

2. Mildred Keith Protests Discrimination, 1942

Mr. Thomas M. Jackson
1219 8th Street
Oakland, California

Dear Sir:

... Here is the statement of my trying to obtain employment as typist.

At present I am on W.P.A. as senior typist and have had the rating of senior typist for the past three years. I have been threatened to be taken off W.P.A. by a Miss Gale and placed in domestics as she stated I am young and able to do domestics. (She has a statement from my family physician contradicting this statement.) She further stated my classification was domestic. I showed Miss Gale my I.D. card from the employment office and my classification read typist. I was asked by her just where do I think a colored person could get a job as typist. I told her any place as we are all American citizens, and as long as the employer wasn't prejudiced like she. I was told I should try some of the colored business men in this area, surely there must be some who would need a typist. I explained to Miss Gale I didn't need a high school education and a year in college to do domestics, and as she was so interested in finding employment for me, please get me something in my classification.

On February 10, 1942, I took a civil service examination for junior typist. I passed with a rating of 85.91. After receiving my rating, I was called two places for personal interviews. One at the Naval Supply Depot in Oakland and one at the Naval Material Inspector's office in San Francisco. Both without results. I have also received two letters from the Civil Service asking if I would accept a position in Washington, D.C. I answered stating that obligations prevented me from accepting the position from home. Since then I have received nothing else from Civil Service. On May 22, 1942, I wrote the manager of the civil service asking if there was a possibility of my being placed. To date I have received no reply. I have filed applications at Fort Mason in Oakland and also at the Quartermaster's Headquarters in Oakland. Only to be told all positions were filled and I would have to be referred to them by Civil Service. I was asked if I had taken any examinations and when I showed them my rating I was told I would be placed on file.

I know for a fact girls have been placed that received a lower rating than I and some that haven't taken an examination.

I would appreciate greatly anything that can be done in aiding me to obtain employment in this status.

Respectfully yours

Mildred Keith (Mrs.)

From Mildred Keith to Thomas M. Jackson, July 23, 1942, Papers of C. R. Dellums, 72/132, Carton 25, Folder "Bay Area Committee Against Discrimination," University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.