Bookbinding

One of the first activities undertaken was the production of scrapbooks with educational and recreational materials for county and state institutions who could not afford to purchase new books and magazines during the Depression. As women became skilled, more advanced book binding was undertaken. Workers mended and rebound used books, prepared an educational series on bookbinding for schools and colleges, and even published a series of children’s books.
Workers in the bookbinding unit mended and rebound books, mounted collections of prints, and made boxes, scrapbooks and portfolios.
To provide reading material for county hospital and institutions, workers clipped carefully selected stories, illustrations, and feature articles from discarded magazines, pasted them onto sheets, and bound them into scrapbooks.
Under a separate WPA project, blind supervisors trained seeing workers to transcribe popular text into Braille. Braille pages were shellacked to preserve the transcriptions.
Milwaukee Handicraft Project workers bound a 39-volume Braille dictionary, the first of its kind, made for the Wisconsin School for the Blind.
Workers prepare an illustration page for *At the Zoo*, one of a series of children’s books published by the Project. Books were written and illustrated by Kendrick Bell and Ludwig Cinatl, young designer-foremen working on the Project.
First, second and third graders at Milwaukee State Teachers College wrote the words and music for a collection. Cinatl designed the illustrations and cover.
Educational kits were prepared for teachers showing different types of book binding for use in high school and college art classes.
See Mary Kellogg Rice, *Useful Work for Unskilled Women: A Unique Milwaukee WPA Project* (Milwaukee County Historical Society, 2003) for references and photo credits.