

# Job opportunities for women during world war ii assignment

[History](#)



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Job Opportunities for Women during World War II Abstract During World War II there were many job opportunities for women. The war opened new doors during a time of depression. As husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers went to fight in the war the women went to work at factories, offices, and even on military bases. These women went to work in paying jobs that were usually for men. Many women became journalists, photographers and broadcasters. They were covering the biggest story ever, the men that were at war and the women that were at home doing the man's work.

Women even joined the military. They were not put in front line positions but they did important jobs and many lost their lives. During the war it was not only the white women that were able to find work but the minority women were also able to. Before the war many lower class and minority women worked but they switched to higher paying jobs. The war had a huge impact on women in the work force and women in their homes. There was even an all American girl league of baseball during this time. This did not come easy though.

With women working they had to deal with changes such as daycare and getting the children to and from. They also were still the primary homemaker and had come home from work and take care of the house and the family. During this time many empowering posters with women came out. One of which is known in households today. The poster was given the name Rosie the Riveter. It was an iconic image representing women in the home front war effort with the words " We can do it! " sent a very strong message to women during the war as well as women today.

This poster was not the only one during this time period featuring pretty women. There were many posters, some encouraging women to do factory work, some encouraging women to join the military as nurses, some were for food donations or jobs like sewing. Women were getting opportunities that they did not have before the war. Before the war they were homemakers. Posters were not the only thing that influenced the women to work. Patriotism was a huge part. Women felt it was their patriotic duty to support their families while their husbands were away.

Possibly the most important thing about the job opportunities that women had during the war is that although they began working because the men were at war they learned new skills, and learned that there was more to life than being a homemaker. Although after the war many women were laid off or forced into lower paying positions the women joining the work force during the World War II paved the future for all women. World War II was from 1939-1945. The war had a huge impact on women and families. While the husbands, fathers, sons and brothers went off to fight in the war they left women back to take care of the home front.

Since there were not as many men to work, the women stepped up to the plate and began doing jobs that were previously seen as men's jobs. Although some women worked before the WWII era, there was a huge surge of women in the work force during this time period. Women were lured in with good marketing. They were praised for working because it was the patriotic thing to do. Marketing was geared primarily at white middle class women. The women were given many job opportunities during this period.

Some jobs were typical women's work while other jobs were working in factories in not so great work conditions.

It was not only white women that were working; there was also an increase in colored women in the work force. Women however did not have it all easy. They faced struggles of childcare and being homemaker for the family as well as being a working woman. Some women greatly enjoyed working, others not as much but they all knew when the war ended so did them working. Life was much different when the men came back from war. Some would say that women going to work during the war changed the future of feminism. There was a huge need for women to do more than just volunteer, that there was a huge need for women in the work force. [1] Marketing was used to get women to work. Most of us know of the famous poster of Rosie the Riveter. She made women all over the world think that they could be just like her. She was sexy and strong and had the words " We Can Do It! ", which were very empowering words. Rosie the Riveter was just one of many advertisements that were used during the war to get women to join the workforce. Advertising for women to get a war job was so common. Good lighting and unique posing, along with sexiness to intrigue women to join the work force was just one technique used.

The pictures showed women working on planes, engines and other machinery. The pictures however were very misleading. They were of women wearing makeup, and jewelry and with their hair worn loosely so that it could get caught in machinery. These pictures were very misleading of the real work that women would be doing. [2] As part of recruiting efforts posters

were put everywhere, however none of them portrayed women of color. They all were of young, beautiful, white women. The reason they say for white women is because they targeted women's magazines that white women would read and news papers.

They also made it seem like it was the woman's patriotic duty to go to work.

[3] Most people would think that something like marketing is a new thing however these slogans and posters are proof that they knew what to say to pull women in to the workforce. Some of the posters asked women to get jobs, others asked them to help the Red Cross, some asked for donations of food, some asked for donations of metals, others asked for women to join the military. No matter what the poster was it always was very catchy and made women want to be like the woman in the poster.

Even after the war there were posters. The new posters showed pictures of the women doing things in their post war life, like relaxing or shopping. The posters were thanking them. Women felt that by going to work they were showing their patriotism. Women joined the work force and patriotism was one of the main reasons why. The women felt it was their duty to stand up for the men in their life and go to work. Not only did the women feel like it was their duty they were persuaded by people saying it was the patriotic thing to do.

People hung the American flag and wore patriotic colors. This is not much different now. Women still stand by their service member. During war time people are brought together. They share a bond and have things in common like a member of their family fighting in the war. Although women worked

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during WWII they did not work in what the government would call war time crucial jobs. Most of the work that women did was working in the steel industry. The steel industry is not a good situation even for men to work in.

So the debate is over why employers did not keep women working in the steel industry when the men came back and just keep them in lower paid positions. Not only did women working in the steel industry require female protective labor laws but the women were also not able to perform all of the jobs that male steel workers could perform. The state of Pennsylvania had to temporarily suspend women's labor laws so that they could allow women to work in the steel industry. Women had to be paid laboring wages even though they could not perform all of the skills of a laborer[4].

Data was collected in the state of Michigan about women working.

Percentage increases were seen of women joining the workforce as well as women who were previously in the workforce who moved into better paying positions. The real increase in women in the work force was that of African American women. [5] Race and minority was still present even during this time when they needed everyone they could get to work. Although women of color were able to get better jobs during WWII, they still did not have equal rights. So because the rights were not equal several groups began to form.

Colored women were discriminated because of age and weight while the white women were able to get those jobs and were not discriminated. Some even said that the white women were flirting their way into jobs and the workforce. It was also said that white women could get better pay and be patriotic, but that women of color were simply supposed to take care of the

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family. Colored women felt this was not fair because they also had husbands, fathers, brothers and sons fighting in the same war. [6] Women of color were able to get jobs although they did not think they were being treated fairly.

Middle class African American women fought for their rights to work in factories during war time. Several groups were formed to protect women workers and especially colored women workers. Segregation was still a problem and the fact that the women had to share bathrooms and lunchrooms and such things did not make many people happy. African American women were not the only women that faced racism. Japanese women were brought into the United States and how it was even harder for them to find work. There were also women from other cultures that faced many problems. [7]

Childcare was a big problem for the women when they went and got jobs. Since they were the homemaker as well as the worker they had to find a balance. Some women even lied about their about their family status so that they could work. With mothers at work the state of Michigan put together some guidelines on childcare. [8] Childcare which was a huge problem during the WWII era and race with childcare was even more an issue because people were saying that black and white children could not play together. So they were not giving child care licenses to people with interracial clientele.

It has been stated that even though women of color had more opportunities than before the war they were still not given equal opportunities based on the color of their skin. [9] Men were not the only ones fighting in the war.

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Women were joining the military and even women that were not in the service worked very closely with the military and were sometimes killed while doing their job. It has been said that women working during WWII was the start of feminism. By joining the work force women felt liberated. It has been said that WWII was the turning point for sexual identity. [10] After careful examination it has been found that from women joining the workforce during the WWII era they have helped change modern feminism. This has to do a lot with the post WWII era when the women reached out to many organizations for working women. [11] Things seemed to go back to normal after the war. Women were back at home with the family and men were back working in the factories. Advertisements now showed women at home relaxing or at the store shopping for home appliances to buy with the wages they earned. [12] After the war there became a big problem with the male and female workers working together or under each other.

All these problems led to a huge whole sale layoff of female workers. [13] When the men came home from war the women were forced out of the factories. [14] It has been said that the real change for women in the work force does not take place till 10 years after the end of WWII. Some women workers wanted to remain employed outside of their homes but that they knew that when the war ended they would not have their jobs anymore. On the other side there were some women who were grateful when the men came home so they didn't have to work anymore.

The women were much more educated now from their experience and when their kids went off to school about 10 years later they were able to enter the



work force again. [15] A lot can be learned about history today from what happened during WWII. Women entered the workforce and did a good job. They were able to raise families and work which is something that women still struggle with today. The women during the WWII era also faced many other struggles like discrimination which is not as common today as it was then. The women paved the way for our lives just as women today pave the future for women later.

Maybe soon we will have our first woman president and that will open even more doors, all which would not be happening if it was not for the women that joined the workforce and went and worked in bad conditions in factories during WWII. Bibliography Boris, E. (1994). Dialogue: Gender, Race, and Rights: Listening to Critical Race Theory. *Journal of Women's History*, 6(2), 111. Retrieved from America: History & Life database. This article talks about race and minority. The article examines three documents dealing with race and equality.

The paper talks about although women of color were able to get better jobs during WWII, they still did not have equal rights. So because the rights were not equal several groups began to form. The article talks about how colored women were discriminated because of age and weight while the white women were able to get those jobs and were not discriminated. Some even said that the white women were flirting their way into jobs and through life. It was also said that white women could get better pay and be patriotic, but that women of color were simply supposed to take care of the family.

Colored women felt this was not fair because they also had husbands, and fathers, and sons fighting in the same war. Childcare which was a huge problem during the WWII era was even more an issue because people were saying that black and white children could not play together. So they were not giving child care licenses to people with interracial clientele. As the article states even though women of color had more opportunities than before the war they were still not given equal opportunities based on the color of their skin. Clive', A. (1979). WOMEN WORKERS IN WORLD WAR II. *Labor History*, 20(1), 44.

Retrieved from America: History & Life database. The article Women workers in World War II is a study based on data collected in the state of Michigan. The article talks about the percentage increases of women in the workforce as well as women who were previously in the workforce and moved into better paying positions. The article also covered in more detail about the type of work that women did during the WWII. The article talks about why women joined the work force and that patriotism was one of the main reasons. The women felt it was their duty to stand up for the men in their life and go to work.

The article also goes into great detail about childcare. Some women even lied about their about their family status so that they could work. With mothers at work the state of Michigan put together some guidelines on childcare. Evans, S. (1997). *Born for Liberty*. Free Press Paperbacks. New York, New York. This book talked a great deal about how women working during WWII were the start of feminism. The book talks about the need for

women to do more than just volunteer, that there was a huge need for women in the work force. The book talks about how they enticed women to join the work force.

It also talked about childcare issues, and issues of housing and transportation. The book also talked about women in the military. The book talks about the liberation that women had from this time period. It also talks about WWII being the turning point for sexual identity. The book also talks about as men got out of the Army, women were forced out of the factories.

Gabin, N. (2000). Revising the History of Twentieth-Century Feminism. *Journal of Women's History*, 12(3), 227. Retrieved from America: History & Life database. This article is actually an essay about two books that were written about twentieth century feminism.

One of the main points of this article is looking at working class women. It also examines women of color in the working class. The article is examining these things to see how they have helped change modern feminism. The article goes into a lot of detail about in the post WWII era the women reached out to many organizations for working women. Norton, M. and Alexander, R. (2007). *Major problems in American women's history* fourth edition. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston, MA. In the book chapter 13 focuses a great deal of women and their roles during WWII. The book talks about women of color getting jobs.

It talks about how middle class African American women fought for their rights to work in factories during war time. It talks about the groups that were formed to protect the women workers and especially the women of

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color workers. It talks about that although the women worked they did not work in what the government would call war time crucial jobs. The book talks about segregation and the fact that the women had to share bathrooms and lunchrooms and such things. The book also talks about how during this time many Japanese women were brought into the United States and how it was even harder for them to find work.

There were also women from other cultures that faced many problems. Also a very important thing that the book discusses is the fact that after the post war era how many women went back to being homemakers and taking care of the family. Rose, J. (1995). 'THE PROBLEM EVERY SUPERVISOR DREAMS': Women Workers at the U. S. Steel Duquesne Works during World War II. *Labor History*, 36(1), 24-51. Retrieved from America: History & Life database. This article goes into great detail about women working in the steel industry. The steel industry is not a good situation even for men to work in.

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whole sale layoff of female workers. Rosen, R. (2000). *The World Split Open How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*. Penguin Group. New York, New York. The book talks about that the real change for women in the work force does not take place till 10 years after the end of WWII. The book mentions that women workers wanted to remain employed outside of their homes but that they knew that when the war ended they would not have their jobs anymore.

The book also mentions that some women were grateful when the men came home so they didn't have to work anymore. Then the book goes into much more detail about women being more educated and when their kids went off to school about 10 years later they were able to enter the work force again.

Yesil, B. (2004). 'Who said this is a Man's War?': propaganda, advertising discourse and the representation of war worker women during the Second World War. *Media History*, 10(2), 103-117. doi: 10.

1080/1368880042000254838. This article is about how during the war millions of women joined the work force.

The article talks about recruiting women to join the work force and the poster Rosie the Riveter. This article takes a close look at women working outside of the home before WWII, so that it can compare to women who joined the work force during WWII and those who were able to get better paying jobs because of the war. This article goes against the belief that the war was the reason women were working. It also says that many women were working before WWII and switched jobs to more labor intense fields.

Instead the article suggests that the real increase in women in the work force was that of African American women.

The article talks about all the recruiting efforts and posters and how none of them portrayed women of color. They all were of young, beautiful, white women. The reason they say for white women is because they targeted women's magazines that white women would read and news papers. They also made it seem like it was the woman's patriotic duty to go to work. Most interesting was after the war when the women went back home and the men went back to work. Advertisements now showed women at home relaxing or at the store shopping for home appliances to buy with the wages they earned.

Media played as big a role then as it does now which is interesting. (2008). Get a War Job!. American History, 42(6), 36-41. Retrieved from America: History & Life database. This article is also about advertising for women to get a war job. It suggests that good lighting and unique posing, along with sexiness to intrigue women to join the work force. The pictures showed women working on planes, engines and other machinery. The pictures however were very misleading. They were of women wearing makeup, and jewelry and with their hair loosely so that it could get caught in machinery.

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