaves college.

I wish you all kinds of success in your work and shall be interested in having you keep me posted from time to time on what you are doing and how you like it.

Sincerely yours,

Elsie Eaves
Manager, Business News Department

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American Society of Women Engineers and Architects Records, Box 1, Folder 5, Folder Part 5, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

27 Knollwood Ave.
Mamaroneck, N.Y.

Feb. 21, 1939

Dear Elsie,

If the enclosed announcement of a dinner for Council women engineers, architects, etc., interests you, would like to have you go with me on the 28th. It will be at the Barbizon which is at 63^d + Lexington. I believe that Marie Reith will be there but ^{that} there is slight possibility of Olive Dennis attending.

Will you let me know as soon as possible either by a note or by phoning Phil at Barclay 7-0820, Extension ~~115~~ 115, so that I can send in the reservation.

Many thanks for sending Miss Tom's letter. I'm returning it in case you want it for your files. Hope to see you Tuesday

Sincerely,

Dorothy Carlin

November 1, 1940

Miss Jane Hall,
208 Rolla,
Rolla, Mo.

Dear Miss Hall:

It is good to hear from you again and to know that you are sticking with the engineering work at college.

You ask whether engineering journalism or structural design or sanitary engineering offer the best opportunities for women.

I doubt if it makes much difference. You are going to have to create a place for yourself whatever you do and there are not as yet enough women in the field to have made any of these departments of the field conscious of the novelty of women in it.

Engineering journalism is limited of course as to the number of openings. It is a fascinating business and offers very interesting work. Some engineering and construction firms and a great many of the manufacturers serving the field have men on their staffs who write publicity and promotion material and in some cases that publish little house organs. These jobs are a cross between advertising and engineering journalism and offer interesting possibilities to trained people who have writing ability.

Structural design is a pretty broad term and would supply jobs in every branch of the market.

Sanitary engineering has reached a very high state of activity in the past few years, particularly in sewage disposal. Miss Jane Rider of Arizona was state sanitary engineer for a period and found that work most interesting and worthwhile. In addition to public works and consulting engineers as possible employers of a sanitary engineer, there is a growing movement by industrial companies to treat their waste products and salvage by-products.

You could tell pretty well by watching the construction reports in Engineering News-Record the kind of new work that is most active and judge from that what you would prefer to do if you could find an opening.

Miss Jane Hall-- 2

November 1, 1940

You will probably have to use imagination and intelligence in finding a job no matter which of the three fields you prefer to work in because they are all about on a par so far as being accustomed to having women apply for the jobs they offer.

Cordially yours,

Elsie Eaves, Manager
Business News Department

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American Society of Women Engineers and Architects Records, Box 10, Folder 25, Encl. Part 5, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University