Women in World War II

Women in Industrial Jobs

When the war began, American defense factories wanted to hire white men. When men began to leave for Europe to fight in the war, there were important places to fill in war production plants and civil service jobs. There were not enough white men to work in all of the jobs, so employers began to recruit women and minorities as workers instead.

Before the war, many people believed married women should not work outside the home, especially in jobs that took employment away from men. Most women who worked were young, single, and employed in traditional female jobs such as being a main or teaching. The shortage of labor during the war forced factories to recruit married women for industrial jobs traditionally reserved for men. The government hired almost 4 million women during World War II.

By the end of the war 18.8 million women were working. Although most women were laid off or left their jobs after the war, their participation in the workforce forever changed American attitudes about women in the workplace.

Rosie the Riveter

When the US experienced a labor shortage the War Advertising Council launched a massive national campaign to encourage women to enter the workplace. This became known as the Women in War Jobs campaign

The propaganda campaign used a series of persuasive patriotic posters and messages featuring different versions of the now-famous symbol; Rosie the Riveter. Rosie became one of the most successful recruitment tools in American history.

Rosie the Riveter appeared in movies, newspapers, posters, photographs and articles to stress the patriotic need for women to enter the workforce

Women in the Armed Forces

During World War II the army enlisted women for the first time, however they were barred from combat. Many army jobs were administrative and clerical. Women worked as typists, clerks, and mail sorters. Female participation was important because they helped the military to operate smoothly and by filling office jobs that would otherwise be held by men, women freed more men to fight.

In May 1942, Congress instituted the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, later upgraded to the Women's Army Corps.Its members, known as WACs, worked in more than 200 non-combatant jobs in the United States and in every theater of the war. By 1945, there were more than 100,000 WACs and 6,000 female officers. The coast guard, navy, and marines also began to establish women's units.

In addition to office and clerical jobs, women also drove trucks, repaired airplanes, worked as laboratory technicians, rigged parachutes, served as radio operators, analyzed photographs, flew military aircraft across the country, test-flew newly repaired planes, and trained anti-aircraft artillery gunners by acting as flying targets. Some women served near the front lines in the Army Nurse Corps, where 16 were killed as a result of direct enemy fire.

The Army Nurse Corps in World War II

Over 59,000 American nurses served in the Army Nurse Corps during World War II. Nurses worked closer to the front lines than they ever had before. Nurses served under fire in field hospitals and evacuation hospitals, on hospital trains and hospital ships, and as flight nurses on medical transport planes. The skill and commitment of these nurses helped lead to an extremely low post-injury mortality rate in American military forces in both Europe and the Pacific. In total, less than 4 percent of the American soldiers who received medical care in the field or who were evacuated died from wounds or disease.

Source #1: A cartoon from *Des Moines Register*, 1943

African Americans in World War II

The Double V Campaign

African Americans in the United States embarked on a Double V Campaign: victory over dictators abroad, and victory over discrimination at home. To find work and support the war effort, many African Americans migrated from poor Southern farms to munitions centers. Racial tensions were high in overcrowded cities like Chicago, Detroit and Harlem. In 1943 race riots broke out across the country in response to white resistance to black labor. Both African Americans and whites died in this riots and hundreds more were wounded. Property worth millions was damaged and destroyed.

Black newspapers created the Double V Campaign to boost black morale and discourage radical action. Most Black women had been farm laborers or domestics before the war. Despite discrimination and segregated facilities in the South, they relocated to the North took blue-collar jobs in the cities. Working with the federal Fair Employment Practices Committee, the NAACP, and CIO unions, these Black women fought a "Double V" campaign—against the Axis abroad and against restrictive hiring practices at home. Their efforts redefined citizenship, equating their patriotism with war work, and seeking equal employment opportunities, government entitlements, and better working conditions as conditions appropriate for full citizens. In the South black women worked in segregated jobs; in the West and most of the North they were integrated, but wildcat strikes erupted in Detroit, Baltimore, and Evansville, Indiana where white migrants from the South refused to work alongside black women.

Segregated Units

At the start of the war, the U.S. military was segregated. African Americans were organized into their own units, but white officers generally commanded them.

Most African Americans serving at the beginning of WWII were assigned to non-combat units and service duties. Their work behind front lines was vital to the war effort. Many drove for the famous "Red Ball Express," which carried supplies to the advancing armies through France. When the allied forces suffered heavy losses in 1945, the military had no choice but to place more and more African American troops into combat positions such as infantrymen, pilots, tankers, medics and officers. Although the military did not end all segregation during the war, it did integrate military bases in 1943 and steadily expanded the role of African Americans within the armed forces.

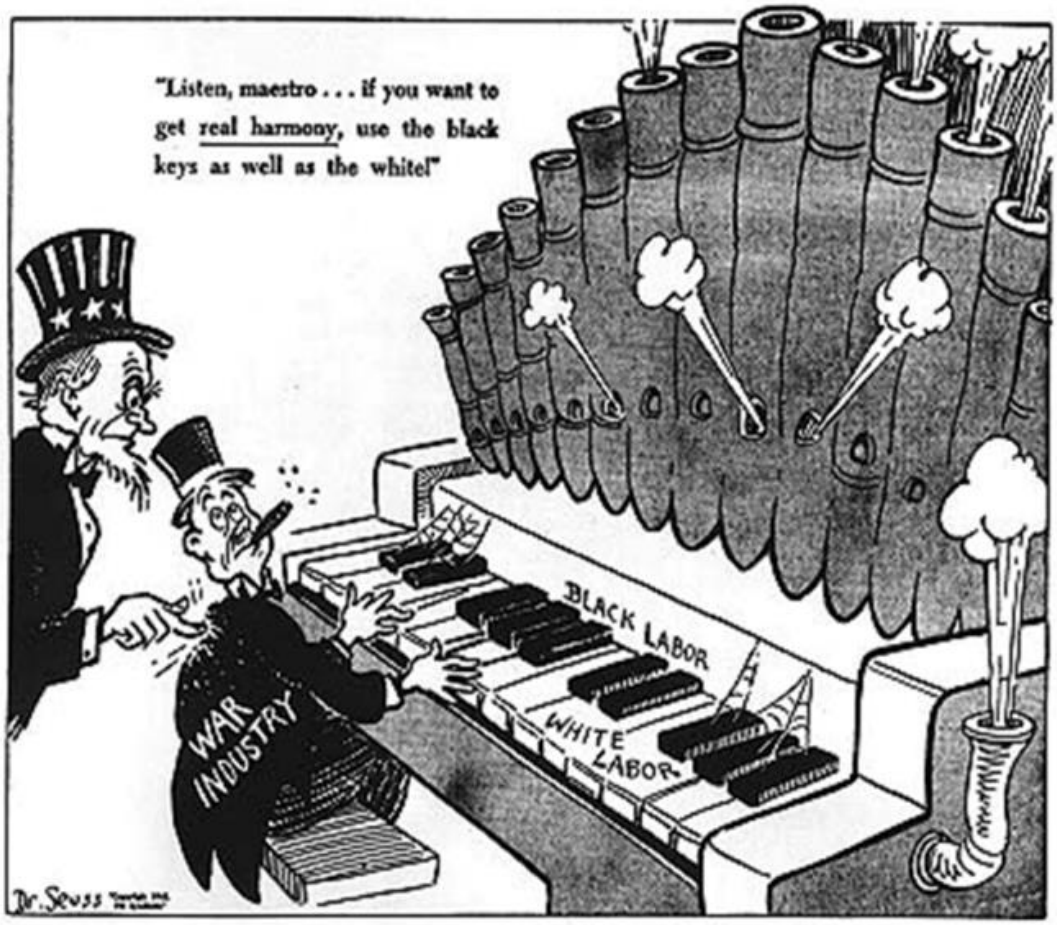
Tuskegee Airmen

The Army Air Force established several African American fighter and bomber groups. The Tuskegee airmen were the first black servicemen to serve as military aviators in the U.S. armed forces, flying during World War II. Though subject to racial discrimination both at home and abroad, the pilots and ground personnel who served with the all-black units would be credited with over 15,500 attacks on the enemy and earn over 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses for their achievements.

Jim Crow

Jim Crow Laws were statutes and ordinances established between 1874 and 1975 to separate the white and black races. During World War II, Jim Crow Laws affected the U.S. military by establishing segregation and discrimination amongst the black soldiers. Black soldiers were given the worst labor, separate housing, separate dining, and were treated like they didn't exist.

Source #1: A cartoon by Dr. Seuss



Source #2: This excerpt from the song "Uncle Sam Says" was written by Josh White in 1939.

"Uncle Sam Says"
Written by Josh White and Waring Cuney, 1939

Well, airplanes flying close to land and sea,
Everybody flying but a Negro like me.
Uncle Sam says, 'Your place is on the ground;
When I fly my airplanes, don't want no Negro 'round.'

The same thing for the Navy when ships goes to sea,
All they got is a mess boy's job for me.
Uncle Sam says, 'Keep on your apron, son;
You know I ain't going to let you shoot my big Navy gun.'

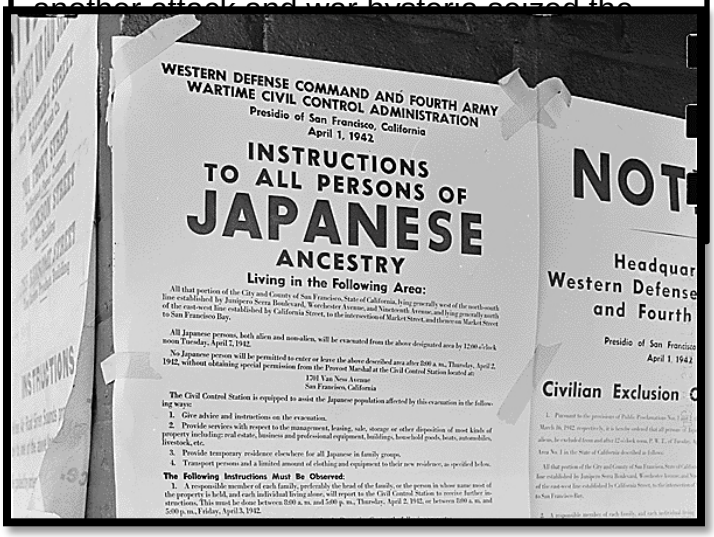
Got my long government letter, It's my time to go,
When I got to the Army, found the same old Jim Crow.
Uncle Sam says, 'Two camps for black and white.'
But when trouble starts, we'll all be in that same big fight.

If you ask me I think democracy is fine,
I mean democracy without a color line.
Uncle Sam says, 'We'll live the American way.'
Let's get together and kill Jim Crow today.

Japanese Americans in World War II

Pearl Harbor

On December 7th 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. US citizens feared another attack and war hysteria seized the



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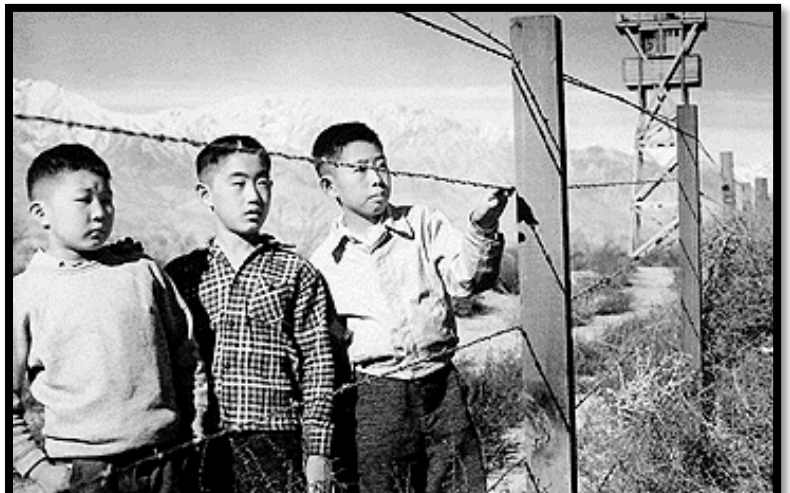
ence, Japanese Americans were suspected of remaining solely for their ancestry. Over two thirds of those interned em were children. Over 127,000 United States Japanese d War II. In some cases family members were separated e entire war only ten people were convicted of spying for

Conditions of the Camps

Conditions in the camps were not of the highest quality. The housing was sparse, consisting mainly of tarpaper barracks. Families ate together at communal dining halls, and children were still expected to attend school in the camps. Adults could work in the camps for a salary of $5 a day. The US government planned for the detainees to make the camps self-sufficient by farming to produce food, however farming on the barren soil was almost impossible.

Evacuees selected representatives to meet with government officials to file complaints, although nothing was usually don. Evacuees also organized recreational activities inside the camps. Some of the detainees even volunteered to fight in one the all-Nisei army regiments and went on to distinguish themselves in battle.

Life in the relocation centers was not easy. The camps were often too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer. The food was mass produced army-style grub. And the detainees knew that if they tried to escape, armed guards would shoot them.



Korematsu v. US (1944)

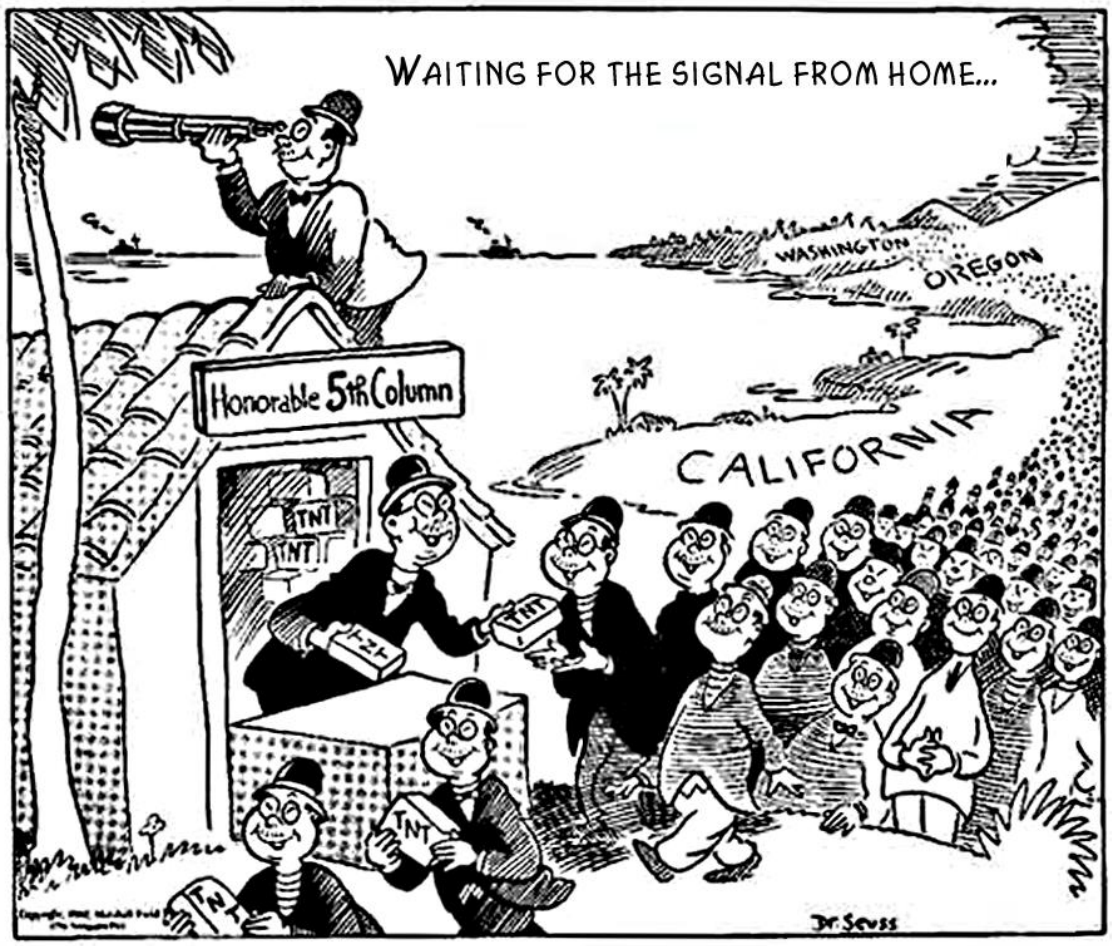
In defiance of Executive Order 9066, Fred Korematsu, an American-born citizen of Japanese descent, refused to leave his home in San Leandro, California. He was convicted, he appealed, and in 1944 his case reached the Supreme Court. The Court upheld Korematsu's conviction. In Korematsu's case, the Court accepted the U.S. military's argument that some Japanese Americans remained loyal to their

Reversing the Executive Order

When the order was finally repealed, many Japanese Americans discovered that they could not return to their homes. Hostility against Japanese Americans remained high across the West Coast. Many villages displayed signs demanding that the Japanese never return. As a result, the escapees scattered across the country.

In 1988, Congress attempted to apologize for the action by awarding each surviving intern $20,000. While the American concentration camps never reached the levels of Nazi death camps as far as atrocities are concerned, they remain a dark mark on the nation's record of respecting civil liberties and cultural differences.

Source #1: A Cartoon by Dr. Seuss



Source 2: Morris E. Opler, “Interview with . . . an Older Nisei,” Manzanar Community Analysis Report No. 36, July 26, 1943, RG 210, National Archives.

If this country doesn’t want me they can throw me out. What do they know about loyalty? I’m as loyal as anyone in this country. Maybe I’m as loyal as President Roosevelt. What business did they have asking me a question like that?

I was born in Hawaii. I worked most of my life on the West Coast. I have never been to Japan. We would have done anything to show our loyalty. All we wanted to do was to be left alone on the coast. . . . My wife and I lost $10,000 in that evacuation. She had a beauty parlor and had to give that up. I had a good position worked up as a gardener, and was taken away from that. We had a little home and that’s gone now. . . .

What kind of Americanism do you call that? That’s not democracy. That’s not the American way, taking everything away from people. . . . Where are the Germans? Where are the Italians? Do they ask them questions about loyalty? . . .

Evacuation was a mistake, there was no need for it. The government knows this, Why don’t they have enough courage to come out and say so, so that these people won’t be pushed around? . . .

Business and Industry in World War II

Roosevelt created oversight agencies to ensure production and labor peace, including the Office of Production Management (OPM), the War Production Board (WPB), and the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply (OPACS), and he adapted other New Deal agencies, such as the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), for the war economy. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), originally created for small businesses and home owners in the Depression, now gave loans on favorable terms to expand industry for wartime production, and as defense jobs increased employment, the government canceled the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which had provided jobs during the Depression.

War Production Board:

During World War II, the War Production Board (WPB) was given the authority to direct production of materials and industrial programs.

The national WPB's primary task was converting civilian industry to war production. The board rationed commodities including gasoline, heating oil, metals, rubber, paper, and plastics. It prohibited industries from use resources to manufacture luxury items such as nylons and refrigerators. The WPB also had the power to control wages and prices. To mobilize the population, the WPB used massive propaganda campaigns.

The WPB and the nation's factories affected a great turnaround to war production. The construction of military aircraft that totaled six thousand in 1940 jumped to eighty-five thousand in 1943. Factories that had manufactured silk ribbons before the war now produced parachutes, automobile factories built tanks, typewriter companies converted to machine gun construction, undergarment manufacturers sewed mosquito netting, and a roller coaster manufacturer converted to the production of bomber repair platforms. Factories were expanded and new ones built.

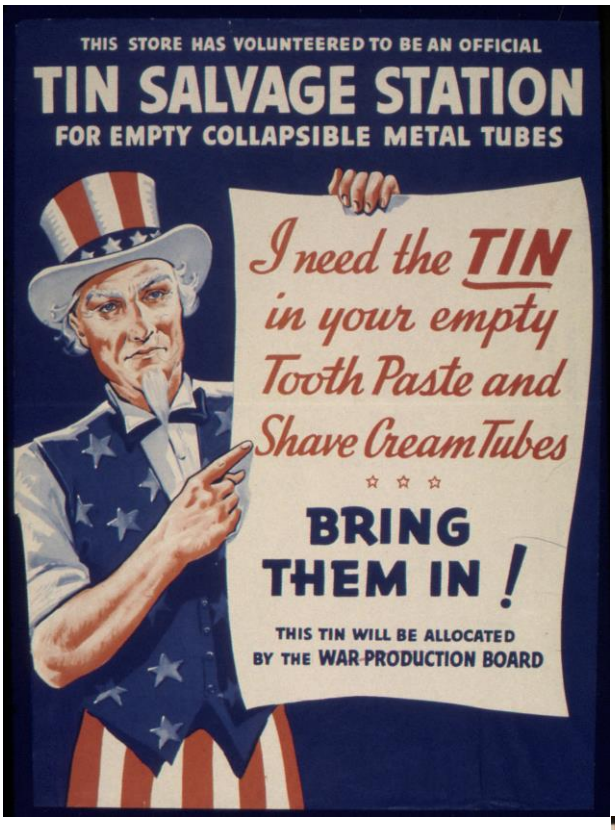
The WPB supervised the production of $183 billion worth of weapons and supplies, about 40% of the world output of munitions.

Impact:
The war effort proved to be an unprecedented success in providing the resources needed for the Allied victory. Located safely away from areas under Axis attack, the United States could build the weapons needed for its own armies and those of its Allies. The United States produced around 300,000 planes, 400,000 pieces of artillery, 44 billion rounds of ammunition, and an additional 47 million tons of artillery ammunition. The United States also built more than 93,000 ships and 86,000 tanks.

World War II created a boom in the American economy. The need for war production lifted the United States out of the Depression by providing full employment, record profits for business, and high wages for workers.

Posters sponsored by the War Production Board

#1



#2

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#4

Women in WWII

Secondary Source:

Describe the role of women on the home front during World War II:

Describe the role of Rosie the Riveter. Why was she important?

Describe the role of women in the armed forces.

Describe the importance of the Nurse Army Corps.

Primary Source:
What do you think the creator of this cartoon was trying to say?

How does this cartoon make you feel? Why?

African Americans in WWII

Secondary Source:

Describe the purpose of the “Double V” Campaign.

Identify the role of African Americans during early WWII. How did that role change? Why?

Explain how Jim Crow Laws affected the U.S. military during WWII.

Identify the Tuskegee Airmen.

Primary Source #1: What is the message of the cartoon?

Primary Source #2: Based on the lyrics, how do you feel that African Americans felt about their involvement in WWII?

Reflect: Explain how you would have felt if you were an African American in WWII in 2-3 sentences.

Japanese Americans in WWII

Secondary Source:

Explain why many US citizens began to fear Japanese Americans.

Describe the purpose of the Executive Order 9066.

Describe the conditions of the Japanese internment camps.

Explain what happened in the Supreme Court case Korematsu v. US. What happened in 1988 regarding this case.

Describe how Americans received Japanese Americans when the order was repealed.

Primary Source #1: What do you see in the cartoon? What is Dr. Seuss trying to justify?

Primary Source #2: Describe the man's reaction to the executive order. Why does he feel this way?

Reaction: Write 2-3 lines about your reaction to Japanese Internment. Do you feel it was justified?

Business and Industry in World War II

Secondary Source:

Explain why FDR created oversight agencies during WWII.

What was the purpose of the War Production Board? What powers did it have>

What did the War Production Board achieve?

What impacts did the war have on the United States economy?

Primary Sources: For each poster, describe what is going on in 2-3 sentences. THEN, write the goal of the poster and what tool is being used.

	Describe the Poster	Goal	Tool(s)
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			