

Southern New Hampshire University

Women's Roles in America:  
Wartime Expansion, Post-War Backlash, and Contraction

A Capstone Project Submitted to the College of Online and Continuing Education in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Master of Arts in History

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## **Abstract**

The position and status of women in American society is a product of how women's roles have changed since the colonial beginnings of America. The problem is that American women have consistently found themselves in a second class status despite providing half the effort and work of American society. Women's roles have changed, evolved and grown throughout American history. So, the question becomes: what has spurred those changes? The answer is war. Women's roles have expanded as their participation, effort and work have been needed during major war periods. As those war period have concluded a backlash has arisen that has resulted in a contraction of women's roles but never to pre-war status. This pattern was realized through the research of gender roles during distinct periods. The historiographies of distinct periods revealed the pattern and that pattern held. Data mining those sources and other research resulted in supportive primary sources that solidified the pattern. Diaries, letters of correspondence, journal and newspaper articles revealed the expansion, backlash and contraction of every war period. The correspondence of Abigail Adams, Civil War journals and nursing orders, Wilson's speech to congress and the words of Suffragettes, the efforts of Rosie the Riveter, her words and the encouragement of government through propaganda, Cold War imposed gender norms and the debate over the ERA are all primary sources that illuminate and support the pattern.

## **Dedication**

For Noelle, Bennett and Asher who are my life. For Dad, who recently passed.

Thank you for support and love.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	iv
List of Figures .....	vii
Acknowledgments .....	viii
List of Abbreviations .....	ix
Introduction .....	1
Chapter 1: Case Study: The American Revolution.....	6
Chapter 2: Case Study: Civil War.....	21
Chapter 3: Case Study: World War I.....	35
Chapter 4: Case Study World War II.....	47
Chapter 5: Case Study: Cold War.....	62
Conclusion .....	81
Epilogue .....	83
Appendix A: Selected World War I Propaganda Posters .....	85
Appendix B: Selected World War II Propaganda Posters and Images .....	88
Bibliography .....	91

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1: Rockwell's famous Rosie the Riveter .....	2
Figure 2: Abigail Adams on Education .....	13
Figure 3: Women in the Civil War .....	21
Figure 4: World War I 'Good Mother' .....	37
Figure 5: Women being encouraged to enter the workforce.....	37
Figure 6: Women encouraged to join military auxiliary.....	38
Figure 7: Another of Rockwell's cover's encouraging female participation in WWII .....	50
Figure 8: Norman Rockwell's Rosie the Riveter.....	50
Figure 9: World War II Nurses .....	54
Figure 10: World War II military recruiting poster .....	55
Figure 11: 'Traditional' Cold War Family.....	62
Figure 12: The sexualized Bombshell, a threat and enticement. ....	71

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ERA – Equal Rights Amendment

LMA – Ladies Memorialization Association

UDC – United Daughters of the Confederacy

WASP – Women’s Air Service Pilot

WJCC – Women’s Joint Congressional Committee

## **Introduction**

### **The Impact of War on Women's Roles: A Pattern of Expansion, Backlash and Contraction**

Throughout human history most cultures have relegated women to second class status. Often the postulate is that men's work has been more valued than women's which has created that second class status. Men's work of hunting and soldiering has been more valued than women's work of child rearing and food preparation. Thus, there has been a distinct division not only in work, but also in the role of both men and women in a society. When it comes to women's roles in United States history the pattern is similar. Men did the breadwinning and soldiering while women's roles were in child rearing and food preparation. The pattern that has emerged is one where wartime resulted in an expansion of women's roles due to the war effort, followed by a post war contraction. Clearly, the opportunities open to women today are far more vast than the roles open to women of the early republic. However, this expansion has not proceeded smoothly nor has it simply progressed uninterrupted.

It is a mistake to see women's roles and rights on an evolutionary path where colonial women were highly constrained and through the women's rights movement modern women have attained nearly equal status. Real history is not this neat. What has emerged in research is that women have gained rights, status and new roles in fits and starts and in response to war. In mobilizing for major wars Americans have asked women to expand their roles as part of the war

effort, the most famous is symbolized by Rosie the Riveter of World War II (see Figure 1).<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1: Rockwell's famous Rosie the Riveter**

Then at the end of each major war period women faced a backlash and contraction of those newly expanded roles. This research uses the bottom up cultural history lens, popularized during the last half of the twentieth century in order to illuminate how women's roles have changed as a response to war. The effect may also give insight into the idea that gender roles reflect social values.

The question becomes how women's roles have changed over the course of United States History in response to war. By using a case study approach to examine the major war periods of United States history a clear pattern of expansion and contraction emerges. Case studies will be conducted in chronological order: Revolution, Civil War, World War I, World War II and the Cold War. Women's roles expand during wartime, face a backlash at the end of and immediately post-war and a subsequent contraction of roles for women. But, the contraction never reaches pre-war levels, thus allowing a general progress and increase of women's roles. This recurring pattern is demonstrated through case studies on the American Revolution, the Civil War, World War I, World War II and the Cold War. So, women's roles have evolved in fits and starts in a pattern that is reminiscent of two steps forward and one step back. Therefore, each chapter will be one complete case study on each war period focusing on the expansion, backlash and contraction and will be developed chronologically, beginning with the Revolutionary period.

<sup>1</sup> <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/0/02/RosieTheRiveter.jpg>

This series of case studies illustrating the changing roles of American women is a significant topic. First, gender histories were ignored for the longest time. As such, the cultural history of women is still being developed and needs multiple perspectives and interpretations. Second, while many respected historians have explained how women's roles have changed. Most, have developed a narrow topic that has focused on a single time period. Therefore, this case study approach is much more comprehensive in order to illuminate the pattern of changing women's roles. Finally, how a culture treats such a significant minority of its population reflects societal values. So, research that demonstrates a pattern of changing roles also demonstrates changing societal values, and the value that society places on gender roles and gendered work.

While each one of these case studies could stand alone as an analytical piece, by putting them together a greater pattern of women's roles in American history is illuminated. Even when historians debate within their narrow period the pattern holds up. For example, Linda Kerber has written the seminal text for the post-Revolutionary period. Kerber argues that women's roles which had expanded during the war, contracted officially post war, but remained open in the private sphere where they served as Republican Mother's reinforcing republican values in their sons.<sup>2</sup> However, Rosemarie Zagarri argues that that as the Jacksonian period progressed a backlash appeared that attributed women's greater emotionality, irrationality to physiological sex differences and that led to more political disenfranchisement.<sup>3</sup> So, this debate within the historiography of the post Revolution period both points of view, in actuality, supports the premise of a pattern where women's roles expand during wartime, then face a backlash and

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<sup>2</sup> Linda K. Kerber. *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 12

<sup>3</sup> Rosemarie Zagarri. *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007, 2

contraction. Each historians work is narrowly focused on their chosen period, but few historians have attempted to develop an encompassing approach that covers the impact of the major war periods on women's roles. This series examines each war period and demonstrates the pattern of how women's roles have changed due to war, which is a new approach. There are also a contemporary implications for this topic.

There are several possible contemporary implications in the pattern of women's changing roles due to the impact of war which make this an important topic. First, while women's roles have certainly developed, progressed, and a woman of 2017 has far more opportunities than a women of 1817, true equality has not been achieved. A pay gap of \$0.80 to \$1.00 is clear evidence that a pattern of developing women's roles is necessary.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, as previously noted, how a society treats a significant minority reflects the values that a society places on the role of that minority and the value society places on the work of that minority. Therefore, the implication is that American society values women at roughly three-fourths (80%) the value of its male members. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the 2016 presidential election and its vitriol against a female candidate may be evidence of this same pattern. Women's roles expanded during the most recent war periods (Iraq and Afghanistan) to where women were more accepted in combat roles.<sup>5</sup> Upon finding a wartime, Iraq and Afghanistan, expansion (women in military combat roles) the pattern expects a post war backlash and contraction. While this premise is not part of this work, it does indicate possible contemporary implications for this case

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<sup>4</sup> Bernadette D. Proctor, Jessica L. Semega and Mellissa A. Kollar, "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2015" United States Census Bureau. Report Number P60-256. September 13, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Vaughn Mills and Redmond Hunt explain in their book that in ten years of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan two hundred and thirty-eight thousand women have been deployed and that women in combat roles have increased overtime, reaching what they call a critical juncture with recent operations. Vaughn W Mills., and Redmond F. Hunt. *Women in Combat and the Armed Forces: Policies and Perceptions* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc, 2012): vii - viii

study series. Gender roles have changed throughout human history, from hunter/gatherer societies to agriculture to industrial and now to a postindustrial culture that is more accepting of a working mother and a stay-at-home father. This series of case studies explains how some of that progress/change occurred in America as a result of participation in war efforts by women.

## Chapter 1: Case Study: The American Revolution

Women's roles have changed and evolved as human history has progressed and this is certainly true for the United States as well. From the very beginning a pattern of expansion during wartime with a subsequent backlash and contraction has been present. Beginning with an expansion of women's roles during the American Revolution and continuing with a backlash and contraction post-war. In 1977 Nancy Cott developed scholarship that introduced the concept of a Domestic Sphere for women where women were able to participate in politics and society as an extension of the household. With the 1980 concurrent publishing of Linda Kerber's work *Women of the Republic* and Mary Beth Norton's book *Liberty's Daughters*, the historiography was expanded. Cott, Kerber and Norton all argue that post-Revolutionary women enjoyed more freedom and were more involved in politics, albeit informally, than colonial women. What became clear is that each author was, in their own way describing an expansion of women's roles during, and immediately following the Revolution with a contraction of women's roles by the Jacksonian period of the 1830s. The period immediately following the Revolution was a time of great potential as the young republic sought to find its feet and establish what and how democracy was going to work in modern times. A case study of women's roles the new republic is a narrative of the new nation defining a modern republic. Because the first steps chart the course, the steps taken regarding women's roles in the republic during the Jacksonian period established a course for women in America. Because women make up half the population, the course charted regarding women impacted the socioeconomic culture of America during the entire antebellum period.

The entire post-Revolutionary period reflects the expansion of women's roles and subsequent contraction. First, initial authors used terms like Domestic Sphere, Republican Motherhood, Republican Womanhood or Civil Society to describe the expansion of women's roles. The causal agency of role expansion was clearly the Revolution in conjunction with the Enlightenment, which posited that intellectually women were equal to men. Initially, Cott uses the term Domestic Sphere to describe the expansion of women into politics in an informal manner. This informal expansion is developed by others in more specific manner or, in the case of Mary Kelley to find the causal agent of that informal expansion. Nearly all notice that as women's roles expanded informally there was a concurrent or slightly later contraction as women were more and more explicitly excluded from formal politics, voting, participating in party politics or holding office.

There is a great deal of evidence pointing to the participation of women in the Revolution, especially their participation in the boycotts, which in turn expanded women's societal roles. First, Paula Baker contends that women were integral to the success of the Revolution through their actions in the boycotts and crowd actions which she asserts was an expansion or extension of their domestic or household role.<sup>1</sup> While this may have been an extension of the domestic role it is also clearly a political function as well and that clearly indicates an expansion of roles for women during the Revolution. Second, T.H. Breen in his analysis of consumer politics and the American Revolution argues that women not only bore the brunt of the inconvenience of boycotting British goods, but also viewed participation in boycotts as a political act, citing three ladies in the Boston Gazette, "The Ladies of America having been

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<sup>1</sup> Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920" *The American Historical Review* 89 no. 3 (1984): 620-47



diverse Times addressed as Persons of Consequence, in the present œconomical Regulations.”<sup>2</sup>

The recognition of women as “Persons of Consequence” in the boycotts as part of the lead up to the Revolution and the dependence on women as a part of the protesting of British tyranny is an expansion of women’s roles. Abigail Adams, writing a letter to her husband John in 1777, conveys a message of female hardship and leadership when she describes first doing without and second how a group of women accosted a merchant who was ‘price gouging,’ physically threw him into a cart, took his keys and took the coffee they were seeking.<sup>3</sup> Clearly women participated in the Revolution and acted as patriot leaders on the home front. In addition, this is corroborated by Christopher Gadsden writing in 1769. According to Gadsden patriotic men must, “Persuade our wives to give us their assistance without which ‘tis impossible to succeed.”<sup>4</sup>

Women’s participation in consumer politics, especially the boycotts constitutes an expansion of women’s political roles during the Revolution. Finally, Linda Kerber also recognizes the importance of women’s participation in the Revolution for both loyalists and rebels in the boycotts, the disruptions of warfare and the needs of both the army and civilian population “profoundly affected women.”<sup>5</sup> Not only did women’s participation shift attitudes towards what women could do, but also wifely attitudes.

Women’s attitudes changed along with their participation in Revolutionary matters.

Mary Beth Norton asserts that the Victorian era, far from constricting women, actually

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<sup>2</sup> T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 25

<sup>3</sup> Abigail Adams, . "Letter Regarding the Boycott." (1777) In *The American Revolution*. American Journey. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, (1999) *U.S. History in Context*

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Gadsden, “To the Planters, Mechanics and Freeholders of the Province of South Carolina, No Ways Concerned in the Importation of British Manufacturers” (June 22, 1769). Gadsden family. Gadsden family papers, 1703-ca. 1955. (1032.00) South Carolina Historical Society. Accessed June 12, 2017. <http://schistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Gadsden-family-papers-1032.00.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 11

accelerated changes begun by the Revolution.<sup>6</sup> Among these changes is a general change in attitudes of women about themselves as well as a societal attitude shift towards women. According to Norton, the developing ideology of republicanism served “to alter both society's view of [women] and their own self-conceptions.”<sup>7</sup> With both society acknowledging and women accepting and expanded capabilities their roles naturally expanded as well. Further evidence of changing wifely attitudes can be found in the letters of Lucy Knox to her husband Henry Knox, Washington’s artillery general and eventual Secretary of War.

Knox writes, being long accustomed to command- will make you too haughty for mercantile matters--tho I hope you will not consider yourself as commander in chief of your own house, but be convinced tho not in the affair of Mr. Coudoe that there is such a thing as equal command-<sup>8</sup>

That Lucy Knox, in the middle of a poignant letter to her husband in the field (she repeatedly declares her love and longing for her husband throughout the letter), would take the time to specifically also declare that General Knox ought not consider himself “commander in chief” of his own house, is compelling evidence of a changing attitude among women. It is also of interest to note the final line in this paragraph where she declares that she does not expect equal command, but does allude to another example, Mr. Coudoe, of a possible example of equal command. Before women’s roles and status could expand their attitude and societies attitude had to shift to allow that expansion. This attitude is also found in Abigail Adams, relatively famous letter where she entreats her husband John to ‘Remember the ladies’ in the creating of a

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<sup>6</sup> Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: the Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), 7

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 228

<sup>8</sup> Lucy Knox. Letter to Henry Knox 8/23/1777. Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. <https://archives.nbcblearn.com/portal/site/k-12/flatview?cuecard=33004>

new law code. In the following lines Adams states that all men would be tyrants and suggests that a rebellion about rule of law, equality and representation should also include women.<sup>9</sup> So, the needs of war, boycotts and labor, pressed a societal shift in attitudes towards women and among women themselves. This expansion continued post war as American society defined what a republican society was to look like and be.

Women's roles expanded significantly in the post war period. First, Linda Kerber asserts that divorce was more accessible after the war as a result of the rhetoric of the war as the happy and unhappy family was compared to the American response to British oppression.<sup>10</sup> Divorce laws, especially strict divorce laws that limit a women's ability to seek divorce are often viewed as patriarchal. So, the expansion of divorce laws post Revolution can be interpreted as an expansion of women's status. The practice of relaxed divorce laws post Revolution is also analyzed by Mary Beth Norton who concludes that numbers of divorce increased as did ease of which women could petition for divorce.<sup>11</sup> In addition, during this post war period Kerber coins the term Republican Motherhood to describe the role expansion of now republican women. Kerber argues that American society encouraged women to be educated on political views as it required a "sensibly educated female to help educate the male."<sup>12</sup> It was the Republican Mother who would be required to raise well informed, civic minded sons and therefore she needed to be educated and versed in political ideas. This ideology is taken a step further by Jan Lewis. Lewis

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<sup>9</sup> Abigail Adams, "Abigail Adams's Letters of March 31 and May 7, 1776." In *The American Revolution*. American Journey. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, (1999) *U.S. History in Context*

<sup>10</sup> Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 9

<sup>11</sup> Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: the Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800*. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980)

<sup>12</sup> Linda K. Kerber. *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 10

states that it was the husband-wife relationship that mattered even more. According to Lewis, courtship and marriage became infused with republican expectations and political meaning and that inevitably developed women into political beings.<sup>13</sup>

Lewis uses the term Republican Wife to replace Kerber's Republican Mother and also notes a societal shift.

Yet in shifting interest from the parent-child nexus to the husband-wife bond, eighteenth-century authors necessarily raised women to a new moral and political stature. When the key relationship in a society is that between father and son or ruler and subject, women may conveniently be ignored; when the most important relationship is between conjugal equals, and when the family is still seen as the correlative of the larger society, then women can no longer be overlooked.<sup>14</sup>

When American colonists emancipated themselves from their British ruler/father they changed the social dynamic throughout the States and the focus shifted. This shift allowed for the education of women and the expansion of their role as political educators of the men, not just sons, in their lives.

As the new nation defined republicanism, education for women became more and more accepted. According to Margaret Nash, a more appropriate term than Republican Motherhood is Republican Womanhood as the American education system and society believed that women had great influence over all the men in their lives: husbands and sons of course, but also brothers and

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<sup>13</sup> Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1987): 698

<sup>14</sup> Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1987): 699

uncles as well.<sup>15</sup> Nash argues that Enlightenment beliefs allowed that women were just as capable of rational thought as men and therefore educators proposed that women's power over men in their lives should be harnessed to engage republican virtues.<sup>16</sup> The repeated encouragement of women to become educated in order to stabilize American society and reinforce republican virtues resulted can be seen clearly in one of the more prolific female writers of the time Mercy Otis Warren. Warren repeatedly encouraged women to participate in civic affairs informally by interaction with their men. In a letter to her sister she encourages Rebecca to, "cultivate your mind and enlarge your understanding by reading."<sup>17</sup> Warren and Abigail Adams exchanged many letters, some of their correspondence was in regards to male/female roles. Adams wrote to Warren in 1776 describing her husbands 'saucy' response to her 'Remember the ladies' letter. Adams expresses a certain level of anger at her husband's 'laughter' in response. However, the most significant part of the letter is where Adams assertively refers to women as a large tribe that may engage their own rebellion if they are not 'remembered.'<sup>18</sup> This is a reference to her Letter to John Adams and describes a society where, at least elite women were able to be that assertive and make such public statements. This attitude where women were encouraged and expected to be educated enough to take part in political discussion in order to fully develop republicanism in the new republic is an expansion of women's roles. The first step in expanding women's roles into the public sphere is that they be educated enough to have cogent conversation regarding political and civic affairs.

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<sup>15</sup> Margaret A. Nash, "Rethinking Republican Motherhood: Benjamin Rush and the Young Ladies' Academy of Philadelphia" *Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 2 (1997): 175

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 188, 178

<sup>17</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Rebecca Otis N.D. 1776, Mercy Otis Warren Letterbook, Warren Papers, 57-58

<sup>18</sup> Abigail Adams. "Letter from Abigail Adams to Mercy Otis Warren (1776)." In *Women in America*. American Journey. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, (1999) *U.S. History in Context*

Women's education played a significant factor in propelling women into the public sphere as political actors. According to Mary Kelley, women's education is what propelled women into the public sphere, something she referred to as Civil Society.<sup>19</sup> First Kelley argues that opportunities, in education, work and business had increased after the Revolution.<sup>20</sup> Kelley then asserts that female academies were places where women polished reasoning and rhetorical skills which then increased women's social capital and leadership skills which contributed to their success in organizing benevolence, social reform and cultural production.<sup>21</sup> For example, Kelley states that "by 1860, women constituted between 65 and 80 percent of the teachers in towns and cities of every region," she notes varying percentages of rural female teachers.<sup>22</sup> Clearly, women used this education to enter the public sphere as teachers and education was

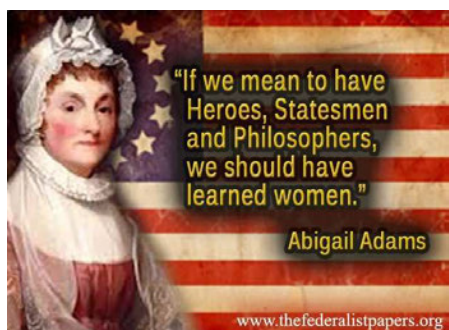


Figure 2: Abigail Adams on Education

considered important (see figure 2).<sup>23</sup> In addition, according to Kelley, "elite white women took their place in the tea houses, coffee houses and salons that formed public opinion, and reform movements: white women's rights and abolition."<sup>24</sup> Kelley notes the salons and literary societies were places where public opinion was formed and the

benevolent societies that campaigned for reform. These organizations were significant in that they allowed women entry into the public sphere where political and civic discussions took place

<sup>19</sup> Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 5

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 22

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 16, 22, 32

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 10

<sup>23</sup> Abigail Adams Quote: "Abigail Adams Letter to John Adams August 14, 1776" National Archives. *The Adams Papers*, Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 2 June 1776- March 1778 <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/d3/94/7a/d3947a0826919c5db7795712316f43b3--republican-girl-abigail-adams.jpg>

<sup>24</sup> Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 8

and policy was enacted, with women's input, clearly an expansion of women's roles in a political fashion. The contribution of a reemerging salon culture was significant to the engagement of women.

A reemerging salon culture in the large cities was instrumental in engaging women in sociopolitical discussion and action. In order to take their place in the salon, women had to be educated, which was now acceptable and accessible, post-war. There are two excellent examples of salon culture, Washington D.C. and Philadelphia, where women not only engaged in salon culture, but also used salon culture in political machinations. First, Catherine Allgor analyzed salon culture in Washington D.C. and concluded that women ran the show, as the early republican ideal held that men had to remain politically pure and thus were unable to access typical political machinations such as patronage.<sup>25</sup> For example, Allgor points to Dolley Madison's Wednesday night "Drawing Rooms" and State dinners, clearly dominated by Dolley Madison where she directed political conversation and which allowed access to the President.<sup>26</sup> This is clearly an expansion of women's political role as not only were women entrusted with political discussion but also in command of that discussion and direction. Allgor also points out that Washington D.C. was a place where "women could throng a congressional gallery airing their views and the practiced of "calling" which was performed by women to make connections, exchange information and plan events.<sup>27</sup> Women participated heavily in the early republics politics through informal salon culture. The same was true in Philadelphia.

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<sup>25</sup> Catherine Allgor, *Parlor politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 240

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 72-73

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 113, 120

In Philadelphia salon culture offered similar opportunities from similar causes and clearly indicates the expansion of women's political roles. Susan Branson argues that women's participation in politics stems from three factors: first, an increasingly available print media, and increasingly literate female population, second the revival of institutions such as salons, and third, the development of a national political culture that incorporated political parties.<sup>28</sup> The requirements of education and culture came together to expand women's roles post revolution. Branson concludes that women were more a part of the public sphere during this period more so than previously because both Federalists and Democratic-Republicans courted women in order to claim each had the best interests of the nation in mind which had the effect of expanding women's political role.<sup>29</sup> Thus, it was the revolution that began the expansion of women's roles which continued to expand immediately post war through the salon. According to Branson, the emergence of the "American political salon" in the 1790s, presided over by the wives of the social and political elite, where they could join in discussing political issues and help to create the necessary glue of networking and alliances, allowed women "to achieve a foothold in the world of politics."<sup>30</sup> Clearly this is another example of how salon culture contributed to an expanded, political, role for women of the early republic. It was not just the salon where women's roles had expanded into the public and political world, there were also benevolent societies.

The reform movements of the early nineteenth century are well known, what is interesting is the women's participation in: the temperance movement, prison reform, common

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<sup>28</sup> Susan Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames: Women and Political Culture in Early National Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001)

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 143

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 236



school movement or most significantly, and most political, the abolition movement were examples of an expanding role for women. According to Nancy Cott the period from 1780 to 1830 was a time of wide- and deep-ranging transformation...invention of a new language of political and social thought; and-not least-with respect to family life, the appearance of “domesticity.”<sup>31</sup> In addition, Cott argues that women entered these reform movement not only to better society but also to “pursue objects of their own self-interest.”<sup>32</sup> These benevolent societies, organizations to affect change, allowed women to lead, organize and move a political and public agenda in a clear expansion of roles. Kathleen McCarthy argues that these voluntary societies served as a method for women to challenge gender roles and expand their political role, defining public opinion and reality for nineteenth century Americans.<sup>33</sup> These benevolent societies were concrete means for women to emerge into the public sphere as an extension of the domestic sphere and engage in political activity. In addition as Margret Nash points out a second factor in educating women was the need for women to fulfill certain business functions.<sup>34</sup> The effect of widowhood on women was not lost on republican society and how to treat women who now had to make business decisions in the absence of the male head of household expanded women’s roles. Linda Kerber also described Coverture laws (British laws that governed female ownership of property) were relaxed post revolution.<sup>35</sup> As women became more and more accepted in the public sphere women’s work began to be redefined as well.

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<sup>31</sup> Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Woman's Sphere' in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 3

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 7

<sup>33</sup> Kathleen D. McCarthy, *American Creed: Philanthropy and the Rise of Civil Society, 1700-1865* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 4, 5

<sup>34</sup> Margaret A. Nash, "Rethinking Republican Motherhood: Benjamin Rush and the Young Ladies' Academy of Philadelphia" *Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 2 (1997): 189

<sup>35</sup> Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 9

Labor, and the significance that is attached to certain labors, changed during the early nineteenth century. First, according to Nancy Cott the shift in production, due to the first industrial revolution, created women's and men's work in that the focus became on labor outside the entire household.<sup>36</sup> Cott's analysis continues to argue that the separation and specialization seemed to create separate spheres but in reality had the effect of increasing the importance of the women's "sphere" because the cultural milieu of the early republic connected the domestic sphere with the well-being of society.<sup>37</sup> So, while there were perceptually separate spheres the significance of the women's sphere allowed women to engage in public discourse. However, this view has not gone unchallenged. Jeanne Boydston asserts that early industrialization made women's work invisible and therefore shrunk women's visibility and significance to American society.<sup>38</sup> These differing interpretations focus the pattern that women's roles expanded due to wartime participation but later a backlash appeared that contracted women's roles and status, although some expansion continued beyond the contraction point.

The backlash that created a contraction of women's roles and status began with the French Revolution. According to Rosemarie Zagari, in the wake of the Revolution women's rights looked promising, but the French Revolution created a conservative backlash.<sup>39</sup> The chaos in France likely a causal agent as American men pulled back from the more liberal ideas. This was a more gradual change until Jackson. Catherine Allgor's analysis of salon culture denoted Jefferson's attitude of excluding women from the political process. According to Allgor,

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<sup>36</sup> Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Woman's Sphere' in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 199

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 199

<sup>38</sup> Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), xx

<sup>39</sup> Rosemarie Zagari, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 2

Jefferson came to believe that women were a disruptive presence in politics.<sup>40</sup> In a common pattern in history, when there is a revolution there proceeds a counter revolution. In this case the revolution was an expansion of women's roles, status and rights. The counter revolution was in the backlash that excluded women.

Initially, the backlash appeared as separation into men's and women's spheres. Nancy Cott, for all her argument on how women's roles expanded, identified that expansion in the informal realm, and identified a limited and sex specific role to play, in addition to the term domestic sphere.<sup>41</sup> The identification of separate spheres and a recognition of expanded but limited participation also identifies the backlash effect. Jan Lewis's *Republican Wife* was hardly an egalitarian relationship. According to Lewis, the essayists who addressed marital conflict instructed the wife to bend.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, while women's roles and status had expanded, those roles were still limited. The salon culture described by Allgor and Branson are also of informal ties so that while women were moving politics and engaged in public discourse they were only able to do so as an extension of the household. Dolley Madison's "Drawing Rooms," as described by Allgor, were cocktail parties hosted by the Frist Family and therefore did not legally include women. According to Zagarri, women were engaged in the Revolution and participated, at the encouragement of male politicians in the building of the republic and in the politics of the early republic as Revolutionary ideas were not limited to men and could apply to

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<sup>40</sup> Catherine Allgor, *Parlor politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 21, 22

<sup>41</sup> Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Woman's Sphere' in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), xvii

<sup>42</sup> Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1987): 712

women.<sup>43</sup> However, Zagarri identifies this was informal participation.<sup>44</sup> So, it was only through informal means that women were allowed to participate. Thus, an expansion of role, but also a backlash creating a contraction of role and status.

If the early republic separated male and female roles the Jacksonian period formally excluded women. First, Kathleen McCarthy's analysis of the Eaton affair, where the society women of Washington D.C. effectively excluded Peggy Eaton and forced the resignation of Jackson's Secretary of War and most of the rest of his cabinet, concludes that, "for men like Jackson and John Eaton, women were to be protected, guided, and perhaps even privately revered. But they were not to be tolerated as political actors."<sup>45</sup> John and Peggy Eaton joined Washington D.C. society with John's appointment to the cabinet. But, rumors of sexual misconduct, an affair and the circumstances surrounding their marriage (a quick wedding after her husband died and almost no mourning period) led Washington ladies to conclude she was not cabinet wife material and ostracize them both. Because Jackson liked the Eatons he insisted that his cabinet socialize with the Eatons leading to the resignations of nearly the entire cabinet. The Eaton affair both showcases the power that women exerted through informal means and the limitations on that power as women were more and more excluded following the Eaton affair. Margaret Baynard Smith commented that in the wake of the Eaton affair that, "social relations are as completely changed as if we had moved to another city"<sup>46</sup> This contraction continued as women were more and more formally excluded. According to Zagarri, as the attitude developed

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<sup>43</sup> Rosemarie Zagari, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 2, 4

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 2

<sup>45</sup> Kathleen D. McCarthy, *American Creed: Philanthropy and the Rise of Civil Society, 1700-1865* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 166

<sup>46</sup> Margaret Baynard Smith. Letter to Jane Baynard Kirkpatrick August 29, 1831. Margaret Baynard Smith Papers. Library of Congress. [www.loc.gov/item/mss40436033](http://www.loc.gov/item/mss40436033)

that women could best serve society in a domestic role, laws were passed that structurally limited participation and excluded women, and political parties developed traditions that did not include women.<sup>47</sup> Further, Zagari asserts the causal agent of this attitude was a belief that “scientifically” the sexes were biologically different and therefore cultural exclusion was science based which resulted in a sea change of attitude where women were actively discouraged from public and political participation.<sup>48</sup> The formal exclusion included voting. There is a clear pattern of role and status contraction in the 1830s following role expansion post-Revolution.

In summary, the pattern of women’s role and status expansion during and immediately post war with a backlash and contraction later began with the Revolution. Women’s participation in the boycotts pre-Revolution and their participation in the revolution as support services led to their role expansion in the domestic sphere immediately post war. Women were encouraged to engage in informal politics and needed to be educated to do so. This education led to women’s emergence into public society where they developed the social capital to engage in politics through a reemerging salon culture and in benevolent societies. But, during the Jacksonian period a backlash emerged that limited women and actively discouraged women’s informal participation in politics and structurally, legally, excluded women from organized politics. However, while the backlash excluded women in many ways, cultural patterns never returned completely to pre-Revolutionary pattern as women continued to be educated and engage in reform movements and informal social discourse.

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<sup>47</sup> Rosemarie Zagari, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 6

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 6, 9

## Chapter 2: Case Study: Civil War

The pattern of expansion and contraction of women's roles as an impact of war and a backlash following war continues through the Civil War. America's Civil War was the most costly in terms of human life, the traditionally accepted casualty numbers of six hundred and



Figure 3: Women in the Civil War

twenty thousand have recently been refigured by J. David Hacker as closer seven hundred and fifty thousand and perhaps as high as eight hundred and fifty thousand.<sup>49</sup> These numbers are close to the number of every other war combined, so naturally the Civil War had a tremendous impact on American culture, society, economics and

politics. Women's roles expanded during the war as women participated in the war effort (see Figure 3) and took up slack at home, which is part of the pattern.<sup>50</sup> Nursing, a traditionally male profession antebellum became an accepted and eventually traditionally female profession postbellum. This points to an expanded role in employment, at home and with the armies. The Lost Cause narrative developed during Reconstruction and women in the South not only took part, but often took on leadership roles, especially through the United Daughters of the Confederacy which points to an expansion of roles. In addition, postbellum, female writers emerged and were professionally sought after in an expanded professional capacity. However,

<sup>49</sup> J. David Hacker, "Recounting the Dead." (New York Times, September 20, 2011).

<sup>50</sup> <http://civilwarsaga.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Our-Women-in-the-War-Wood-Engraving-on-Paper-by-Winslow-Homer-Harpers-Weekly-Sept-1864.jpg>

as this general pattern includes a contraction, those very writers were only allowed to succeed as long as they wrote “properly” of accepted topics which included a white, male patriarchy and especially of Southern authors, of the Lost Cause.

Women’s roles expanded as women took part in the war effort. According to Rhonda Lesniak, women replaced male teachers, learned how to run farms, entered politics and fought for abolition.<sup>51</sup> This is not surprising as a major war, and the Civil War was arguably the most major war in American history, requires the participation of the entire society not just soldiers. Lesniak’s article focuses on nursing which operates as an excellent example of the expansion of women’s roles. In addition, Caroline Janney asserts the war created jobs for women. First, according to Janney, women were hired as clerks in government jobs to such an extent they were called “Government Girls which also led to a breakdown of the separate spheres as many stayed on after the war.”<sup>52</sup> Janney further asserts that the manufacturing sector required more women to take the place of men gone off to war and that while many more were hired in the North, the Confederacy too hired many middle class women as well.<sup>53</sup> Again, the requirements of total war requires the participation of the entire society. This is corroborated by Lesniak who asserts that women were hired in record numbers by the Treasury Department, War offices and the Department of the Interior finally asserting that the number of women earning wages during the war period increased by sixty percent or more.<sup>54</sup> The extreme need for high numbers of soldiers

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<sup>51</sup> R. G. Lesniak, "Expanding the Role of Women as Nurses During the American Civil War" *Advances In Nursing Science* 32, no. 1 (January/March, 2009): 35

<sup>52</sup> Caroline Janney, *Women and the Civil War*. C-SPAN. West Lafayette. Purdue University November 30, 2010. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?296827-1/women-civil-war>

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> R. G. Lesniak, "Expanding the Role of Women as Nurses During the American Civil War" *Advances In Nursing Science* 32, no. 1 (January/March, 2009): 41

required women to step into many of these jobs. The war required an expansion of women's roles and not just in clerical work or manufacturing.

Women's roles had expanded professionally and militarily. Josiah Benton gave a Memorial Day speech in 1894 reflecting on how the war changed women's roles. First, Benton acknowledges that antebellum women were restricted and excluded from many professions.<sup>55</sup> He then describes how, because of the number of men, noting especially thirty thousand teachers and more than a half a million men withdrawn from occupations, created opportunities for women in those professions.<sup>56</sup> He then begins to describe that women took up these jobs, were found capable and in other ways raised money and contributed to the war effort.<sup>57</sup> Finally, Brenton asserts that women will and should remain in those professions, noting that census data points to an enlarged female workforce.<sup>58</sup> While Brenton may not have been representative of all men, the sentiments and facts he expresses illustrate that women's roles had expanded in professional capacities. Additionally, women worked actively as spies for both armies. Belle Boyd was such a Confederate spy. She was captured and imprisoned. While in prison for espionage she describes that her presence behind Federal lines and connections allowed her to acquire information and pass it on through a 'trusty messenger to General J.E.B. Stuart or some brave officer.'<sup>59</sup> This clearly indicates the significance women played in the war and a role expansion in a multitude of roles.

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<sup>55</sup> Josiah H. Brenton, Jr., "What Women Did for the War and What the War Did for Women (1894)." In *Women in America. American Journey*. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, 1999. *U.S. History in Context*

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Isabelle (Belle) Boyd. "Excerpt from Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison (Chapter 3) (1865)." In *Women in America. American Journey*. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, 1999. *U.S. History in Context*



While most of the jobs did not include combat zones many women did participate on or near combat zones. Janney has discovered that women worked as camp followers, working as teamsters and performing domestic chores like washing, but emphasizes they were not prostitutes as the myths suggest.<sup>60</sup> It is women taking on the role of teamster, organized driving of the wagons in or near combat zones that is a marked role expansion. She further notes that some four hundred women disguised themselves and fought in combat where they were known to their units and their secret was kept.<sup>61</sup> Four hundred is not so large number as to indicate a role expansion, but the fact that women participated, were known as female and their secret kept by their “brothers at arms” suggests a fluidity in times of war. While there were many jobs that both Northern and Southern women performed, many of which show a clear expansion of what roles were accepted for women, Southern women faced a unique situation.

Women in the South faced different circumstances, but their roles expanded as well. Janney argues that women in the South had unique responsibilities. According to Janney, women in the South faced running plantations, and slaves, without the men at home and were forced to endure food shortages to such an extent that Southern women petitioned the Confederate government, in political action, demanding that these private matters be taken care of by the government.<sup>62</sup> The role expansion of running a plantation and especially managing male slaves was as significant as the taking of political action in requesting aid from a Federal government in an ironic twist of the “States Rights” Confederacy. For example, Mary Clark petitioned the State of Virginia for compensation over the impressment of her slave Jacob, who

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<sup>60</sup> Caroline Janney, *Women and the Civil War*. C-SPAN. West Lafayette. Purdue University November 30, 2010. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?296827-1/women-civil-war>

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

after his fifty-one day duty fell ill and died after his return home.<sup>63</sup> That Confederate women were able to assert themselves in a public and legal manner indicates an expansion of roles. While a public and legal expansion of roles, Southern women did not have the same opportunities as Northern women.

Southern women had fewer political outlets than Northern women. Janney asserts that female political activism was too closely tied to abolition for Southern women to have as many opportunities.<sup>64</sup> White supremacy and slavery was so significant to the South and then Confederacy that this outlet was denied to women. After the war things changed as well for Southern women. According to Janney, after the war due to heavy casualty rates and a heavily skewed sex ratio, widowhood and spinsterhood became more acceptable postbellum.<sup>65</sup> This is another expansion of women's roles as women were more accepted as single and needing to make a living. As many of these examples illustrate an expansion of women's roles during the Civil War, the clearest example was in nursing.

Nursing became a legitimate profession for women postbellum. According to Caroline Janney, nursing was a male profession antebellum but had become a legitimate female profession after the war.<sup>66</sup> Janney claims nine thousand Northern women nurses and one thousand Confederate nurses, although also stating many more thousands of Southern women were utilized as nurses, during the Civil War.<sup>67</sup> This is very clear evidence of a significant role expansion. This is even more significant as an expansion of gender roles in the fact that it

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<sup>63</sup> Mary Clark, "Report of Committee on Claims in the Case of Mary Clark." In *The Civil War*. American Journey. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, (1999) *U.S. History in Context*

<sup>64</sup> <sup>64</sup> Caroline Janney, *Women and the Civil War*. C-SPAN. West Lafayette. Purdue University November 30, 2010. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?296827-1/women-civil-war>.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

opened an entire profession and shifted the profession into women's realm. According to Rhonda Lesniak, formal, trained nursing was nonexistent antebellum, but with the advent of the war, the need for nurses and the concept of surrogacy, where women could take care of men as an extension of the domestic sphere acting as "surrogate mothers, wives and daughters" allowed women to enter the profession.<sup>68</sup> While men may have had to find some kind of justification for "allowing" women into the profession, the extreme need for nursing left men without a choice. Additionally, that the profession became a women's profession postbellum indicates the role expansion for women into another accepted profession.

Nursing as a women's profession was encouraged by the Union government and Confederate nurses. First, Dorothea Dix, most well known for her work in the prison and mental health asylum reform, was appointed superintendent of U.S. Army nurses. Mary Denis Maher quotes the general order accepting Dorothea Dix from Simon Cameron, Secretary of War.

The free services of Miss D. L. Dix are accepted by the War Department and that she will give at all times all necessary aid in organizing military hospitals for the cure of all sick and wounded soldiers, aiding the chief surgeon by supplying nurses and substantial means for the comfort and relief of the suffering; also that she is fully authorized to receive, control, and disburse special supplies bestowed by individuals or associations for the comfort of their friends or the citizen soldiers from all parts of the limited states; as also, under action of the Acting Surgeon-General, to draw from the army stores.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> R.G. Lesniak, "Expanding the Role of Women as Nurses During the American Civil War" *Advances In Nursing Science* 32, no. 1 (January/March, 2009): 34, 36

<sup>69</sup> Mary Denis Maher, *To Bind Up The Wounds: Catholic Sister Nurses in the U.S. Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 52

Not only the acceptance of women as nurses, but also the acceptance of a women Superintendent of Nursing in the U.S. Army, although not a commissioned posting, encouraged the expansion of women's roles during the war. Dix herself issued orders for the recruitment of nurses. While her orders seem to dwell, from a modern perspective, on appearance rather than qualification, Circular Order Number 8 establishes recruiting rules for Union nurses.<sup>70</sup> So, Dix' established as a female superintendent issuing orders (a clear leadership responsibility) for the recruitment of women as nurses in response to the great need of war illustrates a significant expansion of women's roles. The same was true for Confederate nurses. Kate Cumming was a prominent Confederate nurse who argued in favor of employing women as nurses at the beginning of the war.

Let the women go into the hospitals. Now she comes to what is woman's true sphere: in war, the men to fight, and the women to nurse the wounded and sick, are words I have already quoted. I have no patience with women whom I hear telling what wonders they would do if they were only men, when I see so much of their own legitimate work left undone. Ladies can be of service in hospitals, and of great service. I have heard more than one surgeon say, if he could get the right kind, he would have them in almost every department. I could name many things they could do, without ever once going into a ward.<sup>71</sup>

Eventually, the Confederate government, out of need, incorporated women into the field. In an excerpt of rules and regulations, the Medical Society of South Carolina in article 14 delineates a

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<sup>70</sup> Dorothea Lyne Dix. "Circular Order No. 8, 1862" In *The Civil War*. American Journey. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, (1999)

<sup>71</sup> Kate Cumming. *Kate: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse*. ed. Richard Harwell. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press), 135

“Matron” in charge of certain duties in the war of the hospital.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, both Union and Confederate women were encouraged to expand their roles into the nursing field as part of the war effort and after the war nursing became a legitimate profession for women. Thus expanding women’s roles post war as well.

Once the war ended in Confederate defeat, Southern women’s roles continued to expand through the Lost Cause narrative. Postbellum, Ladies Memorial Associations and the United Daughters of the Confederacy formed to preserve the “correct” memory of the war for the South. For example, in January of 1902, Adelia Dunovant, the President of the Texas UDC, gave an address,

History should be made to serve its true purpose by bringing its lessons into the present and using them as a guide to the future...what lies before us is not only loyalty to memories, but loyalty to principles: not only building of monuments, but the vindication of the men of the Confederacy.<sup>73</sup>

The UDC used words such as “correct” or “truthful” history in order to validate white male supremacy. In fact, according to the 2017 UDC website, the UDC was incorporated to include the following goals, number three states “To collect and preserve the material for a truthful history of the War Between the States.”<sup>74</sup> With the vindication of Confederate men and the message of the Confederacy as part of the goal the UDC, which grew out of the LMAs, both helped to expand women’s roles and also contract those roles. Charles Wilson describes the Lost Cause narrative as a narrative post war where the South constructed a value system with

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<sup>72</sup> Medical Society of South Carolina "Excerpt of Rule and Regulations for the Government of the Trustees and Officers of the Roper Hospital, Adopted by the Medical Society of South Carolina, 1861" In *The Civil War. American Journey*. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, (1999)

<sup>73</sup> Adelia Dunovant, “Address of Miss Adelia Dunovant” *Lost Cause*. 1902. 91-93

<sup>74</sup> “History of the UDC” United Daughters of the Confederacy. [www.hqudc.org](http://www.hqudc.org). 2017

powerful cultural authority steeped in white supremacy and patriarchy in order to assure white cultural dominance.<sup>75</sup> David Goldfield similarly describes the Lost Cause as a way for Southern whites to justify the war by restoring, “the principles upon which its civilization rested: white supremacy and patriarchy. Freedom was a dangerous thing; it ruined a slave and removed women from the protection of men.”<sup>76</sup> The Lost Cause was a way for the former Confederacy to fight Reconstruction and claim that their Cause, which included slavery, “really wasn’t all that bad.” This Lost Cause included significant patriarchal ideology which seems to contradict a role expansion for women, and indeed, eventually the backlash will contract women’s roles. However, women’s involvement in the Lost Cause created opportunities for women.

The earliest Lost Cause women’s organizations, Ladies Memorialization Associations, offered a public way for women to engage in political behavior in an expansion of women’s roles. According to Caroline Janney, LMAs transformed the nature of the Southern male-female relationship as women first solicited powerful men to support their projects, then hired and managed men performing their reinternment and monument projects the result of which was that gender patterns did not return to antebellum status.<sup>77</sup> The public nature of the reinternment and monument projects put women in very public leadership roles in a clear expansion of the roles women were allowed to perform. In addition, Janney asserts that because the leadership was women, the organizations clear political goals were hidden from the North.<sup>78</sup> The subversive nature of the Lost Cause was to reinforce white male supremacy in order to vindicate Southern

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<sup>75</sup> Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009), xiv

<sup>76</sup> David R. Goldfield, *Still Fighting the Civil War: The American South and Southern History* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2002), 2

<sup>77</sup> Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 7

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* 6

men and snatch victory from defeat. It was secondarily subversive in that it contributed to an expansion of women's roles. While the earliest organization may have been the LMAs, it was the United Daughters of the Confederacy that clearly had the most impact.

Women's roles expanded through the Lost Cause narrative by taking leadership through the United Daughters of the Confederacy and memorializing the war. According to Karen Cox, women took prominent leadership roles in a prominent women's organization (UDC) in order to shape the social and political culture of the South and turn military defeat into cultural victory by embracing the conservative values of white supremacy and patriarchy.<sup>79</sup> The primary significance is the role expansion in both women's prominent leadership and in the prominence of the UDC. According to Cox, the UDC was powerful enough that UDC presidents were hosted by the White House, Presidents T. Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson in order to discuss memorializing the Confederacy at Arlington.<sup>80</sup> The power clearly involved in this action is significant, the Confederacy lost a rebellion, that there was even a conversation about memorializing traitors at the United States Federal cemetery shows just how powerful these women had become. Cox further argues that the UDC was attractive as it filled a void in women's lives, allowed women to participate as leaders and use their talents and abilities in the public sphere which was "almost feminism, when feminism was frowned upon."<sup>81</sup> By taking on such role expansion, but hiding it in plain sight, the subterfuge is complete and significant. According to David Blight, women of the UDC were highly effective and highly political, calling them "activists" who "planted a white supremacist vision of the Lost Cause deeper into the nation's historical imagination than

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<sup>79</sup> Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2003.), 1

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 6

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. 28, 29

perhaps any other association.”<sup>82</sup> These women would not have called themselves political activists as that would have provoked backlash in the white, male patriarchy, but nonetheless they used an expanded role created by the Lost Cause to be politically active. The UDC was actively involved in writing history, but the expansion of female fiction writers is also a telling point.

Writing as a profession for women expanded during and after the war. According to Helen Taylor, “women’s writing before and after the War was warmly received by publishers and magazine editors and was used to stoke southern propaganda.”<sup>83</sup> Taylor assert that these female authors became politicized as their stories were used in the purveyance of the Lost Cause Narrative and played a key role in keep spirits up during the war, the defeat and Reconstruction and were further used to develop a Southern culture steeped in the Lost Cause.<sup>84</sup> The first role expansion is clearly the fact of a more accepted profession, that of author. It is worth noting that this is a second newly acceptable profession for women, when prior to the Civil War the very concept of a female professional would have been odd if not outright quashed. The second role expansion is in the sociopolitical nature of the writings. Taylor’s analysis concludes that these women and their stories were significant in developing a white, male supremacist Southern culture.<sup>85</sup> That these stories conveyed a particular sociocultural message that was well and extensively received indicates the importance of the author’s role in developing culture. According to Sarah Gardner, eventually the Southern narrative as conveyed by these women,

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<sup>82</sup> David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA Harvard University Press, 2001), 273, 278

<sup>83</sup> Helen Taylor, "Women and Dixie: The Feminization of Southern Women's History and Culture" *American Literary History* 18, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 849

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 850

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. 849



who had “carved out new roles for themselves and fashioned a new cultural identity for the South,” converged into a national narrative.<sup>86</sup> Clearly these women took advantage of an expanded role to include their profession and just as clearly they had a significant impact on Southern culture and society. While women’s roles clearly expanded during the war due to women’s participation in the war effort and postbellum in the Lost Cause, the conservative nature of the Lost cause also supports the backlash and contraction of women’s roles.

The very monuments built by the United Daughters of the Confederacy conveyed a patriarchal image. According to H. Gulley, the UDC which placed most of the monuments, significantly impacted society in that the monuments help maintain social order as a visual reinforcement of cultural values.<sup>87</sup> Secondly, Gulley asserts that the presence of the monuments serves to “preserve the conservative patriarchal society where women were both revered and constrained.”<sup>88</sup> And, finally, Gulley concludes that most of the monuments are to men, which is suggestive, that the remaining six to women, show women posed passively with captions that “venerate traditional women’s roles as guardians of the home and supporters of the men.”<sup>89</sup> The patriarchal images these monuments present serve to reinforce the sociocultural values of male supremacy as well as white supremacy. With this as a cultural value women were still constrained. Thus, the Lost cause served as a backlash and contraction of women’s roles postbellum as well. While the monuments presented a physical image of patriarchy, women writers of the Lost Cause faced a similar backlash.

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<sup>86</sup> Sarah Gardner, *Blood and Irony: Southern White Women’s Narratives of the Civil War, 1861–1937* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 2

<sup>87</sup> H. Gulley, "Women and the Lost Cause: Preserving a Confederate Identity in the American Deep South" *Journal of Historical Geography* 19, no. 2 (April 1, 1993): 125, 130

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 129

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 133

Women's leadership roles and authorship presented challenges as well. According to David Goldfield, by preserving the Lost Cause "in stone and memory" white women were able to support their men and find outlets for their talents, which were allowed in the public sphere as long as those talents supported white male supremacy.<sup>90</sup> A career was allowable so long as that career appeared to be an extension of the domestic sphere and reinforced the patriarchy and racism. Helen Taylor's literary analysis found the same theme. According to Taylor, "at times, their anger and anguish, apparently directed at the North and its dastardly deeds, is concealing feminist and, sometimes, antiracist frustration against the whole society which constrained and then badly let them down."<sup>91</sup> These women writers could be professionals but only if they followed the formula reinforcing most importantly white supremacy but also male supremacy. Karen Cox argues similarly that the legacy of the UDC is one of white male supremacy conceding that while they did much good, "they perpetuated a conservative ideology and agenda consistent with the politics of white supremacy."<sup>92</sup> Caroline Janney asserts the same is true of the legacy of the Ladies Memorial Associations that they "created rituals and traditions that intensified attachment to the Confederate cause" and "part of the legacy is the white male supremacy developed by these women."<sup>93</sup> The very conservative, patriarchal, nature that these women developed through writing the histories and fictive stories that shaped culture created the constraints that led to role contraction.

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<sup>90</sup> David R. Goldfield, *Still Fighting the Civil War: The American South and Southern History* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2002), 97, 98

<sup>91</sup> Helen Taylor, "Women and Dixie: The Feminization of Southern Women's History and Culture" *American Literary History* 18, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 853

<sup>92</sup> Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2003), 29

<sup>93</sup> Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 198

To conclude, America's most costly war, and arguably the most significant war, the Civil War changed women's roles considerably. As part of a pattern of expansion and contraction women engaged in the war effort and performed many roles as needed which had the effect of expanding the roles where women were culturally accepted. Women were hired in record numbers for government clerical work, and the manufacturing sector saw significant increase in the number of female workers. Nursing as a profession was considered a male profession antebellum and became a female profession postbellum. The profession of author also expanded in the number of female writers during the Civil War period. The Lost Cause narrative and women's groups such as the Ladies Memorial Associations and the United Daughters of the Confederacy used their position in an extension of the domestic sphere to lead movements to reinter Confederate soldiers, build monuments and write the correct history. Their leadership and management showcased an expanding political activism, hidden in the nurturing, kind women's work of being compassionate to impoverished widows and injured soldiers and the memorializing the dead. However, the Lost Cause narrative was inherently a conservative narrative and women leaders embraced, and were sometimes frustrated by, the white male supremacy that the patriarchy insisted be the narrative which essentially contracted women's roles postbellum.

### **Chapter 3: Case Study: World War I**

America's Great War had a significant impact on women. World War I was not the first total war for America but it was the first industrial total war and as such required all sectors of society to take part. Prior to American belligerency women, in an expanded political role, took part in both the peace and the preparedness movements. Women like Jane Addams and Mary Colvorcoresses led movements to either forsake American entry into war or to prepare diligently for war. Upon belligerency, women were encouraged by the government, through powerful propaganda efforts to take part in the war effort as industrial workers, through taking the jobs of men gone to war and by joining the military in auxiliary roles such as nurses and clerks. Finally, by the wars end women had achieved a major role expansion, Suffrage. Initially, women were able to leverage the vote, through the Women's Joint Congressional Committee, into real political power and continued to expand their political role through successful lobbying efforts that influenced the political agenda nationwide for a decade. However, a backlash beginning at the wars end first contracted many, though not all, employment opportunities and eventually a conservative political shift ended much of the political influence of the WJCC. While women's roles contracted as they lost political power, the new political culture and 'new woman' of the 1920s included and accepted women in electoral politics as American society increasingly looked for governmental involvement in social issues that had in the past been the purview of the women's sphere. The pattern is highly recognizable as women's roles expand two steps forward during wartime due to women's participation in the war effort, and are then contracted one step back due to backlash post war, leaving some role expansion to continue.

During this Progressive Era, women played central roles in both the peace and preparedness movements. According to Robert Zieger, before American belligerency women like Jane Addams, Lillian Wald and Emily Stanton Blach extended their social welfare causes into the political arena to protest American involvement in the European war.<sup>1</sup> Further, Jane Addams helped to found the Women's Peace Party, which, according to Zieger, was a preeminent peace organization led by Addams.<sup>2</sup> Addams was a social leader prior to outbreak of war in Europe, that she was able to expand her role of social reformer into one of political reformer illustrates a more accepted political role for women. This was also true for the military preparedness campaign. According to Zieger, women such as Mary Colvorcoreses, Elizabeth Poe and Mary Simmerson led women's preparedness organizations such as the Women's Section of the Navy League.<sup>3</sup> Zieger also points out that the initial preparedness campaigns to provide care and relief for victims of German aggression brought these women for the first time into public activity.<sup>4</sup> While the ideology of peace or military preparedness are opposite, women being accepted easily into public and political activity during the war illustrates an expansion of women's roles.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 139

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 139

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 140

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 141

Once America joined the war women were needed as part of the war effort and were heavily recruited in propaganda efforts. First, according to Ana Garner and Karen Slattery, the press was instrumental in a propaganda effort to change the image of women from ‘Good Mother’ to a ‘Patriotic Mother’ archetype that would support the war and send their boys off to war.<sup>5</sup> Posters (see Figure 4) were used to reinforce that image.<sup>6</sup> This type of propaganda was aimed at women to obtain their permission and participation in the war effort. Second, according to



Figure 4: World War I ‘Good Mother’

Michael Coventry, the government, through the CPI, made it a policy to engage women in the war effort as a mother figure or as a nurse.<sup>7</sup> Thus, American society, as a policy effort through

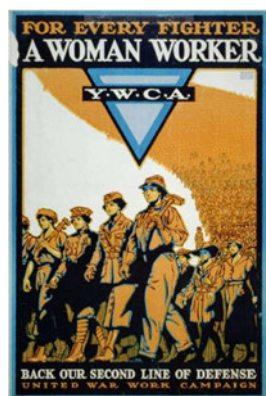


Figure 5: Women being encouraged to enter the workforce

the press and government, deliberately sought to engage women in the war effort. The images that were presented to women resulted in an expansion of women’s roles. Images of women stepping in to take men’s jobs were clearly meant to encourage women to enter the workforce in an expanded capacity. Posters (see Figure 5) were developed to encourage women to participate in the war effort by taking industrial, male oriented jobs.<sup>8</sup> According to Gail Braybon, propaganda in the form of images on

posters were highly used to “reinforce the sense that the home was essential to the war effort,” and then as the women’s work was “deemed more essential the range of their work expanded.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ana C. Garner and Karen Slattery, "Mobilizing Mother: From Good Mother to Patriotic Mother in World War I" *Journalism and Communication Monographs* 14, no. 1 (03, 2012): 5-77

<sup>6</sup> World War I Propaganda Posters. Accessed June 26, 2017 <http://www.ww1propaganda.com/world-war-1-posters/>

<sup>7</sup> Michael T. Coventry, "'Editorials at a Glance': Cultural Policy, Gender, and Modernity in the World War I Bureau of Cartoons." *Review Of Policy Research* 24, no. 2 (March 2007): 97-117

<sup>8</sup> World War I Propaganda Posters. Accessed June 26, 2017 <http://www.ww1propaganda.com/world-war-1-posters/>

<sup>9</sup> Gail Braybon, *Women Workers in the First World War* (Independence: Taylor and Francis, 2008), 13

These propaganda efforts were aimed at women in order to encourage full societal participation in the war. According to Robert Zieger, while women did not join the workforce in overwhelming numbers, the propaganda efforts did significantly reconfigure employment as four hundred thousand joined the ranks of semiskilled labor and more than seven hundred and fifty thousand became office workers.<sup>10</sup> Other World War I posters are included in appendix A. Most are clearly designed to encourage female participation in a variety of ways. Not only were women encouraged to take jobs, but also join the Women's Land Army in order to grow and preserve food items at home so more could go to the front. In addition, recruiting posters (see Figure 6) also encouraged women to enlist.<sup>11</sup> According to Robert Zieger, the army employed thirty thousand women as nurses, clerks, translators and switchboard operators, while the navy recruited eleven thousand.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, not only were women actively encouraged to expand their roles through propaganda efforts, those efforts were highly successful.



Figure 6: Women encouraged to join military auxiliary

The highly successful propaganda efforts resulted in women's participation in the workforce. For example, Mabel Daggett wrote a book, *Women Wanted*, describing the efforts made by women patriating in World War I. In chapter three of this book Daggett outlines how women were being confronted by new images of women in new roles, such as that of an elevator girl, a congress women taking the place of her husband (Mrs. Walter Collier, Lexington, MA) or

<sup>10</sup> Robert Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 144

<sup>11</sup> World War I Propaganda Posters. Accessed June 26, 2017 <http://www.ww1propaganda.com/world-war-1-posters/>

<sup>12</sup> Robert Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 141, 142

in manufacturing.<sup>13</sup> The roles Daggett describes women taking are expanded roles due to the need for women to aid in the war effort. Additionally, women were encouraged to train for these new roles. Emma Hirth put together a forward for listing of collegiate classes aimed at women in order that they might take these classes and enter the workforce prepared to perform necessary war work, the pamphlet lists everything from Agriculture to Economics to Industry and Trades and Scientific Training.<sup>14</sup> This indicates that women were being encouraged to attend school specifically for the purpose of expanding their roles in pursuit of participation in the war effort. But, the most significant role expansion for women of this war period came in the form of the vote.

One of the most significant expansions of women's roles that came about due to the First World War was Suffrage. The War led to increasing political rights, especially the vote, globally and in the United States. According to Susan Grayzel, globally women began the First World War without the vote but, by war's end most nations recognized women's right to vote.<sup>15</sup> Thus, on a global scale women's roles were expanding and this included the United States. The fight for Suffrage increased during the war. Doris Stevens, a Suffragette, compiled a first-hand account called *Jailed for Freedom*, in which she included the resignation letter of Dudley Malone, Woodrow Wilson's Assistant Secretary of State. Malone resigned in protest of Wilson's reluctance to endorse a Suffrage Amendment.

how can the government ask millions of American women, educated in our  
schools and colleges, and millions of American women, in our homes, or toiling

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<sup>13</sup> Mabel Potter Daggett, "Excerpt From Women Wanted (Chapter III), 1918. In *Women in America*. American Journey. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, (1999) *U.S. History in Context*

<sup>14</sup> Emma Hirth, "Clearing House for War Time Training in Co-operation with the Inter-Collegiate Bureau of Occupations, 1918" In *Women in America*. American Journey. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, (1999)

<sup>15</sup> Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (White Plains: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 101



for economic independence in every line of industry, to give up by conscription their men and happiness to a war for democracy in Europe, while these women citizens are denied the right to vote on the policies of the Government which demands of them such sacrifice? For this reason many of your most ardent friends and supporters feel that the passage of the federal suffrage amendment is a war measure which could appropriately be urged by you at this session of Congress.<sup>16</sup>

As suffragettes continued to fight for the vote, more and more men, as Malone, were noticing women's participation in the war effort and recognizing women's sacrifices. Eventually, Woodrow Wilson also recognized this and under pressure addressed the Senate and urged the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, Suffrage, as a war measure.

We have made partners of the women in this war; shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering and sacrifice and toil and not to a partnership of privilege and right? This war could not have been fought, either by the other nations engaged or by America, if it had not been for the services of the women,—services rendered in every sphere,—not merely in the fields of effort in which we have been accustomed to see them work, but wherever men have worked and upon the very skirts and edges of the battle itself...Have I said that the passage of this amendment is a vitally necessary war measure, and do you need further proof?<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Doris Stevens, *Jailed For Freedom* (New York: Boni and Liveright 1920), 167

<sup>17</sup> Woodrow Wilson, *Speech to Senate, September 30, 1918*. Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library. Cary T. Grayson Papers, Staunton, Virginia. <http://www.woodrowwilson.org/digital-library/view.php?did=4438>

The most significant aspects of this passage of Wilson's speech are the connection of the war to democracy and the connection of the services and sacrifices of women to the war effort while there existed a disparity of rights. While it is a bit of a stretch to claim that women were given the vote due to their participation in the war effort, there is clearly a connection of this role expansion and women's participation in the war effort. Upon Suffrage, women were able to, for a brief period, leverage the vote into political power and influence.

The backlash facing women began toward the end of the war and was focused on the vote. Emmitt O'Neil published an article in the *Virginia Law Review* discussing the Suffrage Amendment. This article is an anti-Suffrage article that is more focused on race and the frightening thought that black women might acquire the vote and, in the South, that would result in social chaos.<sup>18</sup> But, *The New York Times* also published thinly veiled anti-Suffrage articles as well. The general argument is that women voting would add to the expense of maintaining polls, but, because women would vote as their husbands and fathers, not affect elections.<sup>19</sup> These indicate the backlash part of the pattern with regard to Suffrage. But, for at least a decade women were able to leverage the vote into influence.

Women used the vote to wield considerable political influence for the decade of the 1920s. According to William Chafe, suffragists hoped that women, because of their nurturing nature, would act as a "cohesive force to bring about social change."<sup>20</sup> In addition, Chafe asserts that both political parties incorporated League of Women Voters proposals, that State politicians

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<sup>18</sup> Emmet O'Neil, "The Susan B. Anthony Amendment. Effect of Its Ratification on the Rights of States to Regulate and Control Suffrage and Elections." *Virginia Law Review*. Vol 6 No. 5 (Feb., 1920)

<sup>19</sup> "Women Add Million to State's Voters." *New York Times*, November 08, 1917. And, "Suffrage's Cost High, Effect on Elections Nil." *New York Times*, November 04, 1917.

<sup>20</sup> William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 25

reacted warmly to this potentially new voting force and that Congress acted “expeditiously on maternity and infancy legislation, the primary demand of female reform organizations.”<sup>21</sup> Male politicians, not knowing what to expect, allowed and even courted the women’s vote for the first decade of women’s suffrage which allowed women to expand their political role into political action and influence. The women’s organization responsible for this influence and power was the Women’s Joint Congressional Committee. According to Jan Wilson, the WJCC was, for the 1920s, considered one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington D.C..<sup>22</sup> Having one of the most powerful lobbies in D.C. is a considerable expansion of political role for women. Additionally, Wilson recognizes the WJCC as historically significant due to the expansion of women’s political culture and the changing nature of the individual and state in the early twentieth century.<sup>23</sup> Women earning the vote not only expanded women’s roles but changed the nature of politics for men and indeed for all individuals and their relationship with government.

The pattern of backlash and contraction after a wartime expansion can be seen first in the immediate contraction in women’s employment. Robert Zieger asserts that urban streetcar employment provides the most vivid example of post war contraction, by 1919 hundreds of women were employed in the industry but by the 1930 census only sixteen were employed throughout the entire country.<sup>24</sup> Leading Zieger to conclude, “Most of the inroads to male-dominated trades did not survive.”<sup>25</sup> As men returned, they wished to return to their male

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<sup>21</sup> William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 27

<sup>22</sup> Jan Doolittle Wilson, *The Women's Joint Congressional Committee and the Politics of Maternalism, 1920-30*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007.), I

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 173

<sup>24</sup> Robert Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 149

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 149

dominated shop floors and while society was willing to accept a temporary role expansion for women, American society was not yet willing to accept full employment equality. Gail Braybon, argues that some new industries were accepting of women but that there was a clear backlash in established industries.<sup>26</sup> This is an excellent example of the overall pattern where there is a wartime expansion, followed by a post war contraction but that the contraction does not return women's roles fully to prewar status. For example, Jane Littell published an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* explaining that women continued to work, partly out of need and partly out of independence.<sup>27</sup> She also considers both the advantages, independence and the disadvantages, wondering if her husband was intimidated.<sup>28</sup> Employment was not the only contraction sparked by backlash.

Women's expanded political power also suffered a contraction by 1930. According to Jan Wilson, "by 1930, however, the committee had lost most of its congressional and public support and began a gradual descent into obscurity until its ultimate demise in 1970."<sup>29</sup> The American political pendulum had returned to a more conservative position by 1930 contracting women's roles in the process. William Chafe also recognized this conservative shift, arguing that a conservative shift in national affairs and that male politicians recognized that women were not voting as a bloc, as had been expected.<sup>30</sup> The more politically active women who formed the WJCC were able to speak for women as a bloc for a brief period until the rather self-evident idea that women were more likely to vote their socioeconomic status, as were men, resulted in their

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<sup>26</sup> Gail Braybon, *Women Workers in the First World War* Independence: (Taylor and Francis, 2008), 217, 220

<sup>27</sup> Jane Littell, "Meditations of Wage-Earning Wife." *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1924

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Jan Doolittle Wilson, *The Women's Joint Congressional Committee and the Politics of Maternalism, 1920-30* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007.), II

<sup>30</sup> William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 30

political contraction. The political pendulum in the United States also ebbs and flows as rarely has there been a period of more than fifteen years where a single party has been in full control.

There is some debate as to whether or not women voted as a bloc during the 1920s. Lorraine Schuyler argues that there was a distinct gender gap in voting patterns among Southern women, that they participated in this cultural shift, developed lobbying tools and enjoyed legislative success.<sup>31</sup> Clearly, this suggests that women did vote as enough of a bloc to enjoy legislative success and this also supports an expansion of women's roles during the 1920s. However, Sara Alpern and David Baum, conducted a study of national voting records and conclude that women did not vote as a bloc, in fact in many cases women consciously avoided working as a block during the 1920s.<sup>32</sup> Alpern and Baum argue that in addition to the numbers that show no voting bloc, Carrie Chapman Catt, leader of the League of Women's Voters, persuaded her organization to avoid voting as a bloc.<sup>33</sup> With the League consciously avoiding a women's bloc, it was highly unlikely that such a bloc would form. While there is some debate on the 1920s, there is a general consensus that by 1930 there was clearly no female voting bloc and any leverage women may have enjoyed, through this expansion in women's roles, was over due to a backlash and contraction by 1930. Ultimately, World War I produced a 'New Woman' of the 1920s with an expanded public and political role that did contract, but did not contract to pre-war status.

The New Woman of the 1920s produced by the First World War rejected domesticity and developed a new political culture. According to Paula Baker, "Suffragists argued that women's

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<sup>31</sup> Lorraine Gates Schuyler, *The Weight of Their Votes: Southern Women and Political Leverage in the 1920's* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 228-229

<sup>32</sup> Sara Alpern, and Dale Baum, "Female Ballots: The Impact of the Nineteenth Amendment" *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 16 no. 1 (1985): 61

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* 61

work in World War I proved their claims to good citizenship.”<sup>34</sup> Baker connects women’s participation, work, in the war effort to Suffrage. Baker then argues that the victory of women’s suffrage reflected a movement away from separate political spheres connecting this idea to growing numbers of women working for wages.<sup>35</sup> As women’s roles expanded politically and socially the separate spheres that had existed since the Revolution began to fade. Baker then asserts that the ‘New Woman’ and many men rejected domesticity as an ideal in favor of governmental involvement for many social ills of the day creating a new political culture.<sup>36</sup> This new political culture included women, which is a significant role change for women. Henry Mencken describes the ‘New Women’ and brings the term “Flapper” into the American lexicon. Mencken describes a cosmopolitan women of great sophistication and intelligence, he is at times both wary of this woman and admiring.<sup>37</sup> Whether admiring or feared the Flapper most certainly has an expanded roles in American Society, learned and in public and this expanded role was transforming American culture. Baker concludes that women played a more active part in the political changes of the Progressive period (including Suffrage) and that created a political culture where “electoral politics lost its masculine connotations, although it did not cease to be male dominated.”<sup>38</sup> This is a significantly expanded role for women, brought by suffrage and while political power contracted by 1930, a political culture that included women in electoral politics did not fade, but instead remained a part of mainstream American society. This is

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<sup>34</sup> Paula Baker, “The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920.” *The American Historical Review* 89 no. 3 (1984): 620–47

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 644

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 644

<sup>37</sup> Henry Mencken, “The Flapper.” *The Smart Set: A Magazine of Cleverness*, February 1915

<sup>38</sup> Paula Baker, “The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920.” *The American Historical Review* 89 no. 3 (1984): 620–47

exactly the pattern described by this series of case studies where women's role expand two steps forward and are contracted one step back.

In conclusion, the First World War brought about a political and cultural change that expanded women's roles through a now familiar pattern. First, women took part in the peace and preparedness campaigns, clearly in the public sphere as part of an expanded role. Second, heavy propaganda campaigns prior to and at the beginning of American belligerency encouraged women to step up and step into expanded roles. Women did step into multiple roles as part of the war effort and took male dominated jobs in industry and joined the military in auxiliary roles that were not available pre-war. A post-war contraction began in employment almost immediately at wars end as women were, largely though not completely, ushered out of male dominated workplaces, though some newly developed industries remained open to women, thus increasing the number of female wage earners. Politically, in the most significant role expansion, women gained the right to vote as part of their war effort, President Wilson saying that he believed women had earned it as a war measure. As part of the vote women were able to, through one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington D.C., leverage the vote into legislation for the decade. As male politicians realized there was no women's voting bloc that power was contracted in the backlash pattern. However, the pattern of two steps forward and one back held as a new political culture was established where women participated in electoral politics and the government was expected to address social problems previously part of the women's sphere.

## **Chapter 4: Case Study World War II**

The participation of the United States in the Second World War had a significant impact on her economy, military and society. Once again, total industrial war descended on the world and tens of millions casualties and tens of millions civilians were affected, in addition the Holocaust makes World War II a horrific event. Such a powerful event could not help but affect large populations. America's civilian population remained largely untouched, not suffering the displacement that millions of others did in both Europe and Asia. However, America's civilian population was recruited to participate in the war effort and that included the most significant population that was prohibited from combat duty, women. Women were encouraged to participate fully in the war effort and possibly the most famous image of that participation is Rosie the Riveter. Rosie is a symbol of women, during World War II, stepping up and stepping into male dominated jobs, both civilian and industrial and military.

World War II impacts women in the same pattern of expansion and contraction as in the previous case studies. And, due to its close time proximity to the First World War, in many very similar ways. First, women's roles expanded in employment, and in record numbers. In addition, women's employment figures would never return to pre-war percentages. There were several reasons why women responded to newly opened jobs, first was part of the war effort, second was in response to the recent Great Depression and finally they responded to a major propaganda effort. Women also joined the military, as they did in World War I. However, in the case of World War II, their roles expanded considerably. Women joined as active military, not as auxiliary, had rank and finished with honorable discharges and many received benefits. This is not to say they performed the same military jobs, women were not assigned to combat roles.



But, they did many other necessary jobs, from clerical to the Women Air Service Pilots who ferried planes to combat zones. Women joined these military units as part of the war effort and again as part of an active propaganda campaign requesting they join out of need. While in the service women faced active discrimination from male troops and yet acted as role models for a younger generation of women. The second part of the pattern includes the post-war contraction due to backlash. During and after the Second World War, discrimination in the workplace and military acted as an immediate backlash, even as women were actively encouraged to join the military or male dominated jobs. The idea of the masculinized women is often referred to as the threat and causal agent of backlash. So, many of the jobs women held during the war were contracted post-war and returned to the men who had held them pre-war. And, methods that reinforced the female subservient role were employed. However, it is also part of the pattern that long term many roles were continued and women's employment numbers and rate never returned to pre-war rates. In addition, the role model effect created a new generation of women who would not accept discrimination and held a belief that women were just as capable as men. The Rosie's of the Second World War and women's employment is a significant role expansion.

One of the most significant factors pointing to a role expansion for women during World War II is in employment. According to Allan Winkler, the number of women rose from fourteen million in 1941 to nineteen million in 1944, with thirty-seven percent of all adult women in the labor force and fifty percent of all women employed at some point during 1944.<sup>39</sup> Winkler states, "At the peak of industrial effort, women constituted thirty-six percent of the civilian

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<sup>39</sup> Allan Winkler, *Home Front U.S.A.: America During World War II* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc. 2012), 58

workforce.”<sup>40</sup> Women had expanded their role into the workforce, but it was not just the number of women, and new women at that, it was also the types of work women were allowed and recruited to perform. According to Winkler, women shifted out of domestic work into manufacturing with the number of women in manufacturing rising one hundred and forty-one percent between 1940 and 1941.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, Winkler states that women were most active in war manufacturing with women making up 90.8 percent of new workers hired for production work in the one hundred eighty-five war plants in Detroit.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, it was not just the number of women in the workforce that expanded their role, but also the kind of work. By taking the male dominated manufacturing jobs women expanded the type of work they could perform. In successfully performing that work, women were able to change the nature of how their gender was viewed, successfully expanding their role in American society.

The workforce expanded and needed women to take these jobs as part of the war effort. According to Sheridan Harvey in a Library of Congress film, women left the laundries for the higher pay of manufacturing with six million first time workers in order to participate in the war effort.<sup>43</sup> The higher pay was certainly an incentive, but women also responded to the need for workers as part of the war effort. Harvey argues, that there were several ‘Rosie’ campaigns including the “More Women at Work, The Sooner We Win!” campaign.<sup>44</sup> Women were needed to fight this total industrial war and women expanded their roles out of that need in order to fulfill the societal need for women to step up and step into industrial work. Women not only

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<sup>40</sup> Allan Winkler, *Home Front U.S.A.: America During World War II* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc. 2012),. 58

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 59

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 59

<sup>43</sup> Sheridan Harvey, *Rosie the Riveter: Real Women Workers in World War II*. Library of Congress. February 10, 2009. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04VNBM1PqR8>

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

stepped up in industrial work but also farm labor. According to Pamela Edwards, thousands of women volunteered for the Women's Land Army, which sent women to farms throughout the United States to replace male farm laborers that had joined the military.<sup>45</sup> Women chose to join the Women's Land Army as part of the war effort just as they chose to take industrial jobs, in order to do their part for the war effort. It was not just that women were willing to step up, they were encouraged to take these jobs.

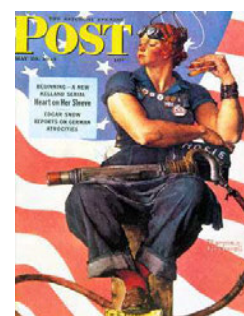
Propaganda during the Second World War is often associated with Hitler's Germany, but the United States government and industry participated in a concerted effort to encourage women to participate in the war effort. As referenced previously, Sheridan Harvey argues that there were several 'Rosie' campaigns that were highly effective. These campaigns included the original (see Figure 8)<sup>46</sup> Norman Rockwell 'Rosie' cover and the following Women at Work cover campaign that



**Figure 7: Another of Rockwell's cover's encouraging female participation in WWII**

expanded beyond the Saturday Evening Post which included his September 4 cover (see

Figure 7)<sup>47</sup> of a women of many jobs including nurse, farmer, conductor, mechanic and telephone operator.<sup>48</sup> These campaigns were designed to encourage women to participate in the war and to expand their roles into jobs that had previously been closed to women. Allan Winkler asserts that the United States government



**Figure 8: Norman Rockwell's Rosie the Riveter**

<sup>45</sup> Pamela Edwards, "West Virginia Women in World War II: The Role of Gender, Class, and Race in Shaping Wartime Volunteer Efforts." *West Virginia History*, New Series, 2, no. 1 (2008): 32

<sup>46</sup> <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/0/02/RosieTheRiveter.jpg>

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.nrm.org/images/HaleyEssay/all-essay\\_3\\_clip\\_image002\\_0005.jpg](http://www.nrm.org/images/HaleyEssay/all-essay_3_clip_image002_0005.jpg)

<sup>48</sup> Sheridan Harvey, *Rosie the Riveter: Real Women Workers in World War II*. Library of Congress. February 10, 2009. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04VNBm1PqR8>

and industry applied a concentrated effort to get women to work outside the home.<sup>49</sup> Winkler cites the War Manpower Commission and the Office of War Information as recruiting women and issuing messages aimed at women by encouraging women to go to exciting work for good wages in a patriotic cause.<sup>50</sup> This was direct and explicit encouragement by American society for women to expand their role in employment. A number of other propaganda images are included in Appendix B. The common theme in these images is how they clearly encourage women to expand their roles in the military and in employment, giving explicit direction to women to be more. In a letter from Mary Bethune to Eleonore Roosevelt, Bethune is seeking support to develop a school to prepare women for participation in the workforce as a result of the war.<sup>51</sup> Her school is meant to focus on African American boys and girls, but she specifically mentions training girls in stenography, typewriting and filing for war work.<sup>52</sup> The presence of such correspondence at the highest levels illustrates that women were being recruited and trained as a result of the war in an expansion of role. Additionally, Harvey's film analyzes the differences between Norman Rockwell's Rosie and other images and additionally addresses the effectiveness of the campaigns. The difference between the various images of Rosie, where, when and how 'Rosie' came to be are interesting, but the more relevant issue is how effective the campaigns were in encouraging women to expand their roles into many employment opportunities.

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<sup>49</sup> Allan Winkler, *Home Front U.S.A.: America During World War II* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc. 2012), 58

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 58

<sup>51</sup> "Mary McLeod Bethune's Letter to Eleanor Roosevelt, April 22, 1941." In *American Decades Primary Sources*, edited by Cynthia Rose, 117-120. Vol. 5, 1940-1949. Detroit: Gale, 2004

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

The Great Depression created an environment where women were more willing to expand their role in employment. According to Winkler, conditions during the depression were brutal as women seeking employment to help struggling families, confronted men also seeking work who were highly resentful of women's employment.<sup>53</sup> Phyllis Gould lived through the Depression and became one of the first Rosie's. Phyllis Gould acknowledged women's roles during the depression in an interview when she explained that the expectations for women during the depression were to get married and have children, that there was no real thought of a career though, "I guess some girls maybe became teachers."<sup>54</sup> But, with the advent of war, men who did not join the military were employed so women were encouraged to enter the workforce at a time when, just previously employment was desperate. According to Harvey, women took industrial jobs quickly and happily to alleviate the lingering effects of the Depression.<sup>55</sup> Gould Describes taking the welding classes, and after several failed attempts finally getting a welding job and dealing with the child care issues in order to help her family as part of the war effort and for the financial need that continued from the Depression.<sup>56</sup> Therefore the timing of war, the propaganda campaigns and the need for women to expand their roles was perhaps serendipitous for women in American society who were exactly primed to take on new roles not only to aid the war effort, but also for the enlightened self-interest of aiding their families and fulfilling their

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<sup>53</sup> Allan Winkler, *Home Front U.S.A.: America During World War II* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc. 2012), 58

<sup>54</sup> Rosie the Riveter World War II American Homefront Oral History Project: *An Oral History with Phyllis Gould* conducted by Brendan Furey, 2002, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2007.

<sup>55</sup> Sheridan Harvey, *Rosie the Riveter: Real Women Workers in World War II*. Library of Congress. February 10, 2009. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04VNBMI1PqR8>

<sup>56</sup> Rosie the Riveter World War II American Homefront Oral History Project: *An Oral History with Phyllis Gould* conducted by Brendan Furey, 2002, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2007.

own lives. While there were many reasons for women to join the workforce during the Second World War, the impact of joining the workforce is also significant.

When women joined the labor force during World War II it had impact on women's roles. According to William Chafe, "The war marked a watershed in the history of women at work, and temporarily at least, caused a greater change in women's economic status than half a century of feminist rhetoric and agitation had been able to achieve."<sup>57</sup> The incredible number of women at work, the type of work they performed, successfully, and the acceptability of their work as wartime need temporarily changed their status and forever changed how women's roles would be viewed. Nothing was the same after World War II in terms of women's employment. Claudia Goldin argues that the war had a more modest impact on women's roles. According to Goldin the war did not change employment, it was long run factors that engaged women in employment, especially clerical work, but that the war did redistribute employment by rekindling family values that reduced the number of younger married women in the labor force and increased the demand for older married women workers.<sup>58</sup> This debate is in the details, but each historian agrees that the war impacted women's roles and women's employment. Phyllis Gould's story very much rebuts Goldin's premise. Gould explains that her first marriage broke up because her proud husband was unable to cope with the independence that war work, and pay brought.<sup>59</sup> She further describes that it was the control factor that led to the break-up of the marriage, her husband had lost financial control, where before he had full control. And, Gould

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<sup>57</sup> William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 136

<sup>58</sup> Claudia D. Goldin, "The Role of World War II in the Rise of Women's Employment" *American Economic Review* 81, no. 4 (September 1991): 755

<sup>59</sup> Rosie the Riveter World War II American Homefront Oral History Project: *An Oral History with Phyllis Gould* conducted by Brendan Furey, 2002, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2007.

credits the war, “And probably if the war had not come along and I hadn’t gone to work I would have stayed with him, not knowing any better. And been kind of a pale shadow of what I became. [Laughing].”<sup>60</sup> Taylor Jaworski argues that the disruption caused by World War II had large and real consequences for women, especially in terms of education, employment and family formation where women who entered the workforce as war labor regularly dropped out of school to do so, creating a long term reduction in earnings until these women were able to return to school later in life.<sup>61</sup> Clearly there was both a short term and long term impact on the working life and role of women in the United States due to the Second World War, leading to a general expansion of women’s roles because of the impact of war labor. While war work was a significant factor in expanding women’s roles, military participation also contributed to and expansion of women’s roles.

Women were encouraged to join the military through the same propaganda campaigns that brought women into the labor force. According to Allan Winkler, by the end of the war more than three hundred thousand women had joined the military with recruiting efforts appealing to women’s patriotism.<sup>62</sup> This high number of recruits surpasses previous war



Figure 9: World War II Nurses

participation and active recruiting emphasizes a change, an expansion, of the acceptable women’s role. Especially important were

<sup>60</sup> Rosie the Riveter World War II American Homefront Oral History Project: *An Oral History with Phyllis Gould* conducted by Brendan Furey, 2002, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2007.

<sup>61</sup> T. Jaworski, "You're in the Army Now:" The Impact of World War II on Women's Education, Work, and Family" *Journal Of Economic History* 74, no. 1 (March 2014): 190

<sup>62</sup> Allan Winkler, *Home Front U.S.A.: America During World War II* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc. 2012), 59

nurses in combat zones (see Figure 9).<sup>63</sup> According to Pamela Edwards, more than one hundred and three thousand professional nurses volunteered and were certified for service by the army and navy.<sup>64</sup> Many were persuaded by recruitment campaigns. These women worked under horrific conditions and in dangerous situations. Agnes Shurr writes of being on a hospital ship during the battle of Coral Sea and being fired on by a friendly ship while under blackout conditions.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, Margaret Raffa describes treating horrific wounds under difficult conditions in New Caledonia in 1943.<sup>66</sup> These women are trusted to work under difficult conditions in a professional manner. Nursing had not only become women's work, it had become a woman's profession. As such, this indicates a significant expansion of women's roles in the military. Not only were women recruited as nurses but as support positions in other branches (see Figure 10).<sup>67</sup> The active recruiting of women into the armed services in support roles



Figure 10: World War II military recruiting poster

point to an expansion of women's roles. The female in the image above is significant in that popular culture has largely relegated these women to support roles and also largely ignored women's participation in military war work. For example, the Naval Reserve Act of 1938 was amended in 1942 to include women in the Naval Reserve and acknowledge them as

<sup>63</sup> History.Com. <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/world-war-ii-history/pictures/world-war-ii-posters/recruitment-poster-by-tom-woodburn>

<sup>64</sup> Pamela Edwards, "West Virginia Women in World War II: The Role of Gender, Class, and Race in Shaping Wartime Volunteer Efforts." *West Virginia History*, New Series, 2, no. 1 (2008): 28

<sup>65</sup> Agnes Shurr, *No Time for Fear: Voices of American Military Nurses in World War II*. Ed. Diane Burke Fessler. 1996

<sup>66</sup> Margaret Richey Raffa, *No Time for Fear: Voices of American Military Nurses in World War II*. Ed. Diane Burke Fessler. 1996

<sup>67</sup> History.Com. <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/world-war-ii-history/pictures/world-war-ii-posters/recruitment-poster-by-tom-woodburn>



commissioned in the military.<sup>68</sup> But, as directed, were not to be used to replace civil service personnel and were directed to release male personnel for duty at sea.<sup>69</sup> The idea of recruiting and accepting women into positions to free men for combat duty indicates the expansion phase. The limiting factors indicate the backlash effect. Anna Froula's analysis of popular culture and how the female soldier image is buried in popular culture in order to continue the male warrior image acknowledges the prejudice these women faced and cites the participation of women in war work, in combat zones and in fighting.<sup>70</sup> Despite their being ignored and despite the prejudice faced by these women the recruiting posters and their military participation are an expansion of women's roles.

Women in the military were especially significant in changing gender patterns. Emily Yellin argues that the war transformed traditional women's roles through women's partition in the workforce and especially in the military. Yellin asserts that male colleagues had to contort their perceptions of women and women's roles in order to justify and accept their needed role expansion and that women themselves had to compromise with a "special strength of character and state of grace, which seemed to be at the essence of every early military woman"<sup>71</sup> As much needed as women were the prejudice they faced and the grace by which they accepted some prejudice while fighting for equal recognition earned them the expanded role of military women.

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<sup>68</sup> Naval Reserve Act of 1938, amended section 401 July 30 1942, Congress enacted a law establishing the Women's Reserve "Title V—Women's Reserve" Section 502. 1942

<sup>69</sup> Naval Reserve Act of 1938, amended section 401 July 30 1942, Congress enacted a law establishing the Women's Reserve "Title V—Women's Reserve" Section 505

<sup>70</sup> Anna Froula, "Free a Man to Fight: The Figure of the Female Soldier in World War II Popular Culture." *Journal Of War & Culture Studies* 2, no. 2 (July 2009): 153

<sup>71</sup> Emily Yellin, *Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II*. (New York: Free Press, 2004), 112

One of the most significant military roles played by women in the Women's Air Service as pilots.

Women's Air Service Pilots provided an essential service and expanded women's roles through their service in the military and created a role model effect. Jean Hascall Cole has compiled a book of first person interviews with some of these pilots and the impact of the war on them and their impact on the war.<sup>72</sup> First, WASP's were used to ferry the large bombers from the mainland United States into the war zones, mostly of the Pacific, so their impact on the war is significant. Second, these women to a person, describe how powerful an impact this war work was for them to develop a sense of identity beyond being married and having children. Additionally, many describe, in looking back how they had an impact on future women. For example, Ruth Woods explains,

Because we opened the door for the present women in the Air Force and other women in aviation. We opened that door so that they would be accepted and not sneered at. We laid the groundwork. We followed behind people like Amelia Earhart, who were loners. We came in as a body, a group—any group can exert a lot more pressure than a single individual. I personally feel that was our greatest accomplishment.<sup>73</sup>

This particular quote is quite significant in that it explains that the war created a sense of identity among these women. That these women contributed, significantly to the war effort and that contribution proceeded to change and develop them into a role model that future women could

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<sup>72</sup> Jean Hascall Cole, *Women Pilots of World War II* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992)

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 136

use as a stepping stone for even further role expansion. This is not an isolated idea. Another example is from Fran Smith,

I believe history is going to prove that we did a tremendous service. First, because we did step in and help the country when it was necessary. Just as a bunch of the women did who went into the other services, and into factory work and so on. We did our part for the war effort. Also, I think we opened the eyes of a lot of people to the fact that women were capable of doing things! I feel we were the forerunners for the women who are in the Air Force today.<sup>74</sup>

Clearly the work these women performed as air Service Pilots during World War II not only had a major impact on the war and war effort, but also contributed to a substantial role expansion for women. However, these military women faced similar prejudice in the military that women faced in the workforce and that is evidence of the second part of the pattern, the backlash and contraction of women's roles.

The major argument that historians make when contending that the Second World War did not have a significant impact on women's roles is the assertion that while employment and military service existed women's status did not change. Richard Polenberga argues that not only did women's status not change due to the war, but that the war acted as a conservative influence on gender roles and reinforced the values a military man and a housewife in the home.<sup>75</sup> Polenberga cites a public opinion poll where a significant number of people who thought married women should not work outside the home.<sup>76</sup> So, even as women, and married women at that,

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<sup>74</sup> Jean Hascall Cole, *Women Pilots of World War II* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992), 139

<sup>75</sup> Richard Polenberga, "The Good War? A Reappraisal of How World War II Affected American Society." *Virginia Magazine Of History & Biography* 100, no. 3 (June 1992): 296, 314

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. 296

were performing war work, the idea that they did not belong there was widely held. D'Ann Campbell echoes that in her work. According to Campbell, women may have taken up war work as part of the American value system, but desired to return, post haste to the home and their children also as part of the American value system.<sup>77</sup> Campbell asserts that it was not Rosie or the WAC that was the role model, but the housewife was the overwhelmingly model woman, and that women as well as men were part of the backlash that desired to return women to the home.<sup>78</sup> The impressive need for women in the workforce and in the military created conditions where women had to step up and take those jobs as part of the value system and patriotism. This need did not necessarily reflect a radical change in the value system. Therefore, while some women's roles expanded and some of the WASPs and Rosie's enjoyed their independence the American value system remained conservative with the housewife and the primary role model.

A post war backlash, but economic need developed both a contraction and accommodation for women. Karen Anderson argues that women's status did not really change and that employment was only redistributed post war.<sup>79</sup> Anderson asserts that the societal change where more married women were allowed to work outside the home reflected an accommodation between martial, home, and work roles for women.<sup>80</sup> Anderson is carefully interpreting the increased employment numbers and coordinating the widely accepted traditional women's role in order to explain both the limited change in women's status with the clear evidence of increased women's employment. Anderson further argues the causal agency of this

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<sup>77</sup> D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 4

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 224, 237

<sup>79</sup> Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981)

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 9

accommodation was not the war but a post-war society that was expansive and therefore required women's monetary contribution and so a relaxed attitude toward married women's work allowed both a conservative family value and a nice lifestyle.<sup>81</sup> This clearly describes a backlash to the expansion of women's roles in the workforce that contracted women's jobs back to the home in terms of attitude, but allowed the financial contribution of women's work.

This is the pattern of how war has impacted women's roles. First, women respond to the war by expanding their participation in some ways. In the case of World War II, women responded to propaganda by going to work in formerly male dominated jobs and by joining the military. Second their successful work in those jobs changed their identity and attitudes toward independence. Third, a backlash seen through prejudice in the workplace and military service contracted women's roles. Finally, women's roles never contact to pre-war status. So, the number of women in the workforce never return to pre-war numbers. And, while women were released from service their role model effect encouraged them and others to find other outlets for newfound talents.

In sum, the pattern of expanding women's roles during wartime and a corresponding backlash and contraction holds true for the Second World War as well. In the case of World War II women's participation in the war effort led to their expanding role in employment. Women joined the workforce in previously male dominated jobs and their success during the war led to many seeking employment after the war and employment numbers never returned to pre-war levels. Although, facing prejudice during the war and a contraction post-war forced many out of male dominated jobs women's employment had expanded due to the war. Women also joined

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<sup>81</sup> Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 174

the military in unprecedented numbers and filled many essential roles from nursing to flying. After World War II many of the military roles were contracted but their war experience led many to find other outlets for their talents and they provided a role model for future women joining the military. Women joined the workforce and military in response to massive propaganda campaigns that were highly effective. And, while some argue that women joined for the war effort and preferred to return to the home after the war, the effective expansion of women's roles had been accomplished. But, to many, the status of women had not been changed significantly by the end of the war, so therefore the impact of the war was modest at best. The pattern of wartime expansion, post war backlash and contraction but not to pre-war levels holds for the Second World War.

## Chapter 5: Case Study: Cold War



Figure 11: 'Traditional' Cold War Family

According to Gretchen Livingston in 2014, “Fewer than half (46%) of U.S. kids younger than 18 years of age are living in a home with two married heterosexual parents in their first marriage. This is a marked change from 1960, when 73% of children fit this description, and 1980,

when 61% did, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of recently released American Community Survey (ACS) and Decennial Census data.”<sup>1</sup>

America’s fighting of the Cold War and the emergence of an American Empire impacted women’s roles. The length of the Cold War, roughly forty years (1946 to 1991) means that this particular war was fought as a more chronic crisis than previous wars which had a more acute nature. America’s Revolution took eight years, the Civil War was fought across five Aprils, a little more than four years, America’s belligerency in World War I lasted about eighteen months and the Second World War declared in late 1941 lasted four years. Thus, even with pre-war agitation, preparation, organization and war readiness programs the acute nature of previous wars

<sup>1</sup> Gretchen Livingston, “Fewer Than Half of U.S. Kids Today Live in a ‘Traditional’ Family” PewResearchCenter. December 22, 2014. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/12/22/less-than-half-of-u-s-kids-today-live-in-a-traditional-family/>

created a situation where women were immediately required to step in to expanded roles in order to, patriotically, do their part. So, the Cold War's chronic nature impacted women's roles differently, yet the same pattern of expansion and contraction propagates, though in a slightly different form.

The pattern of expansion, backlash and contraction within the Cold War emerges in three phases. First, the beginning of the Cold War lay in the shadow of World War II. Therefore, partially due to the backlash and contraction of the Second World War and partially due to a conscious propaganda effort and policy, the development of a unique, though familiar, set of gender roles emerged. The picture above is both unique and familiar, the data with the image, suggests the family was both commonplace and rare. Second, as the Cold War continued three factors develop that cause the expansion of women's roles. Initially, women had been invited to participate as Cold Warriors, though in limited fashion. But, that limited fashion did not last. Then, the counter culture of the 1960s arose as a reaction to the conservative nature of Cold War and domestic policies which had the effect of expanding women's roles. Finally, the Vietnam War, and the specific timing of that war, expanded women's roles in the military and invited a response/rejection of sexism, racism and hyper-masculinity. The third phase is the contraction phase which is best seen through two lenses, the debate over the ERA and the conservative reaction to the ERA and popular culture where a remasculinization emerges during the 1980s.

Women's roles of the early Cold War emerged as a contraction from World War II. The chapter four case study on World War II provided evidence that women's employment and military service clearly expanded women's roles. Further, discrimination during the war and a backlash at the end of the war created an immediate contraction of women's employment and military service. While women's roles never returned to pre-World War II status, there was a



contraction that in combination with new Cold War policy created an early Cold War gender/family norm.

Cold War policy created an appropriate family image with women as the center and the center located in the home. According to Elaine Tyler May, propaganda from American government and media portrayed an American ideal of affluence in the suburbs that was white, with a male breadwinner, and a stay at home Mom.<sup>2</sup> May further asserts that American leaders considered a stable family (with the above structure) to be a stabilizing force and that internal conflict could lead to internal communist take-over and therefore “promoted family and the population agreed and turned to family for security in an insecure world.”<sup>3</sup> The insecurity came from the threat of nuclear war that characterized the Cold War. So, this image was developed, partially as a contraction from World War II and partially in response to the threat of nuclear war. The home and family would provide stability for American society and women needed to be home in order to provide that security and stability. Kristina Zarlengo argues that American society was enthralled with nuclear preparedness and that women were encouraged to imagine themselves as warriors in training.<sup>4</sup> Zarlengo asserts that the suburban household was encouraged to practice civil defense in which the housewife was responsible to maintain the stability needed for society, to fill the household and bomb shelter with consumer goods, and where civil defense responsibilities were divided by gender.<sup>5</sup> The practice of civil defense and societal stability were placed in women’s hands so long as those hands were also in the kitchen. So, this is both a backlash from World War II and the deliberate creation of Cold War gender

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<sup>2</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound : American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 8

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 9

<sup>4</sup> Kristina Zarlengo, "Civilian Threat, the Suburban Citadel, and Atomic Age American Women." *Signs* 24, no. 4 (1999), 930

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 940-942

roles due to Cold War insecurities. Cold War insecurities were born out of a fear of nuclear war but also a fear of social upheaval.

Cold War gender roles were consciously created as a reaction to fear, fear of nuclear war and fear of a destabilizing family life. According to Elaine May, “fears of sexual chaos surface during times of crisis and rapid social change, depression and war years, and now Cold War.”<sup>6</sup> American leaders felt this fear and created the 1950s idea of gender norms and American society largely bought into these gender roles out of insecurity which was a contraction of women’s roles. This fear expressed itself in the ideology of sexual containment. May asserts that sexual containment ideology was rooted in the ‘traditional’ gender roles of a male breadwinner and female, non-working mother, and if these roles were violated the country would be weakened.<sup>7</sup> The fear of not participating as a Cold Warrior by deviating from the newly established ‘traditional’ family led to the baby boom and the gender norms of the late twentieth century.

This fear is easily seen in media from the time period. For example, Reuben Hill’s article in 1947 critiques what he sees as the potential for internal instability unless an established patriarchy is developed as the appropriate model. Hill states,

Family living, moreover, is no longer compulsory. A man can get his meals cooked and his clothes mended more cheaply without a wife than with one. Most able-bodied women can provide themselves with better clothes through their own efforts than out of the pay envelope of a husband. Economically, marriage has become a luxury and parenthood a positive expense.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound : American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 93

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 117

<sup>8</sup> Reuben Hill, "The American Family: Problem or Solution?." *American Journal of Sociology*. (1947), 125

Hill's economic analysis that men and women no longer need each other and so will likely begin living alone, no longer having children and this will lead to the breakdown of American society and all that is good sounds far-fetched, now. But, at the time fear of a rapidly changing world and a Soviet threat created this ideology. Hill continues by asserting that certain intimate needs, recognition, growth and security are met through marriage and that the proper family type, the most secure and stabilizing for the country is, "the semi patriarchal form in which a dominant husband "brings in the bacon" and a submissive woman plays a traditional wife-and-mother role."<sup>9</sup> As early as 1947 American leaders, like Hill who is writing in a professional journal, call for this type of gender norm which contracts women's roles. Other experts reinforced this ideal.

Sociological experts reinforced the family as stabilizing force and encouraged women's participation by being submissive. Charles Johnson, writing in 1948, recognized the potential for a disintegrating family life, blamed women for it and encouraged the 'proper' role for women in the home. First, Johnson recognizes societal changes emerging from World War II in terms of the family and the "recasting" of the role of women in the family.<sup>10</sup> He continues his argument by announcing that the children suffer when women as mothers are unsatisfied and that men in this dysfunctional family are unable to make the emotional adjustment to the new family imperative.<sup>11</sup> The exhortation of the unsatisfied female blames the female for the dysfunction and therefore blames the female for the destabilizing of American society. Johnson continues by recognizing that the American democratic ideal is in conflict with the traditional male dominated family but then contends that it is the responsibility of the American family to pass on and

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<sup>9</sup> Reuben Hill, "The American Family: Problem or Solution?." *American Journal of Sociology*. (1947), 129

<sup>10</sup> Charles S. Johnson, "Disintegrating Factors in Family Life." *Marriage & Family Living* 10, no. 3 (August 1948), 53

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 53

maintain American social values.<sup>12</sup> Thus the only way that American society remains stable is if the family remains stable and the only way that can occur is if women are in a traditional role and are satisfied in that role. If women's Cold War role is to be found in the home, then the home is a centerpiece of American society.

The home, and the traditional gender roles that came with it, played a large part in fighting the Cold War and establishing early Cold War gender roles. According to Elaine May, in order to conform to the Cold War gender norm men and women married earlier (earlier sex) which was a behavior change, but the sex was normalized because it was within the confines of marriage.<sup>13</sup> So, to fight the Cold War, but also to engage in human behavior men and women had to find a work around. This work around also contracted women's roles as placing women at home. May asserts that with the established Cold War gender norm the family was center and the family's center was in the home with home ownership and the good life available to all.<sup>14</sup> So, home ownership became part of the American dream and women's part in that dream was in the kitchen of the home. This is especially evident as policy and ideology in the "Kitchen Debate." The Kitchen Debate is the ideological debate between then Vice President Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev which takes place in an exhibit showcasing the modern American home and kitchen. While the entire debate is about the ideological differences between capitalism and communism, the beginning of the debate centers on how modern conveniences have made life easier for the American housewife supported by her breadwinner husband. This is the presumed, and preferred, natural gender role for both male and female as

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<sup>12</sup> Charles S. Johnson, "Disintegrating Factors in Family Life." *Marriage & Family Living* 10, no. 3 (August 1948), 54-55

<sup>13</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound : American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 117

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 162, 163

defined by Post World War II backlash and Cold War policies.<sup>15</sup> In this case both leaders placed women's roles at the center of the Cold War with the American leader reinforcing the gender roles of male breadwinner and female at home mother. The home being the center of American society and women being in the center of the home (kitchen), those homes were now located in the suburbs.

The Cold War home was located in the suburbs and American policy helped put them there. According to Kristina Zarlengo, suburban "satellite cities" would provide a dispersal of citizens which would mean fewer casualties and thus deter attack.<sup>16</sup> These satellite cities became the American suburbs and exurbs. Zarlengo argues that governmental policies encouraged this expansion into the suburbs. For example, she cites:

Truman's 1951 executive order requiring that financial assistance for new industrial plants be predicated on their dispersion, the Comprehensive Defense Housing and Communities Bill (S349) and the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, which provided \$100 billion to cover 90 percent of the cost of building 41,000 miles of national highway.<sup>17</sup>

Clearly these governmental policies not only encouraged migration into the suburbs but nearly required that mass movement. Zarlengo contends that of thirteen million new home built during the 1950s, eleven million were in the suburbs.<sup>18</sup> American society located its ideals in the suburbs. According to Elaine May, the home built in the suburbs were deliberately designed

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<sup>15</sup> *The Kitchen Debate*, July 24, 1959, transcript. Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev. Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs at Ashland University.

<sup>16</sup> Kristina Zarlengo, "Civilian Threat, the Suburban Citadel, and Atomic Age American Women." *Signs* 24, no. 4 (1999), 933

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 936

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 936

with the kitchen near the front room, so the wife (at home) could keep an eye on the kids. So, the family was the center of Cold War policy, the women was the center of the home, located in the kitchen and the home was located in the suburbs. Women's role in this Cold War gender conflict was to...purchase consumer goods.

Part of the Cold Warrior mentality was the purchasing of consumer goods and married women got jobs, in order to facilitate the American dream, creating an odd role paradox. According to Elaine May, women were expected to make the family purchases, as wives, and as long as the purchasing was family oriented it was acceptable, since that would not lead to decadence.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the woman is still the center of the family, which is beginning to become an expansion of women's roles, as long as it is hidden within the façade of domesticity. Additionally, May argues that as a carry-over from the Depression, married women continued to work, in order to afford the suburban lifestyle of consumer goods, which was acceptable as long as the male breadwinner was not undermined.<sup>20</sup> This primary role that women are fulfilling is the odd paradox of the early Cold War women's role. It is a primary role, therefore an expansion, which includes employment, but must be hidden as a domestic role, and so the paradox of also being a contraction.

Other evidence of a paradoxical role in the early Cold War is found in America's overseas military base operations. The culture, and therefore gender roles, of the early Cold War were also defined by family practitioners. According to Mire Koikari, American women, mainly wives of service men, were invited to participate as Cold Warriors (an expansion of women's

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<sup>19</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 166-167

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 167

roles) but only in order to export American style traditional domestic roles (a contraction).<sup>21</sup> Koikari argues that the gendered dynamics of expansionism were confusing as women were “simultaneously invited into and excluded from the domain of politics.”<sup>22</sup> In this case gender helped spread American ideals through women’s work and culture, through food prep and other domestic chores, like sewing, because the food we eat is highly cultural. So the wives of servicemen (in this case in Okinawa) acted in an expanded status, being invited to engage in the Cold War and yet, as a contraction in that their participation had to be domestic. Doctors as American cultural leaders were reinforcing these roles at home as well.

American leaders were not only politicians but also cultural leaders like doctors and scientists who defined women’s roles in the early Cold War according to strict sexual roles which resulted in a contraction of women’s roles. According to Carolyn Lewis, doctors, especially the newly developed family practitioners, used their status as scientists, at a time when science held unprecedented cultural authority, to define sex and sex roles for all Americans.<sup>23</sup> Lewis argues that doctors defined sexuality and sex roles, with a male leader and breadwinner and a submissive wife, in order to stabilize marriages and therefore American society as well.<sup>24</sup> The particular case study that Lewis examines is the marriage of Kent and Jan, whose marriage is saved when Jan learns to become less assertive.<sup>25</sup> Lewis asserts that manhood was in flux due to contradictory popular images: John Wayne, Ward Clever and Hugh Hefner.<sup>26</sup> Thus, as men were unsure of what being a man meant, the backlash was directed at women and forced a

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<sup>21</sup> Mire Koikari, “Cultivating Feminine Affinity.” *Journal of Women’s History* 27, no. 4 (Winter 2015): 114

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 114

<sup>23</sup> Caroline Lewis, *Prescription for Heterosexuality: Sexual Citizenship in the Cold War Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 5

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 3

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 72

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* 73

contraction of women's roles from the engaging women of World War II into the more submissive ideal of the early Cold War. Clearly the early Cold War paradoxically invited women to participate as Cold Warriors in a simultaneous expansion and contraction of women's roles from World War II. The Cold War expansion of women's roles took place as the counter culture of the 1960s became apparent.

The counter culture of the 1960s signified an expansion of women's roles. According to Elaine May, the youth of the 1960s expanded women's roles as they married later, challenged gender roles and sex norms and pushed the divorce rate up.<sup>27</sup> This counter culture which had unprecedented access to higher education engaged challenged societal norms, including women's roles and demanded more opportunity and more access. Kristina Zarlengo describes a secondary women's role that challenged women's roles and was perceived as a threat. Zarlengo describes the atomic age bombshell (using the term both as a popular term and in conjunction with the bomb like threat) as a hypersexual, single woman (see Figure 12)<sup>28</sup> who, challenged gender and sex norms, was both the best and worst thing do with a women's freedom and threatened the social fabric of American society.<sup>29</sup> Zarlengo's bombshell was the beginning of the counter culture's expansion of women's roles. Further expansion occurred through employment and birth control.



**Figure 12: The sexualized Bombshell, a threat and enticement.**

<sup>27</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 7

<sup>28</sup> <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/35/a4/76/35a476e85b827ad55b6d05d5bd552c53--vintage-pin-ups-vintage-photos.jpg>

<sup>29</sup> Kristina Zarlengo, "Civilian Threat, the Suburban Citadel, and Atomic Age American Women." *Signs* 24, no. 4 (1999), 946-950



Women's roles expanded during the Cold War in employment. According to William Chafe, the number of women employed after World War II, thus during the Cold War, never returned to pre-war numbers.<sup>30</sup> Even those arguing that World War II had a more modest effect on women's roles, such as Karen Anderson, recognize that women's employment continued to expand during the Cold War.<sup>31</sup> Women's employment, combined with birth control contributed to the expansion of women's roles, from where the bombshell originated. According to Linda Gordon, birth control became an anti-imperialist/anti-Vietnam issue as part of a population control argument.<sup>32</sup> Gordon asserts that birth control became politicized during the 1960s, as part of the counter culture, as women's were expanding their roles into employment and into male dominated jobs and politics.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the counter culture of the 1960s expanded women's roles as part of expanding employment. The Vietnam War had an impact on women's expanding roles as well.

Television was a major medium, a reflection of society at large and indicates the earlier traditional gender roles and the changing counter culture roles for women. Betty Friedan, wrote an article for TV Guide in 1964 chastising television producers for not creating images of women of modern women.

Why is there no image at all on television of the millions and millions of self-respecting American women who are not only capable of cleaning the sink, without help, but of acting to solve more complex problems of their own lives and

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<sup>30</sup> William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 136

<sup>31</sup> Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 174

<sup>32</sup> Linda Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 286

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* 145

their society? That moronic housewife image denies the 24,000,000 women who work today outside the home, in every industry and skilled profession, most of them wives who take care of homes and children too.<sup>34</sup>

Friedan is insisting on the acknowledgment in contemporary imagery of the role expansion that already exists. The response to Friedan was twofold. First, the defense of why there were no such images was a chauvinistic perspective where the MGM Producer explained that his show couldn't have action led by women. Because, for her to overcome conflict would show her as dominant and masculine which would be unpleasant.<sup>35</sup> This indicates the early Cold War gender role. But, the general response to Friedan was an increase in stronger female roles on television. Essentially an acknowledgement of the expansion of roles that was already occurring. The counter culture and women's movement were, in a way, aided by role expansion precipitated by the proxy war in Vietnam.

The Vietnam War, one of two U.S. proxy wars fought as part of the greater Cold War, contributed to the expansion of women's roles in America. According to Heather Stur, American women went to Vietnam in order to fulfill traditional roles, mother, caregiver and girl next door, but their concrete experiences contributed to the antiwar rejection of traditional women's roles.<sup>36</sup> First, Stur argues that women's presence in Vietnam muddled the gendered image of women as back home wives and girlfriends waiting back home.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, Stur asserts, the military launched recruiting campaigns aimed at women (though not in combat

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<sup>34</sup> Betty Friedan, "Television and the Feminine Mystique." *TV Guide*, (February 1-8, 1964): 273-275.

<sup>35</sup> Betty Friedan, "Television and the Feminine Mystique." *TV Guide*, (February 1-8, 1964): 273-275.

<sup>36</sup> Heather Marie Stur, *Beyond Combat: Women and Gender in the Vietnam War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 13

roles), and women responded because they needed jobs and money for school.<sup>38</sup> Third, women in the military advanced and lived the ideals of the women's movement in expanded women's roles, though many did not recognize this until well after their service.<sup>39</sup> Stur concludes that the GI anti-war movement issued a rejection of sexism and hyper masculinity and demanded a reassessment of gender roles.<sup>40</sup> Thus, even a smaller war period contributed to the expansion of women's roles during the counter culture and women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The expansion, backlash and contraction of the later Cold War was exemplified in the battle over the Equal Rights Amendment.

No other public argument better exemplified the ongoing debate over women's roles during the Cold War than the fight over the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). In the wake of Vietnam and the expansion of women's rights brought on by the counter culture and women's movement of the 1970s the ERA came to symbolize an expansion of women's rights and women's equality. Its failure symbolized a backlash and contraction of women's roles during the Cold War period. At first the ERA seemed destined to pass as many polls suggested a majority of people supported the Amendment. However, the interest group Stop ERA developed and headed by Phyllis Schlafly, was created in backlash and worked to define women in their domestic role as part of the contraction.

Initially the Equal Rights Amendment was broadly supported. According to a *Time Magazine* article in 1973, the wording of the ERA was not considered controversial and seemed like a formality to a battle already won, especially since twenty-two states had already ratified

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<sup>38</sup> Heather Marie Stur, *Beyond Combat: Women and Gender in the Vietnam War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 217

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 226, 230

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 15

the Amendment leaving only sixteen needed for complete passage.<sup>41</sup> Clearly, the general support of the ERA and the general attitude of a highly credible and analytical cultural and political source point to an expansion of women's roles during the middle of the Cold War at the end of the Vietnam War. In addition to *Time Magazine*, national polling organizations corroborate the idea. For example, the *Miami Herald* reported in 1974 that seventy-one point nine percent of Florida residents supported passage of the ERA.<sup>42</sup> While the *Pensacola Journal* reported in 1977 that of 1000 voters surveyed forty-eight percent preferred passage.<sup>43</sup> Florida had become a battle ground state and symbolized the battle over the ERA, beginning with a clear majority that favored passage of the Amendment. That so many favored passage, enough for most media outlets in the mid-1970s to assume passage, is evidence of the expansion of women's roles brought on during the middle part of the Cold War, at the end of Vietnam. The proxy war had a similar effect as the major war periods creating a call of women to step up and an acceptable expansion of roles. But, also part of the pattern, was the inevitable backlash post-war.

A backlash and consequent contraction of women's roles occurred post-Vietnam and is symbolized by the ERA debates. *Time* reports the rising backlash and the arguments given by the opposition. For example, *Time Magazine* reports the principle argument against the Amendment is that it would remove existing safeguards protecting women's domestic place such as: "the requirement that men support their families, Social Security benefits that widows receive from a husband's job and that, if a marriage fails, the wife gets alimony and child support."<sup>44</sup> The backlash to women's expanding roles was obvious and fits the pattern of wartime expansion

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<sup>41</sup> "Trouble for ERA." *Time* 101, no. 8 (February 19, 1973): 30

<sup>42</sup> "71.9 Pet. Back ERA - Poll," *Miami Herald* (December, 17 1974)

<sup>43</sup> "Majority in Poll Wants ERA Passed," *Pensacola Journal*, (April, 5 1977)

<sup>44</sup> "Trouble for ERA." *Time* 101, no. 8 (February 19, 1973): 30

and post war contraction, albeit in the paradoxical Cold War manner. American leaders, men and women, responded to the backlash in order to defeat the ERA. Their reasoning generally dipped into traditional religious and masculinity issues.

In Oklahoma, Democrat John Monks helped defeat the bill by preaching from the Bible. "The good book says a woman should serve her husband," he told his colleagues. Arkansas State Senator Guy Hamilton ("Mutt") Jones put the matter a little differently: "Women are put on this earth to minister to the needs of miserable men," he argued. Marion Olson, chairwoman of a right-wing political party in Minnesota, offered yet another objection: "We don't want to turn our daughters into tigers and our sons into pansies. Nature did not intend men and women to be equal."<sup>45</sup>

The arguments against, especially in the above case, seem like elementary playground circular arguments of the "did not" "did so" variety. However, these arguments in conjunction with general societal backlash and fitting the pattern of contraction were highly effective as the ERA never received enough votes for ratification. In addition, similar arguments were reported in Florida papers. Pat Harbolt was quoted in the Tallahassee Democrat in 1977, as part of the Florida debate with a masculine religious opposing argument, "Man has been the spear carrier and woman has been the protector of the cave. I didn't set that up. God did."<sup>46</sup> The typical masculine imagery of the warrior and protector of the woman and home has been a regular image of the backlash in order to force a contraction of women's roles after an expansion period. The

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<sup>45</sup> "Trouble for ERA." *Time* 101, no. 8 (February 19, 1973): 30

<sup>46</sup> "Parents Fighting ERA," *Tallahassee Democrat*. (April, 5 1977)

leader of Stop ERA, Phyllis Schlafly, embodied the backlash and contraction of women's roles during the middle late Cold War, but also as part of the paradoxical manner of the Cold War.

Phyllis Schlafly vociferously called for domestic, at home women and manly men who were the warrior protectors and used military service and physical differences to argue against the ERA. Writing in 1978, in the *Congressional Digest*, Schlafly argued two points: first, that family support would be reciprocal in terms of alimony and child support, in other words that women would now be expected to be breadwinners and second, that girls would be subject to selective service and the draft.<sup>47</sup> In the wake of the Vietnam draft battle her argument over military service was highly topical and highly effective. She continues by saying that reasonable people want differences between men and women based on factual differences, namely babies and physical strength.<sup>48</sup> Military service and physical differences were Schlafly's two pronged argument. Writing in 1982 she not only accepted stereotyping, but demanded it by asserting:

Except for the tiny fraction of one percent of career-age women who volunteer for military service and complete their terms of enlistment, American women still expect their men to protect and defend them. And American men will never stoop so low as to send their wives, sisters, sweethearts, and daughters out to fight enemy men. Stereotyped sex roles? Of course. Now and forever.<sup>49</sup>

The mother image, the wife/girlfriend image have long been used in order to force and reinforce a contraction of women's roles in the backlash phase of the overall pattern. But, even as

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<sup>47</sup> Phyllis Schlafly, "The Question Of Ratification Of The Equal Rights Amendment CON." *Congressional Digest* 56, no. 6/7 (June 1977): 189.

<sup>48</sup> Phyllis Schlafly, "The Question Of Ratification Of The Equal Rights Amendment CON." *Congressional Digest* 56, no. 6/7 (June 1977): 189

<sup>49</sup> Phyllis Schlafly, "Eternal Differences." *The Wilson Quarterly* (1976-) 6, no. 3 (1982): 152.

Schlafly called for women at home, she was working, speaking and living a career life as part of the unusual paradox found in the Cold War pattern.

Phyllis Schlafly was a career lawyer and leader of Stop ERA, and as she argued for women at home she was living a public, political and 'liberated' lifestyle. In an analysis of the woman *Time Magazine* recognizes the paradox describing Schlafly as flying from state capital to state capital making public appearances and political speeches while insisting that "women find their greatest fulfillment at home with their family."<sup>50</sup> The paradox of a women making public political speeches with an agenda and directly stating that women should remain at home, while not being at home is clear and also provides evidence of a an expansion of women's roles as well as the backlash to that expansion. Schlafly did not seem to recognize her 'liberated' lifestyle.

When asked by *Time* she stated:

My husband lets me do what I want to do," she says. "I have canceled speeches whenever my husband thought that I had been away from home too much."

Besides, she adds, "when I fill out applications, I put down 'mother' as my occupation." She boasts that she breast-fed every one of her six children and later taught each of them how to read. Says she: "I work all the time. I'm organized. I've learned to budget every minute."<sup>51</sup>

So, while working all the time because her husband lets her "do what I want to do." Because she puts down 'mother' as her occupation she is, therefore, a 'stay at home Mom' who just does not stay at home. Schlafly clearly reaped the benefits of role expansion that occurred in the wake of

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<sup>50</sup> "Anti-Era Evangelist Wins Again Feminine But Forceful, Phyllis Schlafly is a Very liberated woman." *Time* 112, no. 1 (July 3, 1978): 20.

<sup>51</sup> "Anti-Era Evangelist Wins Again Feminine But Forceful, Phyllis Schlafly is a Very liberated woman." *Time* 112, no. 1 (July 3, 1978): 20.

Vietnam as part of Cold War and as part of the pattern. She was also just as clearly part of the backlash part of the pattern in the paradoxical manner that the lengthy Cold War contributed to the over-all pattern of expansion and contraction. The societal and cultural implications are referred to as a remasculinization and are also found in popular culture.

During the late Cold War backlash and contraction to role expanding legislation led to popular culture imaging a re-masculinized America. Legislative expansion such as Title IX, which forced schools accepting federal monies to equally distribute those monies to boys and girls extracurricular activities occurred with pressure from women's groups.<sup>52</sup> But, this did not go unchallenged. According to Heather Stur, media images in the 1980s not only illustrated re-masculinized society, she cites the A-Team as a hyper masculine television show, but also notes that in many cases women were all together excluded, citing popular television shows like: My Two Dad's, Full House, and Highway to Heaven.<sup>53</sup> So, while the women's movement pushed forward with role expansion such as Title IX, some popular culture was creating a world where women did not exist in backlash.

At last, the Cold War followed the pattern of expansion, backlash and contraction in a unique, paradoxical manner due to the length and unusual waging of the Cold War. First, the Cold War begins in the wake of World War II, which immediately places American women in a backlash and contraction phase as society attempts to re-orient from the expansion that occurred by asking Rosie into the workplace. Thus creating an early Cold War gender role that placed women in a domestic role, which many agreed to as a stabilizing factor during unsettled times.

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<sup>52</sup> United States Department of Labor, *Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972* (Title 20 U.S.C. Sections 1681-1688)

<sup>53</sup> Heather Marie Stur, *Beyond Combat: Women and Gender in the Vietnam War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 239



Paradoxically, these women were simultaneously invited to participate as Cold Warriors and excluded. In addition, women in the workplace would never return to pre-war numbers and American society had to adjust to significant numbers of women in the workplace. As the Cold War continued through proxy wars, the war in Vietnam, in conjunction with the counter culture and women's movement led to expanding roles in society and the military, while the hyper masculine warrior image was tarnished and rejected by many. Thus, the middle Cold War period saw an expansion of women's roles. However, by the 1970s the battle over the ERA, and its failure, showcased a backlash and contraction that carried into popular culture of the late Cold War even as the women's movement carried expansion into the late Cold War period with legislative progress.

## **Conclusion**

### **The Impact of War on Women's Roles: A Series of Case Studies**

In conclusion, through this series of case studies it has become apparent that women's roles have changed and expanded in response to war. There is a clear pattern that women's roles expand during wartime, face a backlash at the end of and immediately post-war that results in a contraction of women's roles. However, women's roles do not return to pre-war levels, thus allowing a general progress and expansion of women's roles throughout American history.

The pattern begins with the Revolution and proceeds through each war period. Women's roles expanded during the revolution as women were asked to take part in boycotts and aid soldiers. Due to that participation women were accepted as political participants, however the backlash and contraction women's political participation was limited to a 'domestic sphere' and women were only allowed to participate in political discussion informally. A similar pattern emerges during the Civil War. Nursing, a male profession antebellum became a female profession due to the war postbellum and women writers were not only accepted but sought after. However, once again backlash and contraction forced women to write primarily in reinforcement of white male supremacy. World War I and World War II saw the expansion of women in employment, the military and politically with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Backlash and contraction sent some women out of the workforce, out of the military and politically ignored. The Cold War's unique pattern begins with a contrived 'traditional' set of gender roles in the contraction from World War II and progresses in a paradoxical pattern of

expansion and contraction with Vietnam and the counter culture acting as a catalyst and the debates over the ERA acting as a symbol.

In order to understand how America has become what it is, it is necessary to explore how war has impacted American society. A significant part of human life is coming to understand who and what an individual defines themselves within the context of culture and society. Gender roles are a significant part of how individuals define themselves. As a man or woman and what that means. Recent arguments about gay marriage or the status of transgendered individuals are clear evidence of the importance of these definitions. Therefore, a study of how women's roles in society and how society has responded (in backlash and contraction) illuminates a great deal about American society and culture over time. In order to predict the future the past must be understood. This project helps to understand a pattern of American history, society and culture. This paper illustrates how women's roles have changed over the course of American history and therefore adds to scholarship regarding women's studies, American history, gender norms and perhaps allows us to understand how women's roles might change and evolve in the future.

## Epilogue

In the end this area is ripe for further exploration. First, the question becomes, has this pattern held since the end of the Cold War. Second, by nature and scope, several groups have been left uncovered, most significantly African American women. Third, have women's rights, status or roles stagnated since the ERA debates. While African American women's roles have history that can easily be explored, the other questions are hampered by how recent the events are in time. To describe the nature of recent events in following the pattern is high conjecture, but there is some evidence that points to a continuing pattern.

While there is a significant amount of conjecture, the pattern of expansion, backlash and contraction seems to have generally held. Since the end of the Cold War in 1991, women have engaged further and further in the workforce and challenged the glass ceiling in the workplace and in politics. According to Valentina Zarya, the number of female CEO's on the Fortune 500 has increased from twenty-one to thirty-two, which is a record number since 1955.<sup>1</sup> According to the Center for American Women and Politics, one hundred and five women hold seats in Congress in 2017.<sup>2</sup> In 2016, Hillary Clinton ran for president on the Democratic ticket (a major party). This is a clear expansion of women's roles in the workplace and in politics. However, as mentioned in the introduction, the vitriol against a female candidate may be evidence of a backlash. Further, President Trump's August 2017 attempt to ban transgender persons from the military may also be evidence of a similar contraction of non-traditional gender roles.<sup>3</sup> It would

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<sup>1</sup> Valentina Zarya, "The 2017 Fortune 500 Includes a Record Number of Women CEOs" *Fortune*. June 7, 2017

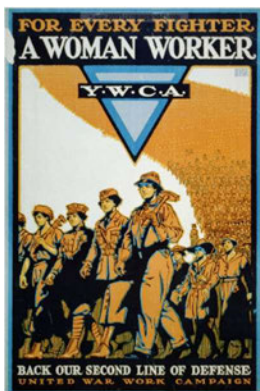
<sup>2</sup> "Women in the U.S. Congress 2017." *Center for American Women and Politics*. Rutgers, Eagleton Institute of Politics. 2017

<sup>3</sup> Helene Cooper, "Trump Says Transgender Ban Is a 'Great Favor' for the Military" *The New York Times*. August 10, 2017

be nearly impossible to ban women from the military at this point so the backlash and contraction must focus on others who do not conform to the traditional gender norms.

African American women are glaringly absent from these case studies. First, none of the posters from World War I or World War II have an African American presence, though African American women participated in both wars. Second, none of the primary or secondary sources focused on African American women. David Blight's *Race and Reunion*, does focus on race, but, his UDC argument was applied in the Civil War case study. Partially, literacy was needed in order to research women's roles and, especially for America's early history, it was elite white women who were literate and who did write in diaries and journals. Additionally, it was a choice to develop research and write case studies based on women's roles in society in general and that meant a focus on white women. This leaves an entire group open to research. For example, the Cold War period, was also a period of Civil Rights, so how did African American women's roles differ from white women of that period. Also, African American women's roles during the Revolution and Civil War periods included slavery. So, how did women's roles differ, expand or contract within slavery. In addition, what were the effects of the pattern of expansion, backlash and contraction on free African American women? While the entire topic is open to extended research, this area alone is ripe for research and writing.

## Appendix A: Selected World War I Propaganda Posters



1. For every fighter a woman worker Y.W.C.A. : Back our second line of defence. LOC Summary: Poster showing a parade of women workers wearing uniforms appropriate for specific jobs. . LOC Notes: Promotional goal: U.S. G2.J7. 1918. Date Created/Published: N.Y. : The United States Printing & Lith. Co., 1918. World War One recruitment poster provided by LOC. Original medium: 1 print (poster): lithograph, color.



2. New York Spring horse show, Durland's Academy ... New York, April 29, 30, May 1, 1919, for the benefit of the Motor-corps of America. LOC Summary: Woman in uniform carrying stretcher. LOC Notes: Promotional goal: U.S.K3. 1918. Date Created/Published: 1918. WW1 propaganda poster provided by LOC. Original medium: 1 print (poster): color.



3. The Woman's Land Army of America--Training school, University of Virginia--Apply Woman's Land Army, U.S. Employment Service, Richmond, Virginia. LOC Summary: Two women carrying basket of vegetables in front of woman in uniform on horseback with U.S. flag. LOC Notes: Copyright by the Woman's Land Army of America. Date Created/Published: c1918. WWI recruitment poster provided by LOC. Original medium: 1 print (poster): color; 75.5 x 50.9 cm. (sheet).



4. One of the thousand Y.M.C.A. girls in France--United War Work Campaign Nov. 11th to 18th. LOC Summary: Poster showing a woman in a Y.M.C.A. uniform offering a steaming cup of coffee and books; large red triangle is behind her. LOC Notes: Promotional goal: U.S. G2.J7. 1918. Date Created/Published: 1918. Propaganda World War 1 poster provided by LOC. Original medium: 1 print (poster): color.



5. Women awake! Your country needs you--Learn to be of national service - join the Navy League--Help the Navy - local headquarters. LOC Summary: Woman in uniform holding megaphone and flag. LOC Notes: Promotional goal: U.S. F34.J7. 1916. Date Created/Published: Washington, D.C.: Andrew B. Graham Co. Lithographers, 1916. Propaganda World War 1 poster provided by LOC. Original medium: 1 print (poster): lithograph, color.



6. The greatest mother in the world. LOC Summary: Red Cross nurse holding wounded U.S. soldier on stretcher. LOC Notes: Promotional goal: U.S. J8. 191-. Date Created/Published: 1917?. World War I propaganda poster provided by LOC. Original medium: 1 print (poster): color.



7. Help her carry on! National League for Women's Service. LOC Summary: Woman in uniform saying, "Miss America reports for service, Sir," to Uncle Sam. Date Created/Published: 1918. World War One recruitment poster provided by LOC. Original medium: 1 lithograph (poster): color.



8. Back our girls over there United War Work Campaign. LOC Summary: Y.W.C.A. poster for the United War Work Campaign showing a young woman seated at a switchboard with soldiers in the background. Date Created/Published: 1918. World War 1 recruitment poster provided by LOC. Original medium: 1 print (poster): lithograph, color.



9. Five thousand by June Graduate nurses your country needs you. LOC Summary: Red Cross recruitment poster showing a nurse standing, with barracks in background. Date Created/Published: New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1917?. WW1 poster provided by LOC. Original medium: 1 print (poster): lithograph, color.



## Appendix B: Selected World War II Propaganda Posters and Images





Members of a riveting team at an aircraft factory use rivet guns and bucking bars to work on a basis trainer plane wing center section.



Here, a woman rivets an airplane wing at a munitions factory.



Fee Perez inspects .30 caliber rifle and machine gun bullets at Remington Arms Company's Bridgeport, Connecticut, plant alongside a photo of her husband, Melburn, who is serving overseas.

All World War II posters and images and images are available here: <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/world-war-ii-history/pictures/world-war-ii-posters/recruitment-poster-by-tom-woodburn>.

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