



INVISIBLE WARRIORS

African American Women in World War II

Basil and Becky
Education
Foundation

LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS
**TEACHING
WITH PRIMARY
SOURCES**
Consortium Member

PURPOSE & GOALS

- Increase Knowledge and Understanding of Primary Sources
- Broaden Knowledge of African American Women in World War II (Rosies)
- Increase knowledge of how to utilize primary sources to teach the topic in your classroom.



Produced In 1943 by J. Howard Miller, this poster was created for Westinghouse Electric and intended to boost morale among female workers. The poster was not widely circulated during World War II and was shared with Westinghouse employees for only one month.


In the 1980s, the image was widely produced and named Rosie the Riveter.



ORAL HISTORY



PHOTOS



DOCUMENTS

15,000 Negroes Assembled at St. Louis, Missouri
 20,000 Negroes Assembled at Chicago, Illinois
 23,500 Negroes Assembled at New York City
 Millions of Negro Americans all Over This Great
 Land Claim the Right to be Free!

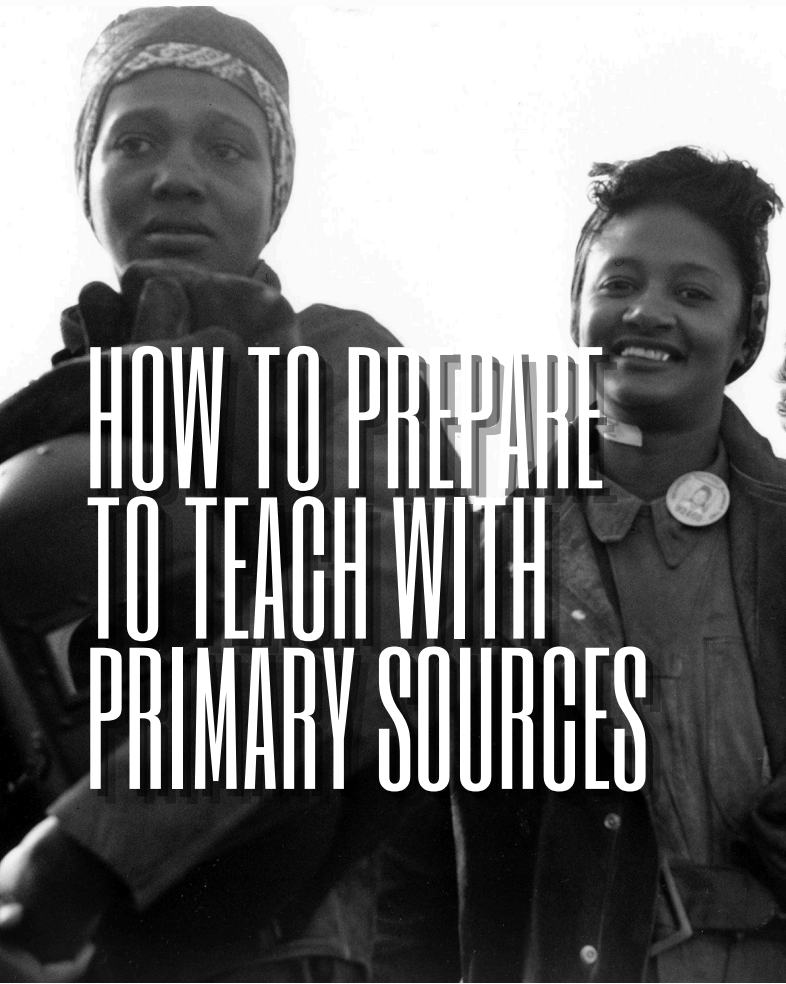
FREE FROM WANT!
 FREE FROM FEAR!
 FREE FROM JIM CROW!

*"Winning Democracy for the Negro is Winning the War
 for Democracy!" — A. Philip Randolph*



OBJECTS

WHAT IS A PRIMARY SOURCE?



LEARNING
OBJECTIVES

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

INTEREST

SUITABILITY

USABILITY

INSTRUCTION
FLEXIBILITY

In preparing to teach with primary sources, choose appropriate sources that fit your learning objectives, that are usable, and engage your student's interests. You can analyze primary sources in many different ways:

- Document Analysis
- Annotating Sources
- Image Analysis
- Surprising, Interesting, Troubling
- See, Think, Wonder

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

WWII BY THE NUMBERS

- **Fought on every Continent except Antarctica**
- **70 Nations Participated**
- **100 - 300 million mobilized globally**
- **60 - 75 million killed (27 million Russians)**
- **125,000? Japanese killed March 1945 – largest mass killing in history**
- **40 million people displaced: largest human movement ever**
- **16 million served in the U.S. military - 455,000 killed & 671,278 wounded**
- **Cost: \$4 trillion (2020 dollars)**

OBSERVE REFLECT QUESTION

Inquiry skills take practice to develop, but primary source analysis can help.

| Observe | Reflect | Question |
|--|---|---|
| <p>At first, make no inferences and address only the facts. What do you see, what do you notice? Make no assumptions about what you see.</p> | <p>Now make inferences about what is happening in the primary source, speculate. What is happening, who created the source, why was it created, what activities do you see happening?</p> | <p>Build on questions from your reflection? Delve deeper into the source. Then brainstorm where to find answers to the questions. What bothers you about the source, what more do you want to know.</p> |
| | | |





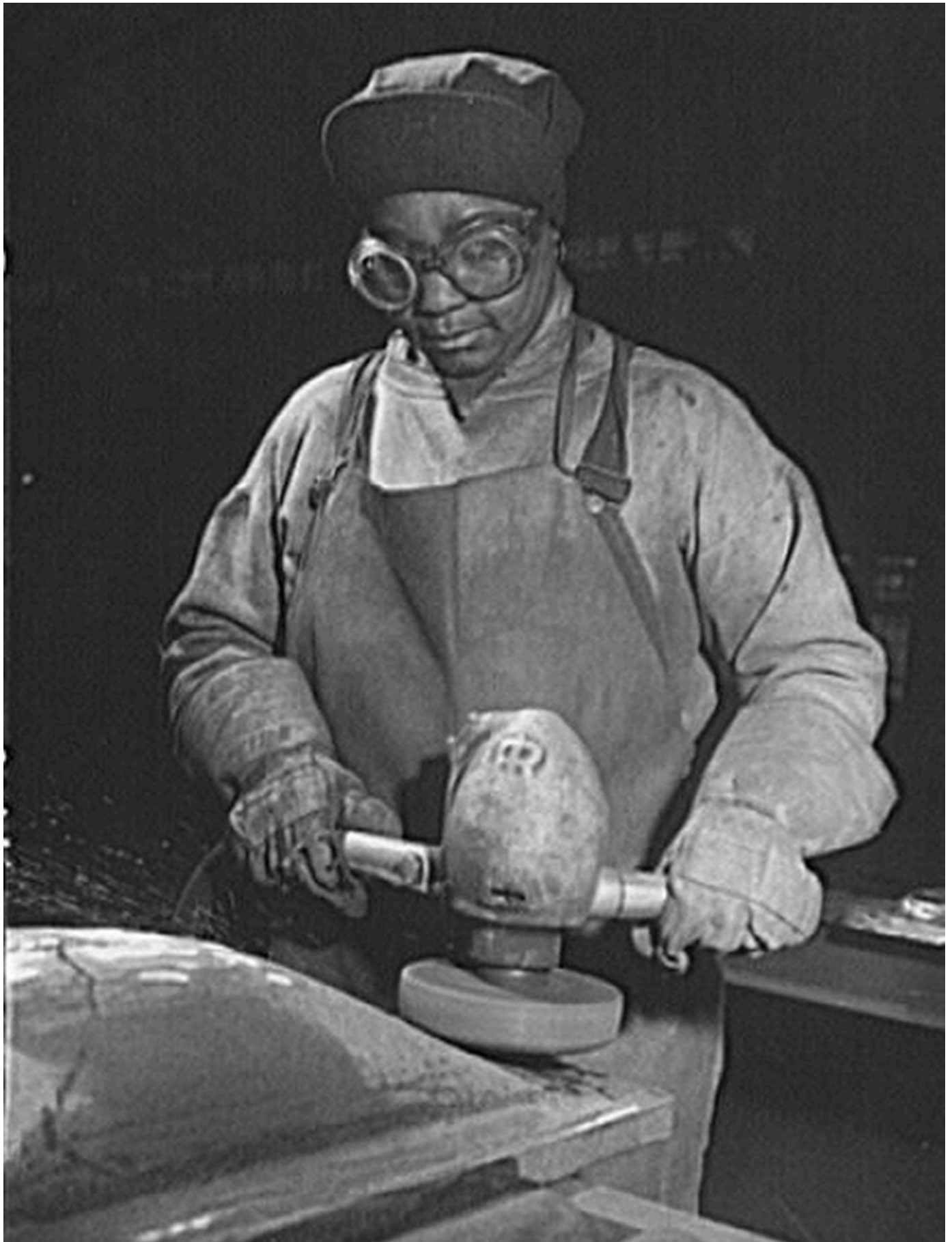




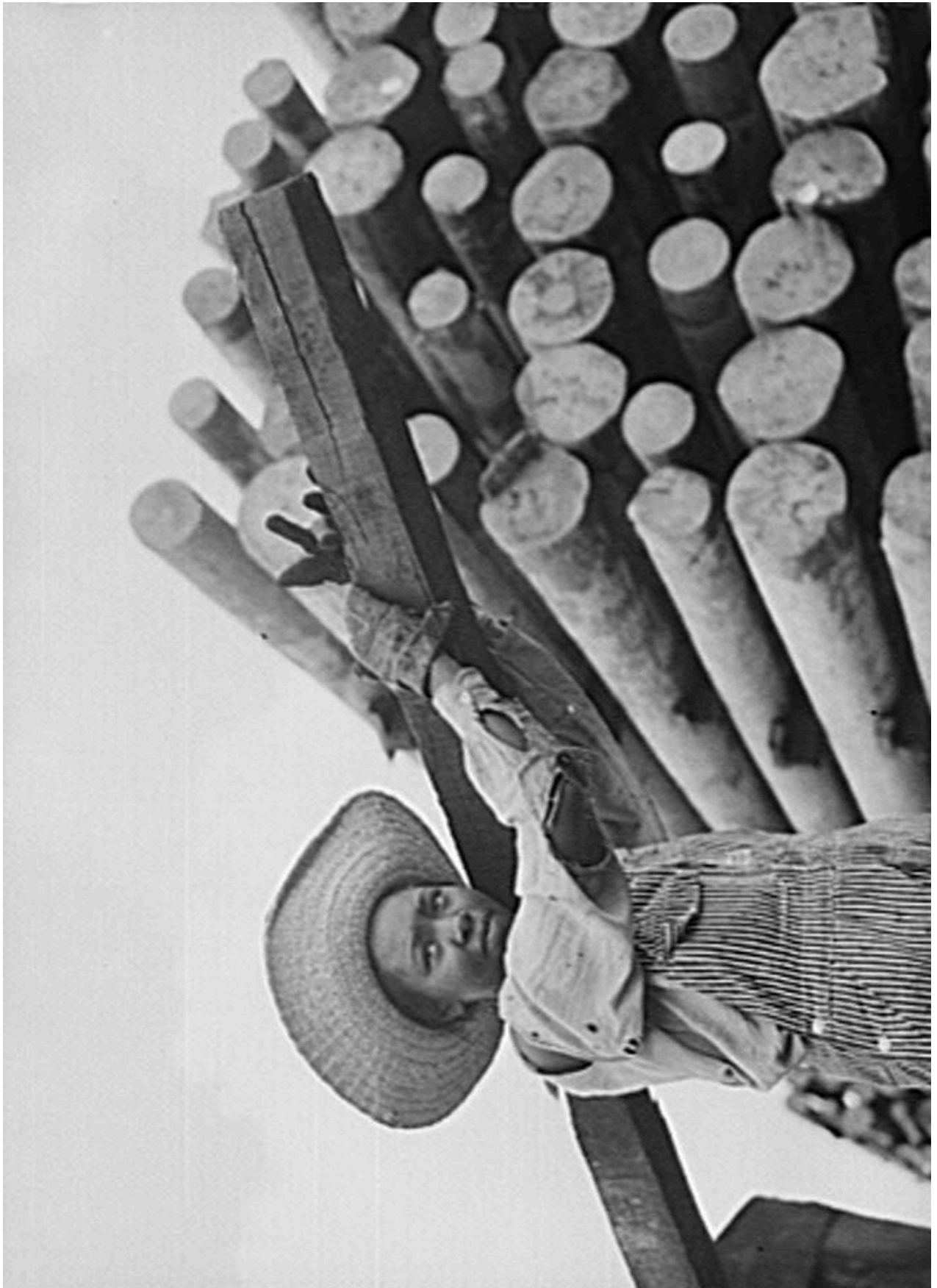


OWI-14866.C



































D-7013



1

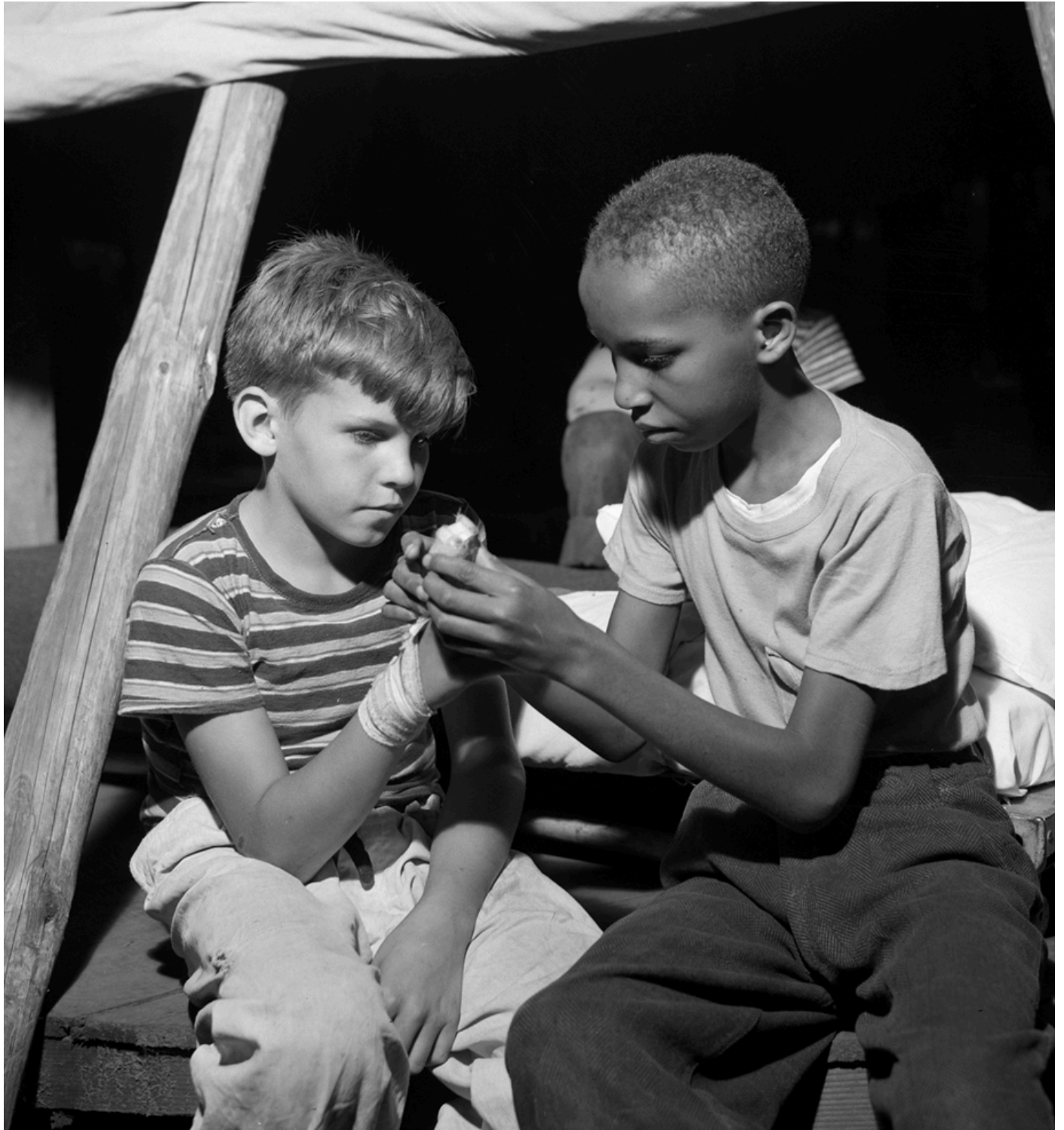


IMAGE KEY

1. Double Bottom Assembly crew at Kaiser Richmond Shipyard No. 4, NPS
2. Women welders at the Landers, Frary, and Clark plant in New Britain, Connecticut, 1943, Library of Congress
3. Manpower. Negro navy yard workers. American women of many racial groups are furnishing manpower for war production. This Negro girl is a machine operator in the aircraft factory of an Eastern Navy yard. She is turning out small parts for assembly in another part of the plant. Howard Liberman, photographer, Office for Emergency Management, May 1942 Safety Film Negatives <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017692220/>
4. Machine gun production operators. Employed at Midwest war plant, Photographer Ann Rosener, July 1942, LOC 2017693693
5. Daytona Beach, Florida Bethune Cookman College NYA (National Youth Administration) girls' welding class Parks, Gordon Jan 1943 Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017843233/>
6. Industrial training for war work offered to women by New York University under United States Government sponsorship. Hammering metal into chain links. New York University 40.72871 Department of Agriculture
7. A female grinder working at Pratt and Letchworth, makers of castings for ships and tanks in Buffalo, New York. In May 1943, the Library of Congress
8. Woman worker at the International Creosoting plant. United States Farm Security Administration and Office of War Information, Library of Congress
9. Young woman at a Beaumont Creosoting plant in 1943 Photo by John Vachon, Library of Congress
10. Two Female Factory Workers Reconditioning used spark plugs to be re-used in Testing Military Aircraft Motors at Buick Plant Converted for War Production, Melrose Park, Illinois, USA Ann Rosener, Office of War Information July 1942, Library of Congress
11. Melrose Park, Illinois, February 1942, Negro women with no previous industrial experience are reconditioning used spark plugs in a converted Buick plant to produce airplane engines. Despite their lack of technical knowledge, these women have become expert operators of small testing machines. Ann Rosener, FSA Library of Congress.
12. African American Female riveter sitting on a huge piece of machinery during WWII at Lockheed Aircraft Corp, 1942 National Archives
13. African American women trainees at Carrie Furnace learning masonry skills, Pittsburg, PA, October 1944.

IMAGE KEY

14. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division, The New York Public Library. (1945 - 1951). North Carolina. Tobacco sales. Drinking fountains at a Lumberton warehouse Retrieved from <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/9064b4e7-566d-827d-e040-e00a180628a3>
15. Workers at the Pacific Parachute Company, San Diego California, 1942 Smithsonian National Museum
16. Drinking fountain on the county courthouse lawn, Halifax, NC segregation enforcement, April 1938 Library of Congress
17. Workers at Marin Ship Yard in Sausalito, CA during WWII. NPS
18. African American and Caucasian women take a break while working at the Richmond Ship Yards. 1942. Dorothea Lange, photographer. Gelatin silver print. Collection of Oakland Museum of California. Gift of Paul S. Taylor.
19. National Youth Administration Student Training for a Defense Job, Daytona Beach, Florida, 1943
20. Plato's office staff for Wake and Midway Halls; Samuel Plato, contractor, and part of his office staff at their field headquarters for the construction of Wake and Midway Halls, now being completed for 1,000 Negro women war workers in Washington, D.C.; Left to right [clockwise]: Zelda S. Wilson, Mildred Dunn, Wilhelmena Barnett, Mrs. Elnora Plato (wife of the contractor and his chief accountant), Mr. Plato and Frances Purdy, March 1943. Schomburg center for research in black culture. New York Public Library
21. Women employed at the Savannah Quartermaster Depot, Savannah Georgia, 1943 National Archives
Secretarial staff for Liberian President. Miss Aurelia Toyer and Miss Torreceita E. Pinder, stenographers in the United States State Department, were assigned to the staff of his Excellency, Edwin Barclay, President of the Republic of Liberia, during his stay at the historic Blair House in Washington, D.C. Miss Toyer seated at typewriter is a native of Bluefield, West Virginia and Miss Pinder comes from Gainesville, Florida, LOC <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017854916/>
23. Operating a hand drill at Vultee-Nashville, woman is working on a "Vengeance" dive bomber, Tennessee Contributor Aldred Palmer Taken February 1943 Source Library of Congress
24. Women in war. Supercharger plant workers. Plant foremen point to 20-year-old Annie Tabor as one of their best lathe operators, despite her lack of previous industrial experience. Employed by a large Midwest supercharger plant, this young woman machines parts of aircraft engines. Like many other young Negro girls, she had known only Contributor Ann Rosener Taken Oct 1942 Milwaukee Wisconsin Source Library of Congress
25. First Aid: Interracial activities at Camp Nathan Hale, Southfields, NY 1943 Schomburg Center



OBSERVE REFLECT QUESTION



Women in war. Machine gun production operators. One of 2,000 women currently employed in a Midwest war plant, this young Negro worker has proven a competent and earnest machine operator. She processes gun parts in this plant which has been converted from the production of spark plugs to machine guns. A.C. Spark Plugs

Contributor Ann Rosener
Taken July 1942 Flint Michigan
Source Library of Congress

James G. Thompson, "Should I Sacrifice to Live 'Half-American?'" Pittsburgh Courier, January 31, 1942. Reprinted by permission from the New Pittsburgh Courier.



Should I Sacrifice To Live 'Half-American?'

Suggest Double VV for Double Victory Against Axis Forces and Ugly Prejudices on the Home Front.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: A young man, confused and befuddled by all of this double talk about democracy and the defense of our way of life, is asking, like other young Negroes, some very pertinent questions. We reprint this letter in full because it is symbolic.)

DEAR EDITOR:

Like all true Americans, my greatest desire at this time, this crucial point of our history; is a desire for a complete victory over the forces of evil, which threaten our existence today. Behind that desire is also a desire to serve, this, my country, in the most advantageous way.



Jame Thompson's Letter

“Like all true Americans, my greatest desire at this time, this crucial point of our history, is a desire for a complete victory over the forces of evil, which threaten our existence today. Behind that desire is also a desire to serve, this, my country, in the most advantageous way.”

OBSERVE. REFLECT. QUESTION

“If this V sign means that to those now engaged in this great conflict then let we colored Americans adopt the double VV for a double victory. The first V for victory over our enemies from without, the second V for victory over our enemies from within.”

“For surely those who perpetrate these ugly prejudices here are seeking to destroy our democratic form of government just as surely as the Axis forces.”

“This should not and would not lessen our efforts to bring this conflict to a successful conclusion, but should and would make us stronger to resist these evil forces which threaten us. America could become united as never before and become truly the home of democracy.”

THE ROSIES



Alice Amaro
1918 - 2018
Frankford Arsenal

“Working at the Frankford Arsenal made me feel independent. It gave me a strong sense of existence. I’m small in stature, but my mind and character are bigger than me.”



Bernice Bowman
1925 - 2023

Clerk Typist: General Accounting Office (GAO)

“GAO was my first job. I was proud to get that job.”



Willie Mae Govan
1926 - 2023
Munitions Worker: E.I. DuPont Corp.

“I feel like America belonged to me too”



Birdia Bush
1914 - 2014
Clerk: War Department

“Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. Bethune worked together to get our pictures removed from the applications, so they didn’t know we were Negroes.”



Gwen Faison
1925- 2021
Electronics Assembler:
RCA

“I was 19 when I became a supervisor in the Department of Engineering.”



Dr. Dorothy I. Height
1912 - 2010
Executive Director: Phyllis Wheatley
YWCA, Washington, DC

“Whenever the NAACP would hang out a sign saying, ‘A man was lynched yesterday,’ we had 88 youth groups that we would call together and we would go down to Times Square, wearing black armbands, and we would walk around Times Square chanting, ‘Stop the lynching! Stop the lynching.’”

THE ROSIES



Susan King
Riveter: Eastern Aircraft Corporation

“Eastern Aircraft at that time was completely integrated. It was the first time I had ever sat down to eat in a completely integrated institution in my life.”



Marian Reid
Sharecropper

“When my five brothers went off to war, the girls were left to do their work — picking cotton and peanuts, and working heavy machinery.”



Ruth Wilson

Sheet Metal Worker:
Philadelphia Navy Yard

“World War II changed my life because I made more money and became independent.”

For Screenings of *Invisible Warriors: African American Women in World War II* at your school, please contact Gregory S. Cooke – bbef25@gmail.com

www.bbef.org



CONTACT

Gregory Cooke

bbef25@gmail.com

**Basil and Becky Education
Foundation**

www.bbef.org

Basil and Becky
Education
Foundation

LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS
TEACHING
WITH **PRIMARY**
SOURCES
Consortium Member