



THE WWII HOMEFRONT EXPERIENCE RECONTEXTUALIZED

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Like many Americans, I grew up learning a narrative of World War II that was frequently one dimensional, and left a lot unsaid. The men went to war, women went to work, we won, and all was well. In reality, the World War II Home Front was by no means a bastion of equality or progress. To this end, one of the things that stood out to me in my research this summer, was the standards that women in the workforce were held to—both personal and professional. From childcare, to makeup to glasses, women were held to grueling standards. Black women, and other women of colour faced even greater challenges. The National Park Service Theme Study on the American WWII Home Front that I worked on sought to expand on previous research by more fully detailing the struggles and efforts put forth by marginalized communities. The queer community, (only one of many that we are examining) for example, has largely remained undiscussed within the context of WWII. Moreover, the struggles faced by these groups varied largely. Violent race riots broke out at the proposition of desegregating housing to accommodate upticks in population in urban centers. The Home Front effort was a battle on many fronts. Another, equally important aspect of this project, is the National Heritage Cities Project. We aim to help identify one city for every state and territory in the U.S, that was particularly significant to the Homefront War effort. WWII led to massive upticks in production. At the conclusion of the war, many of these buildings, both factories, and relocation camps, were repurposed. As a result, they have lost the necessary integrity for NHL or National Register status. Natural deterioration over time has further contributed to urgency in identifying these locations—before it's too late.