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POPULAR MAGAZINES, WOMEN,  
AND WORLD WAR II: THE USE OF  
POPULAR CULTURE AS PROPAGANDA

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Maureen Elizabeth Honey

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in English

Major professor

Date March 1, 1979

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POPULAR MAGAZINES, WOMEN, AND WORLD WAR II:  
THE USE OF POPULAR CULTURE AS PROPAGANDA

By

Maureen Elizabeth Honey

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1979

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1979

## ABSTRACT

### POPULAR MAGAZINES, WOMEN, AND WORLD WAR II: THE USE OF POPULAR CULTURE AS PROPAGANDA

By

Maureen Elizabeth Honey

This study examines images of women in popular magazines during the 1940s. Specifically, it analyzes the characteristics of heroines in fiction and women in advertisements from The Saturday Evening Post, a middle-class magazine, and True Story, a magazine aimed at working-class women. The analysis is based on all advertisements from both magazines and over three hundred stories from January 1941 through March 1946.

The major question of the study was why images of women in popular magazines after World War II did not reflect the egalitarianism of women's war work. Magazines ignored the large numbers of women who entered the postwar labor force and women's competent performance of male jobs during the war, idealizing instead the full-time homemaker. Women's wartime role should have resulted in reevaluation of female capacities and furthered sexual equality in the postwar world. Paradoxically, however, postwar ideology created a feminine mystique which defined women's status more conservatively than at any time since the nineteenth century.

In addition to exploring images of women during the war period, this study concerns the variable of class. It investigates the differences between middle-class and working-class fiction concerning women's role in society and female identity. Based on the assumption that women from different classes must cope with separate realities, the research defines how sex roles were affected by class stratification.

The conclusions of this analysis are as follows. War work produced egalitarian images of women and improved attitudes toward all the work women performed. Magazines praised them for their strength, intelligence, competence, bravery, and their ability to fill male occupations. Fiction portrayed married working women as managing to successfully handle family and job responsibilities, a significant change from the prewar period which posed a conflict between female careers and happy marriages.

Wartime egalitarianism failed to survive reconversion to a peacetime economy for two reasons. First, images of female war workers largely resulted from government and private propaganda groups which were influenced by the government's policy to use women as a temporary labor reserve. Fiction writers, advertisers, and government propaganda agencies worked together to recruit women into war production on a temporary basis only.

Of equal importance was the use of the family, in wartime propaganda, to symbolize democracy, peace, and the American Way of Life. The emphasis on women as symbols of vulnerability, innocence, and the home front glorified the homemaker, and reinforced an image of



female dependence on masculine strength. In addition, equating peace with family life insured that women's wartime identities as wage laborers would be abandoned, after the war, in favor of the full-time homemaker.

Finally, two findings concern class differences in sex-role ideology. From the evidence of popular magazines, middle-class women based their identity on their role as wife and were primarily concerned with their sexual attractiveness to men. Working-class women, on the other hand, placed far more importance on motherhood and tied femininity to fertility rather than to sexual attractiveness. Partly because middle-class women placed great importance on the marital bond, middle-class ideology was more egalitarian than working-class conceptions of sex roles. During the war, middle-class magazines contained stronger egalitarian themes and more assertive images of women than did the more conservative working-class magazines. The impact of war work on traditional notions of female identity was greater for middle-class women--which casts doubt on the thesis that egalitarian images stem from female participation in the labor force.

**To Russel B. Nye**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many individuals who contributed to this dissertation. I wish I could mention them all and acknowledge my debt to their support, patience, advice, and help in finding research material. Since that would result in another dissertation, I regretfully confine myself to citing the following individuals who were of particular importance to my research. Russel B. Nye directed my thesis and I owe him many thanks for his sensitivity, willingness to suggest sources, and valuable suggestions for the final editing. He has been instrumental in my intellectual growth, by encouraging me to publish and by providing me with a model of an extraordinary teacher, an inspiring scholar, and, most importantly, a kind person. I want to give special thanks, too, to the other members of my graduate committee. Barrie Thorne has been a good friend, a sister in the struggle for female equality, and a superb teacher who has given me unusually good feedback on my work. Her enthusiasm for this project has encouraged me to continue my research into images of women in popular culture. Victor Howard, through his interest in American social history, has shown me the value of interdisciplinary work in American Studies and has led me to the Saturday Evening Post as a historical record. Finally, I wish to thank Madison Kuhn for his acute observations about the relationship of the media to government policy during World War II, and for sharing with me his breadth of knowledge of American history.



I would also like to thank The Macfadden Group, which publishes True Story, for allowing me to use their collection and to work in their offices. Confession magazines are valuable sources of information about working-class women and are impossible to find in libraries. I cannot overestimate the importance of Macfadden's decision to accommodate scholars. Similarly, I owe thanks to the people who staff the National Records Center at Suitland, Maryland. Their kindness and intelligence helped me find documents on the recruitment campaign waged by the Office of War Information, material I would have had difficulty locating myself.

I want to acknowledge my debt to sisters in the women's movement who recognized the importance of research on women during World War II, and who have encouraged me to use a feminist analysis in all my research. My teaching colleagues have been extraordinarily supportive, and I owe them many thanks for their help in completing the final draft, while I was teaching full time. I want to give special thanks to John Mock, who has given me much help in articulating the ideas of my thesis while encouraging me to pursue academic work. Finally, my family and friends have been largely responsible for my completion of both the dissertation and the requirements of graduate school. It is impossible to thank them enough for being the perceptive, loving people they are.

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## PREFACE

Popular culture is a valuable source of information about a society. Not only is it a record of which values and conceptions of reality great numbers of people are exposed to, but it provides insight into the ways people adjust to the stresses of living and to the social system in which they function. Popular culture must speak to the needs of its audience for information, relief of tension, and meaning. The nature of the issues it addresses and the fantasies it contains, therefore, provides clues about what people find important and how they picture themselves.<sup>1</sup>

This study is based on the notion that popular culture transmits dominant cultural values within the framework of audience experience and needs for fantasy, entertainment, and guidance.<sup>2</sup> It is neither entirely a reflection of audience beliefs nor of values designed to support the status quo. It is, more complexly, an amalgam of audience experiences and fantasies, values deeply rooted in the culture, and attitudes which support the prevailing social structure. It functions as a disseminator of values which are determined by the economic and political systems, cultural history, communications network, and other structural characteristics of the society from which it springs while speaking to the particular experiences of its audience.<sup>3</sup>

Different audiences create variations in the content of popular culture as do historical events. Class, sex, ethnic, and age distinctions, for instance, partially account for the types of appeals made by entertainment formulas. To study popular culture, then, is to gain insight into several aspects of society--the contours of social structures, the feelings and motivations of people who do not generally provide the historian with material which describes their lives, the impact of major events on the ideology of social systems, and the forces that produce or inhibit social change.

This study uses these principles to illuminate the status of women during the 1940s. This was one of the most critical periods in the history of women's participation in the labor force, as it was the first time that occupational barriers against women entering male sectors of the labor market were removed to a significant degree. Women's wartime role implicitly challenged widespread notions about the capacities of women as a group and undermined rationales for occupational segregation. Most importantly, these changes held the promise of restructuring sex roles on a permanent basis.

After the war, the potential for women to achieve greater social and economic equality went unrealized. War workers were channeled back into the low-paying female sector of the labor market; three million women left the labor force. Ignoring the reality of women's increasing role in wage labor and their competent performance of male social roles during the war, the mass media glorified the full-time homemaker and created a feminine mystique which defined

sex roles as rigidly as at any time since the cult of true womanhood of the nineteenth century.

Several studies have examined the war period to see why and how the potential for an egalitarian restructuring of society failed to occur.<sup>4</sup> The role of popular magazines in the government's campaign to recruit women into war production and in the glorification of the family as a symbol of democracy throughout the war helps explain why the egalitarianism necessitated by war work failed to be incorporated into postwar ideology.

In addition to exploring the nature of magazine images of women during the war, this study focuses on the variable of class. It investigates the way role shifts and economic requirements were adapted to the entertainment formulas of different socioeconomic groups. This is intended to both illuminate the ideology of middle-class and working-class women and to illustrate the ability of popular culture to transmit cultural values in different ways.

Magazines played a major role in the government's labor recruitment campaign and their wide circulation made them important attitude and self-image shapers. The emphasis of this study is on magazine fiction and advertisements, because their messages are subtler and carry more emotional weight than those of nonfiction or editorials. Thus they have potentially more influence on reader beliefs.<sup>5</sup> Fiction is an especially good indicator of cultural attitudes, since its values are absorbed unconsciously and its fantasies are elaborately drawn. In addition, popular fiction is filled with



archetypal characters who can tell us a great deal about cultural values:

Since the reader identifies . . . with a particular hero model, the fictional hero, together with his [sic] status, qualities, and achievements, becomes an important vehicle of social values. Heroes and heroines become the carriers of specific American traditions.<sup>6</sup>

By examining the heroines of wartime fiction, we can thus understand more completely how war work affected social norms concerning sex roles.

Chapter I reviews the labor force changes that occurred during the war in order to provide a framework for understanding the propaganda and images promoted by magazines. It discusses the significance of women's wartime labor force activities and describes government and business policies toward women wage workers. Chapter II describes the propaganda groups which played a key role in shaping the images of women to war needs and focuses on their relationship to the magazine industry. Connections between government policy makers and these groups made it likely that women's wartime role would be interpreted to the public in a way that would support the use of women as a temporary wartime labor reserve. Chapters III and IV concern the Saturday Evening Post and True Story. The Post represents a group of magazines known as family "slicks" which were aimed at a diverse but decidedly middle-class audience, while True Story represents magazines directed at working-class women. Chapter V draws conclusions about the differences between working-class and middle-class magazines' treatment of women's war work in order to understand the role of class in wartime ideology.

The use of popular magazines as recruitment propaganda during World War II highlights several characteristics of popular culture and American attitudes toward women. It helps explain discrepancies between women's labor force activity and popular images of women while contributing to an understanding of the war period itself. An analysis of wartime images of women allows for identification of those factors which led to the failure of the war to equalize women's role in the economy, strengthen their identities as wage workers, and produce egalitarian images in the postwar period.

## Footnotes--Preface

<sup>1</sup>For an indication of the variety of the theoretical approaches used in popular culture research, see Theories and Methodologies in Popular Culture, ed. Ray Browne, Sam Grogg, Jr., and Larry Landrum, from the Journal of Popular Culture (n.p.: n.p., n.d.); Media and Symbols: The Forms of Expression, Communication, and Education, ed. David Olson (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1974); Mass Culture Revisited, ed. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (New York: VanNostrand Reinhold, 1971); Popular Culture in America, ed. David Manning White (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970); and Culture for the Millions, ed. Norman Jacobs and Paul Lazarsfeld (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).

<sup>2</sup>John Cawelti, Adventure, Mystery and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1976) articulates this perspective brilliantly.

<sup>3</sup>Studies which support the notion that popular culture promotes values consonant with such structural factors include Carl Bode, The Anatomy of Popular Culture, 1840-1861 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1959); Richard Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957); George Gerbner, "The Social Role of the Confession Magazine," Social Problems, 6 (1958), 29-40; Abraham Kaplan, "The Aesthetics of the Popular Arts," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 24 (1966), 351-64; Albert McLean, American Vaudeville as Ritual (Kentucky: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1965); Leo Bogart, "The Mass Media and the Blue-Collar Workers," in Blue-Collar World, ed. Arthur Shostak and William Gomberg (N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964); and Stuart Ewen, Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1976).

<sup>4</sup>Sheila Tobias and Lisa Anderson discuss the failure of unions to protect the interests of women workers in "What Really Happened to Rosie the Riveter: Demobilization and the Female Labor Force, 1945-47" (N.Y.: MSS Modular Pub., 1974), Module 9, 1-36; Eleanor Straub attributes the failure to the inability of women in government to influence government policy and to the absence of feminist pressure groups "United States Government Policy Toward Civilian Women During World War II," Diss. Emory Univ., 1973; William Chafe concludes that radical changes were simply not desired by Americans in The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970 (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972); Leila Rupp asserts that the way public images of women incorporated their wartime labor activities made it clear that women's war work was to be temporary Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945 (N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978).

<sup>5</sup>For a discussion of communications researchers who support the view that the hidden messages of popular culture are more persuasive since they escape controls of consciousness, see Frank Fox, Madison Avenue Goes to War: The Strange Military Career of American Advertising, 1941-1945, Charles E. Merrill Monograph Series (Utah: Brigham Young Univ. Press, 1975), p. 11.

<sup>6</sup>Patricke Johns-Heine and Hans Gerth, "Values in Mass Periodical Fiction, 1921-1940," Public Opinion Quarterly, 13 (1949), 105-113.

## CHAPTER I

### THE EGALITARIAN POTENTIAL OF WAR WORK

The role of women in World War II is of great social and historical importance, because the war precipitated the entry of millions of women into the labor force and into jobs normally filled by men. Only in World Wars I and II were women able to enter the high-paying, skilled occupations in manufacturing generally filled by male workers, thus providing them with the opportunity to make more money than ever before and to acquire job skills and work experience normally denied them.<sup>1</sup> They temporarily escaped occupational patterns established from the beginnings of industrialization which confined them to the most marginal positions in the economy.<sup>2</sup>

While women have steadily entered the labor force in great numbers, they have entered a segregated labor market. From 1900 to 1960, 60 to 73 percent of the female labor force was concentrated in occupations where the majority of workers were female, and 30 to 48 percent were in occupations which were 80 percent or more female.<sup>3</sup> This has been a market which provides women with relatively few work options. In 1940, for instance, 23 of 451 occupational titles listed in the census accounted for 75 percent of all employed women.<sup>4</sup>

Because women have tended to enter occupations which had been performed in the home, such as manufacture of clothing and

textiles, processing of food, teaching, nursing, and domestic service, and because the forces of occupational segregation have been so strong, the occupational roles women fill have remained remarkably stable. Despite the work women did in the war, for instance, 14 occupations in which 70 percent or more of the workers were women appear in lists from both 1900 and 1950.<sup>5</sup> The occupations open to women have generally fallen into four categories: high-status, low-wage professions such as teaching and nursing; service and trade industries (clerks, waitresses, laundry workers, telephone operators, domestics); nondurable goods industries (apparel, textile, food); and clerical work. Most of these jobs come from industries which operate on low profit margins, are nonunionized, and provide few opportunities for advancement. In short, women have been treated as "the most expendable members of the work force."<sup>6</sup>

The war provided an opportunity for women to significantly alter their status in the work force--and by extension in American society--since the shortage of male workers and the necessity for production of war material forced employers to remove many of the occupational barriers that kept women out of higher paying, more skilled work. Training programs were set up by government and industry for women to learn how to handle industrial equipment and master skills; protective labor legislation which had been instrumental in keeping women out of high-paying jobs was rescinded;<sup>7</sup> women were accepted into male-dominated unions;<sup>8</sup> and high school girls were encouraged to take courses in fields designed to develop skills useful in war industries.<sup>9</sup> Women were hired in durable goods industries where

workers tended to be unionized and to enjoy higher wages, and also in nonfactory jobs linked to male social roles.

For the most part, these changes began to occur in 1943, when women were hired in great numbers for production jobs in war industries. By the end of that year, they comprised 25 to 52 percent of workers in aircraft plants, 10.6 percent of those in steel production, and 34.2 percent of ammunition workers.<sup>10</sup> The following year, women were 10 percent of all workers in shipping and 8 percent of railroad workers.<sup>11</sup> As a result of the increased employment of women in these male-dominated fields, the percentage of women rose from 8 percent of all production workers in durable goods industries in 1939 to 25 percent in 1944, their numbers having gone from 340,000 to over two million.<sup>12</sup> In addition, women went from .9 percent of all "craftsmen, foremen [sic], and kindred workers" in 1940 to 1.5 percent in 1945.<sup>13</sup>

Because war industries offered higher wages than traditional woman-employing fields, large numbers of women changed occupations. In seven of the ten major war production areas, 25 percent or more of the women employed both in 1944 and before Pearl Harbor changed occupation groups. Thirty-two percent of all sales workers and 30 percent of service workers shifted to operative work.<sup>14</sup> In the Puget Sound area, where many women were employed in shipyards, the trade and service sector declined from 67 percent of all women workers to 42 percent over the course of the war.<sup>15</sup> Twenty-six percent of female workers in war industries across the nation came from traditional female fields.<sup>16</sup>

TABLE 1  
WOMEN CHANGING OCCUPATION GROUP,  
PEARL HARBOR TO MARCH 1944

Occupation at Time of Pearl Harbor	% of Total Employed Women from Occupation Group Who Left Between Pearl Harbor and March 1944 to Enter Another Occupation Group
Total, all occupations	14.7
Clerical workers	4.4
Proprietors, managers, officials	6.2
Professional and semiprofessional workers	6.6
Craftsmen, foremen, operatives, and laborers	8.6
Farmers, farm managers, farm laborers	24.2
Other service workers	29.3
Domestic service workers	29.5
Sales workers	32.9

Source: "Recent Occupational Trends," Monthly Labor Review, August (1947), 139-147.

A comparison of the 1944 earnings of women in these fields with those of women employed in war plants explains the desire of female workers to enter male sectors of the labor force. Wages in munitions plants and aircraft factories averaged 40 percent higher than those in consumer goods factories.<sup>17</sup> In Detroit, a typical war production center, the average weekly take-home earnings of women in laundries, restaurants, hotels, retail and wholesale trade, and consumer goods industries ranged from \$24.10 to \$29.75 while those of women in war industries averaged \$40.35.<sup>18</sup>



The shift of women workers from female to male occupations and the hiring of new entrants to the labor force in these more lucrative sectors of the job market constituted massive changes in the history of women's labor force activity. No less significant was the other role shift occasioned by the war, one which carried added potential for greater sexual equality--the employment of married women and mothers in record numbers. Of the new entrants to the labor force, 56 percent were homemakers<sup>19</sup> and three million were married, an increase of 75 percent over 1940.<sup>20</sup> For the first time, married women workers outnumbered single wage earners. Most of the homemakers (40 percent) went directly into war manufacturing.<sup>21</sup> Many of these housewives were service wives, 50 percent of whom joined the labor force and who constituted nearly .4 million of the five million new workers.<sup>22</sup> Despite the policy of the War Manpower Commission, which urged employers to hire mothers of young children as a last resort, one-third of the married women in the labor force in February 1944 had children under ten.<sup>23</sup>

The entry of large numbers of housewives and mothers into the labor force had the potential to break down the normative ideal of the full-time homemaker that had existed from the beginning of industrialization, an ideal instrumental in maintaining women's marginal status in the labor force.<sup>24</sup> As long as employers could argue that woman's primary role was that of wife and mother, financially dependent on the husband, they could rationalize low wages and lack of upward mobility by claiming that women were merely temporary members of the work force. In addition, the ideology accompanying

industrialization encouraged women themselves to devalue their role as workers. As William Chafe says: "Once the role of full-time homemaker had become a badge of 'succeeding' economically and socially, the barriers of breaking out of that position became nearly insuperable."<sup>25</sup> The need for married women and mothers in war work temporarily modified the homemaker ideal by encouraging women to develop work identities outside the home.

These changes challenged the ideology of occupational segregation as well as the identification of women with the home, undermining traditional ideas concerning female capacities and interests. While many studies of the war period indicate that this challenge to traditional beliefs failed to produce significant changes in attitudes toward women, it has been argued that the war expanded women's role in society to include that of wage worker.<sup>26</sup> The major evidence cited in support of this position is that married women and mothers joined the labor force in record numbers after the war. It is true that married women have outnumbered single women in the labor force since the war and that the percentage of female workers never returned to its prewar level. This labor force pattern, however, does not mean that the normative role of women was expanded to include roles as wage earners.

To a large extent, the married woman worker of the postwar period has been invisible, nullifying whatever impact her presence could have had on changing conceptions of female roles. The fact that she has come from the lower end of the socioeconomic scale and filled the lowest-paying positions in the job market means that she

has not been included in the normative image of middle-class success: "the [rising] participation by women occurred in the face of an intensified cultural fixation on their virtues as housekeepers, child rearers, and husband custodians."<sup>27</sup> The war may have accelerated the entry of married women into the labor force, but the image of women as full-time homemakers remained as central to normative definitions of the female role as it was before the war.

With reconversion to a peacetime economy, the potential for women to achieve greater social and economic equality went unrealized. Layoffs fell disproportionately on women workers, claiming 175 out of every 1,000 women in manufacturing industries, almost double the rate for men. They were consistently higher for women than for men from August 1945 through May 1946, the period when three-quarters of returned veterans who found employment in manufacturing obtained jobs.<sup>28</sup> While 45.3 percent of women production workers had been employed in higher-paying durable goods industries in November 1943, only 25 percent of these workers were in durable goods by November 1946.<sup>29</sup> (See Figure 1.)

Industry and government channeled women who remained in the labor force into low-paying woman-employing sectors of the labor market. There was a net drop of .5 million women in "craftsmen or foremen [sic]" positions after V-J Day and the percentage of women in service work increased.<sup>30</sup> Job referrals of the U.S. Employment Service indicate that women were placed in unskilled and semi-skilled classifications in industry and that the demand for workers in these positions was greater than the supply.<sup>31</sup> The Women's Bureau described

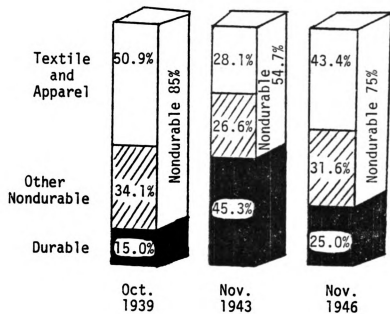


Figure 1. Distribution of women production workers in manufacturing industries

Source: "Postwar Labor Turn-Over Among Women Factory Workers," Monthly Labor Review, March (1947), 411-419.

women as "reluctant to return to household work [paid domestic work], and also to other services, and to the more unattractive and low-paid clerical and manufacturing jobs as well."<sup>32</sup> A Women's Bureau study confirms the fact that women were channeled unwillingly into prewar fields: "When jobs of the skill levels women have developed in war work are no longer available, the tendency is to refer them back to their earlier types of jobs, which many of them no longer desire."<sup>33</sup> This was in spite of the fact that the proportion of skilled workers in the 1947 labor force was slightly above the wartime ratio.<sup>34</sup>

While women previously employed in war manufacture were returning to the home, to school, and to female sectors of the labor force, large numbers of male wartime operatives moved up the occupational ladder into the rapidly expanding building trades or into skilled positions in manufacturing of consumer goods.<sup>35</sup> By April 1947, 11 million of the 13.5 million veterans were employed, and the bulk of male workers were "proprietors/managers/officials," "craftsmen/foremen/kindred workers," "operatives," and "laborers." In contrast, the bulk of women workers in 1947 were clerical workers, operatives, domestics, and service workers.<sup>36</sup>

Employers and government planners intended from the outset to break down occupational barriers which kept women out of high-paying jobs on a temporary basis only. There were several government and industry policy studies published early in the war that identified women as war labor reserves.<sup>37</sup> One of these was authored by Thelma McKelvey who, in 1942, headed the Women's Labor Supply Service of the War Production Board's Labor Division.<sup>38</sup> McKelvey outlined war labor

requirements and identified three phases the economy was expected to go through which would require extra women workers. The first phase consisted of a demand for workers in occupations traditionally held by women resulting from increased purchasing power of the population. The second was use of women as a supplement to male labor in highly industrialized areas in 1942. The third was the replacement of male workers as the war progressed.

What is significant about this report is that while it readily supported programs designed to facilitate the employment of women in jobs normally filled by men, it made no mention of any government concern for permanently ending occupational segregation based on sex. While government planners expressed concern over work conditions, equal wages, fair hours, and adequate living quarters for women workers, it was clear that they gave precedence to male workers. For example, the Labor Division's policy statement specified that defense training programs for women should not be set up in industrial areas where great numbers of men were unemployed.<sup>39</sup> In addition, the report reveals that the government expected women to leave the labor force as soon as the emergency was over: "There is little doubt that women will be required to leave their jobs at the end of the war to permit the return of men to their jobs as they are released from the armed forces."<sup>40</sup>

The Census Bureau made a more detailed analysis of which women could be most readily utilized as a wartime labor reserve to help the War Manpower Commission with administration of the war program. While published in 1943, the report had been made available

to government agencies considerably before the date of publication. After identifying the demographic characteristics of women in and out of the labor force, the report concluded that married women without children under ten, living in metropolitan districts of 100,000 or more, would be the best source of workers for the duration of the war.<sup>41</sup>

All of the policy reports drawn up in the early stages of the war show a clear understanding of the value of women as an available reserve of labor power that could be brought into the economy to replace men. None of them considered persuading experienced women workers already in the labor force to enter male occupations in war factories or recruiting housewives from the lowest income bracket, the two groups of women most likely to remain in the work force after the war and most interested in retaining high-paying jobs. Plans were not made to train experienced workers for war factory jobs but instead to recruit women who would be more likely to leave the work force at the end of the war.

Another aspect of government policy toward women war workers that fostered retention of occupational segregation was the reluctance of the War Manpower Commission (WMC) to recruit mothers of young children, even though it recognized that many of these women would enter the labor force. The WMC made it official policy to employ young mothers as a last resort, and child care facilities were kept to a minimum throughout the war. This policy helped to preserve the normative definition of women as full-time homemakers and to maintain

the social attitude that women could justifiably be employed as marginal workers in peacetime.

In addition, the government's failure to provide sufficient community services, especially adequate child care, meant that women would be tempted to drop out of the labor force when they were laid off.<sup>42</sup> Even before V-J Day, reports of the Women's Bureau showed that absenteeism and failure of women to seek employment were largely due to the enormous workloads female workers had to bear and to the conflicting demands made on them by employer and family.<sup>43</sup> The Women's Bureau conducted a study in the summer of 1943 which showed that one-half of married war workers had full responsibility for housework, and it indicated that the women were exhausted from their double burdens. To support its request for more community services, the Bureau cited cases like the following:

A 45 year old woman, living on a farm fifteen miles from the plant, gets up at 4, packs lunches for herself and two sons in high school, gets the family breakfast, and leaves home at six o'clock. For her ride home she has to wait for men who work longer hours, so regardless of the hours worked it is after six when she reaches home. Then she has dinner to get, dishes to wash, and the whole round of household work to do. . . . It is eleven p.m. when she retires, allowing only five hours for rest.<sup>44</sup>

Drained by factory work weeks averaging 44 to 48 hours, pressured by husbands to continue their roles as homemakers, hampered by inadequate transportation, and forced to shop in crowded stores, married women workers who did not have to work for financial reasons undoubtedly found the prospect of staying home after the war attractive. Those who had to work were apt to seek employment in female fields closer to home once the war was over.



Employers, too, intended to use women in male jobs only for the duration of the war and took steps to preserve occupational segregation even while barriers against women were being removed.<sup>45</sup>

There was a good deal of initial resistance, never entirely overcome, to the hiring of women in male-dominated industries. The Women's Bureau found hostile attitudes on the part of employers and workers alike in aircraft production, shipping, and steelmaking in 1941.<sup>46</sup>

Eleanor Straub's recent study of labor policy regarding women war workers reveals that, as late as the end of 1942, employers insisted that women were unsuitable for over half of their labor needs.<sup>47</sup>

It also shows that when the War Department and the War Manpower Commission encouraged employers to hire women for defense jobs, they found "prejudices against women, blacks, aliens, and Jews in the labor force were often frequently deep-seated and employer specifications were often not modified until in-migration had strained community facilities to the breaking point."<sup>48</sup> Employers in war industries lowered restrictions against women workers reluctantly, with a certain amount of apprehension and distaste, and with an eye to replacing them with male workers when the war was over.

Many employers engaged in war production preferred to hire wives of men called up for duty on the theory that they would leave those jobs as soon as the men returned. The Women's Bureau found this practice widespread. In a sample of 35 ordnance, aircraft, and other war industry plants, half indicated that 50 percent or more of their women workers were married.<sup>49</sup> This corroborates an early survey which found that employers preferred hiring female members of families

of servicemen because the women would be easier to discharge when the men returned.<sup>50</sup> Employers frequently failed to promote women and put them in blind-alley jobs, a practice which the government later discovered was one of the major reasons women quit jobs in war plants.<sup>51</sup> Employers also sometimes reclassified jobs as female work, even though they had been previously performed by men.<sup>52</sup> These practices illustrate the limited commitment employers made to new women workers and how they prevented women from making permanent inroads into male-dominated occupations.

Employment policies, therefore, severely limited the opportunities for female advancement opened up by the wartime shortage of male workers, even though it was in the best interests of employers to train and retain women in their new jobs. The extent to which employers were willing to go in favoring male workers in jobs usually filled by men is illustrated by the fact that, after the war, women aircraft workers trained returning veterans in the new technology of airplane production so that the men could replace them.<sup>53</sup>

Some government policies prohibited discrimination against women, of course, and there were statements by some government officials that expressed a desire to upgrade women's postwar status in the work force. Certain War Manpower Commission policies advocated equal treatment of women workers both in war employment and reconversion. The War Labor Board, for instance, had a policy of equal pay for equal work. The Women's Bureau fought for women's right to retain their new positions, calling for legislation to provide equal pay, upgrade wages in consumer goods industries as well as in service

and trade, to provide adequate services for women workers, and institute sex-blind job classifications.<sup>54</sup> Finally, the Women's Advisory Committee to the War Manpower Commission warned that:

Government and industry must not assume that all women can be treated as a reserve group during war only, nor should those who wish to stay in the labor market be accused of taking men's jobs . . . any easy assumption that a great number of women will return to their homes is to be seriously questioned.<sup>55</sup>

Other policies weakened these sentiments, however, nor was the War Manpower Commission effective in enforcing its egalitarian policies. The War Labor Board, for example, while advocating equal pay, did so in the mildest of tones and ruled that women transferred to men's jobs for the duration would acquire no seniority.<sup>56</sup> The War Manpower Commission allowed no women on its Management-Labor Committees, which were the primary organs for institution of WMC programs and had no enforcement powers.<sup>57</sup> While the Women's Bureau and Women's Advisory Committee were strong advocates for women workers, they had little power to influence labor policy.<sup>58</sup> In addition, they actually worked against integration of the labor force by emphasizing the primary role of women as mothers, and by encouraging women to enter jobs in traditional woman-employing sectors of the economy during reconversion.<sup>59</sup>

Government and industry planners initially considered women as simply a wartime labor reserve to be employed on a temporary basis in jobs normally not open to them. Government policies during the war and in the postwar period encouraged the temporary upgrading of women workers by ineffectual promotion of egalitarian policies,

adoption of other policies that undercut egalitarian goals, and by channeling women into traditional female occupations during reconversion.<sup>60</sup> One of the final studies made of the war's impact on the labor force reaffirmed the government's initial attitudes toward women as no more than a reserve labor supply and heralded the defeat of egalitarian sentiment:

It has been found that there are many persons who can readily be attracted into the labor market when job openings expand, and who are likely to drop out when conditions become less favorable. . . . The working population's reactions under wartime stress furnished a striking demonstration of its flexibility.<sup>61</sup>

It is clear how the policy to use women as a temporary labor reserve during the war prevented the radical potential of war work from being realized in the peacetime economy. What is less clear is why postwar ideology was not affected by the wartime challenges posed to the homemaker ideal and to occupational segregation in the work force; why, in fact, the postwar period glorified domesticity and traditional sex roles far more than at any other time since the nineteenth century. Furthermore, there is a discrepancy between government records, which show that women wanted to keep their wartime jobs, and the dominant image of women war workers, which was that women wanted to return to the home after victory.<sup>62</sup>

The following analysis addresses itself to these postwar anomalies. It begins with a discussion of the propaganda groups which formed in 1941 and 1942 to support the war effort, and which played a leading role in fashioning public images of women workers in popular magazines. Because these groups provided links between

the government, war manufacturers, and the magazine industry, they helped insure that the public's image of women would reflect policies to employ women in male occupations on a temporary basis only rather than the desires of workers to retain their high-paying jobs.

Footnotes--Chapter I

<sup>1</sup>There is little information available on women's role in World War I. Some studies which give information on that period are U.S. Women's Bureau, The New Position of Women in American Industry, Bulletin No. 12 (Wash. D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1920); F. M. Brewer, "Women Workers After the War," Editorial Research Reports, 1, No. 16 (1944), 285-300; Washington Bullard, Women's Work in War Time (Boston: Merchants National Bank, 1917); Sophonisba Breckinridge, Women in the Twentieth Century: A Study of Their Political, Social and Economic Activities (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1933); and Nancy Malan, "How 'Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down?: Women and World War I," Prologue, 5 (1973), 209-239.

<sup>2</sup>For an excellent review of women's labor force activity from 1870 to 1940, see U.S. Women's Bureau, Women's Occupations Through Seven Decades, Bulletin No. 218 (Wash. D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1947); W. Elliot and Mary Brownlee provide a valuable though brief analysis of women's labor force activities from 1675-1929 in Women in the American Economy: A Documentary History (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1976); William Chafe's The American Woman, 1972, also provides useful information on women in the work force.

<sup>3</sup>Valerie Oppenheimer, The Female Labor Force in the United States, Population Monograph Series, No. 5 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1970), p. 70.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Women's Bureau, Bulletin No. 218. The sources and mechanisms of occupational segregation are discussed in Martha Blaxall and Barbara Reagan ed., Women and the Workplace (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1976) and in Oppenheimer, The Female Labor Force.

<sup>5</sup>Oppenheimer, Female Labor Force, Table 3.5, pp. 78-79.

<sup>6</sup>Chafe, American Woman, 1972, p. 67.

<sup>7</sup>U.S. Women's Bureau, State Labor Laws for Women with Wartime Modifications, Bulletin No. 202-1 (Wash. D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1944).

<sup>8</sup>Female members increased from 800,000 in 1939 to 3 million in 1945. Chafe, American Woman, 1972, p. 144.

<sup>9</sup>Karen Anderson, "The Impact of World War II in the Puget Sound Area on the Status of Women and the Family," Diss. Univ. of Washington, 1975, p. 94.

<sup>10</sup>Chester Gregory, Women in Defense Work During World War II (N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1974), pp. 68, 95, 114.

- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 81, 130.
- <sup>12</sup> U.S. Dept. of Labor, Handbook of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 916 (Wash. D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1947).
- <sup>13</sup> Harold Wool and Lester Pearlman, "Recent Occupational Trends," Monthly Labor Review, August (1947), 139-147.
- <sup>14</sup> U.S. Women's Bureau, Women Workers in Ten War Production Areas and Their Postwar Employment Plans, Bulletin No. 209 (Wash. D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1946), p. 38.
- <sup>15</sup> Anderson, "Puget Sound," 1975, p. 32.
- <sup>16</sup> U.S. Women's Bureau, Changes in Women's Employment During the War, Special Bulletin No. 20 (Wash. D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1944).
- <sup>17</sup> Chafe, American Woman, 1972, p. 143.
- <sup>18</sup> Women's Bureau, No. 209, 1946, Table III-1.
- <sup>19</sup> Women's Bureau, No. 20, 1944.
- <sup>20</sup> Mary Pidgeon, "Women Workers and Recent Economic Change," Monthly Labor Review, 65 (1947), 666-671.
- <sup>21</sup> Women's Bureau, No. 209, 1946, Table II-6.
- <sup>22</sup> Leonard Eskin, "Sources of Wartime Labor Supply in the United States," Monthly Labor Review, August (1944), 264-278.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> This position has been effectively argued by Elise Boulding, "Familial Constraints on Women's Work Roles" in Women and the Workplace Blaxall and Reagan, eds., 1976.
- <sup>25</sup> William Chafe, Women and Equality: Changing Patterns in American Culture (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), p. 34.
- <sup>26</sup> William Chafe is the best known advocate of this position. It has also been advanced by Gregory, Defense Work, 1974.
- <sup>27</sup> Brownlee, Economy, 1976, p. 2.
- <sup>28</sup> Clara Schloss and Ella Polinsky, "Postwar Labor Turnover Among Women Factory Workers," Monthly Labor Review, 64 (1947), 411-419.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Wool and Pearlman, MLR, 1947.

<sup>31</sup>Schloss and Polinsky, MLR, 1947.

<sup>32</sup>Pidgeon, MLR, 1947.

<sup>33</sup>U.S. Women's Bureau, Employment of Women in the Early Post-War Period, Bulletin No. 211 (Wash. D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1946).

<sup>34</sup>Wool and Pearlman, MLR, 1947.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., and U.S. Women's Bureau, Handbook of Facts on Women Workers, Bulletin No. 225 (Wash. D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1948).

<sup>37</sup>Thelma McKelvey, Women in War Production (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1942); U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the U.S.: Population--The Labor Force: Employment and Family Characteristics of Women (Wash. D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1943); Harold Metz, Is There Enough Manpower? (Wash. D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1942); M. L. Gainsbrugh and I. J. White, "Women as War Labor Reserves," Conference Board Economic Record, 4 (1942), 47-50; Jerome Kidder, Women in Factory Work, Studies in Personnel Policy, No. 41 (N.Y.: NICB, 1942).

<sup>38</sup>McKelvey participated on OPM's Natl. Labor Supply Committee and served on a subcommittee to form policy on women workers with Mary Anderson of the Women's Bureau and Nelle Miles of USES. Eleanor Straub, "United States Government Policy Toward Civilian Women During World War II," Prologue, 5 (1973), 240-254.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>41</sup>Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth, 1943.

<sup>42</sup>Chafe identifies the inadequate provision of community services and the failure to industrialize housework as one of the major factors that prevented postwar modification of sex roles; American Woman, 1972, p. 171.

<sup>43</sup>Gregory also mentions lack of child care as the primary cause of absenteeism and resignation among women workers; Defense Work, 1974, p. 52.

<sup>44</sup>U.S. Women's Bureau, Women's Wartime Hours of Work: The Effect on Their Factory Performance and Home Life, Bulletin No. 208 (Wash. D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1947).



<sup>45</sup> See Eleanor Straub, "U.S. Government Policy Toward Civilian Women During World War II," Diss. Emory Univ., 1973 for an excellent analysis of government and employer policies toward women war workers.

<sup>46</sup> Gregory, Defense Work, 1974, pp. 68, 82, 106.

<sup>47</sup> Straub, "Policy," 1973, p. 33.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>49</sup> U.S. Women's Bureau, A Preview as to Women Workers in Transition from War to Peace, Bulletin No. 18 (Wash. D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1944).

<sup>50</sup> Kidder, Factory Work, 1942. Straub also discusses the favoritism shown to married women as they would be easier to remove when the war ended. "Policy," 1973, p. 178.

<sup>51</sup> Women's Bureau, No. 18, 1944.

<sup>52</sup> Chafe, American Woman, 1972, p. 157; Gregory, Defense Work, 1974, p. 172.

<sup>53</sup> Gregory, Defense Work, 1974, p. 79.

<sup>54</sup> Women's Bureau, No. 209, 1946.

<sup>55</sup> Women's Bureau, No. 18, 1944.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Industrial Mobilization for War: History of the War Production Board and Predecessor Agencies, Vol. I (Wash. D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1947), p. 718.

<sup>58</sup> Straub documents the futile efforts of women in government to serve the interests of women war workers and to prevent reinstitution of prewar status barriers, "Policy," 1973.

<sup>59</sup> Chafe, American Woman, 1972, p. 159.

<sup>60</sup> For a full discussion of the use of women as a wartime labor reserve and its implication for labor policies toward women workers in peacetime, see J. E. Trey, "Women in the War Economy--World War II," The Review of Radical Political Economics, 4 (1972), 41-57.

<sup>61</sup> Harold Wool, "Recent Trends in the Labor Force," Monthly Labor Review, December (1947), 638-644.

<sup>62</sup>Tobias and Anderson first brought to light information which showed that 75 percent of women war workers wanted to keep their jobs, including 50 percent of those who had previously been engaged in full-time housework, "Demobilization," 1974. These findings are confirmed by studies with similar results: N.Y. State Dept. of Labor Reprints, Post-War Plans of Women Workers in New York State, Women in Industry and Minimum Wage (N.Y.: n.p., 1945) and "Women War Workers' Post-War Job Plans," Monthly Labor Review, 59 (1944), 589-591.

## CHAPTER II

### RECRUITING WOMEN FOR WAR PRODUCTION:

#### OWI AND THE MAGAZINE INDUSTRY

During the period between World Wars I and II, Americans had considerable distaste for the use of propaganda. Most studies attribute this to offensive excesses of the Creel Committee during World War I, but it also stems from democratic principles of freedom of thought and abhorrence of state control. As a result, those who engaged in the dissemination of propaganda during World War II generally couched their activities in terms more consistent with democratic beliefs. The Office of War Information (OWI) saw itself as a conduit of information about the war. A distinction was made between propaganda, which was considered distortion of the truth for political ends, and information, which was perceived as neutral, truthful, and a necessary element of democracy. Elmer Davis, head of OWI, expressed this distinction when the agency was established: "This is a people's war, and to win it the people should know as much about it as they can. This Office will do its best to tell the truth and nothing but the truth." Later, he addressed the issue of propaganda directly: "'Propaganda' is a word in bad odor in this country but there is no public hostility to the idea of education as such, and we regard this part of our job [maintaining morale] as education."<sup>1</sup>

Statements like Davis' are admirable in their intent but, in retrospect, seem naive given the necessary distortion of reality that news dissemination involves, especially in stressful periods like wartime. What seems to have been meant by "propaganda" was the whipping up of public emotion through persuasion techniques and, on this point, there was genuine ambivalence and division in government circles. There was squabbling between media representatives and government officials over proper and efficacious use of the media, with some wanting OWI to function as a news service and others wanting it to mobilize public opinion in support of government programs.<sup>2</sup>

Despite these divisions, an elaborate and effective bureaucracy was set up in 1942 which coordinated government policy with information disseminated by the media until 1945. Bureau chiefs kept track of economic requirements through regular contact with government information officers in war agencies, and through an interdepartmental liaison staff which served as contacts with war agencies for questions of major policy. Policy decisions were funneled to the media through frequent and detailed publications, correspondence, and personal visits with media representatives.

The controversy over government management of information and dissemination of propaganda was largely resolved by the willingness of media organizations to shoulder the burden of influencing public opinion. Media people had fewer qualms than government officials about the propriety of arousing public sentiment for war purposes. Advertisers were particularly eager to sell the war to the public. James Young of Young and Rubicam proudly and enthusiastically endorsed

the formation of the War Advertising Council (WAC) in November 1941: "We have within our hands the greatest aggregate means of mass education and persuasion the world has ever seen."<sup>3</sup>

Chester LaRoche of Rubicam and chair of the WAC wrote frequently to Gardner Cowles, head of OWI's Domestic Branch, throughout the war, urging expanded use of the media's potential for directing public sentiment. In a lengthy letter complaining of insufficient government control of the media, he suggested reorganizing OWI to better coordinate propaganda:

For waging psychological warfare, our informational weapons have not been as highly developed as the fighting machines of the armed forces; . . . we, in the information field, are rapidly falling behind the Army. There cannot be total war effort unless the informational weapons at hand are properly used; . . . we have the brains, the experience, the coast-to-coast polling machines; we know the people, know how to make them read; know how to plan huge informational efforts; . . . and know how to coordinate every form of media.<sup>4</sup>

The Writers' War Board was another nongovernment group that took upon itself the task of influencing public opinion. As one member of the Board later said: "I think we broke through a lot of taboos, did many things the government wanted done and could not itself do. . . . The government was slow; we were fast. . . . World War II was strangely unemotional and needed a Writers' War Board to stir things up." Clifton Fadiman characterized the Board as "an arm of the government" and a recent study concludes that it "could engage in controversial polemics without involving the government's own reputation for objectivity."<sup>5</sup>

These two organizations played a major role in fashioning magazine images of women which were consonant with the recruitment effort. The War Advertising Council was formed to coordinate advertising with the needs of the war economy. Not only was it in the long-range interest of advertisers to see that the economy functioned smoothly, but it was apparent that companies would have few consumer goods to sell. By June 1942, for instance, 29 percent of prewar production of consumer durable goods had been cut off.<sup>6</sup>

By July 1942, the Council had set up a procedure which allowed for fast and accurate transmission of information from war agencies to the advertising industry.<sup>7</sup> When the Bureau of Campaigns within OWI was set up in August 1942, government agencies funneled their publicity needs through that office which became the Council's major government contact. The Council communicated directly with magazine publishers through their representation on the Council itself and through the Magazine Publishers Association.

In November 1942, the Council persuaded the Association to devote a page in every magazine issue to the war effort<sup>8</sup> and, the following month, LaRoche sent a war campaign plan for the Association to Gardner Cowles. He also announced the appointment of a Management Committee from the Council to supervise the plan. The campaign's function was "to create a background for the specific directives of the Government." The major method for creating that background was to present home-front campaigns in terms of the citizen's personal life:

The citizen must be convinced that, unless he [sic] cooperates, he personally will pay a penalty, either through loss of the war or through loss of something precious to him--his son in the armed forces, his political rights and social privileges, his future freedom.<sup>9</sup>

Through emphasizing the personal stake of magazine readers in victory, the Council and the Association devised advertisements which they hoped would "clear up misunderstandings, overcome irritations, disarm unreasonable criticism, and thus condition the public not only to make required sacrifices willingly but to make more than are actually asked."<sup>10</sup>

The Writers' War Board first met in January 1942 under the leadership of mystery writer, Rex Stout. Several committees organized by the Board channeled information about government campaigns to different media. The Board had a close working relationship with the Authors' League of America and originally worked out of that organization's offices. Luise Sillcox, executive secretary of the League, was a Board member throughout the war and through her, the Board had access to a file of four thousand writers. In the spring of 1942, the Board set up a file which indexed these writers according to the type of writing the person was most experienced in, his or her fields of knowledge, and the writer's region.<sup>11</sup>

The Board also had close ties to the government. It received funds from the Office of Civil Defense and OWI, had a liaison office that handled information from government agencies, and was often mistaken for a government agency itself. It also distributed the Magazine War Guide for the Magazine Bureau of OWI, in addition to its own monthly report which was distributed to up to four thousand

writers from April 1943 to March 1946.<sup>12</sup> The Magazine Bureau kept regular contact with the Board through its own New York office and through correspondence with the Bureau's first chief, Dorothy Ducas, who was the government's principal correspondent with Stout.<sup>13</sup> Ducas also had contact with the Authors' League, to whom she explained the operations of the Magazine Bureau, its cooperation with the Board, and OWI's request that writers use war themes suggested by her office in fiction.<sup>14</sup>

#### The Magazine Bureau of the Office of War Information

Just as these groups eagerly sought to aid the war effort without government prompting, the Magazine Bureau was largely established at the urging of magazine editors, most of whom were based in New York and had no Washington correspondents. When Ducas made her first visits to editors in May 1942, she found that they enthusiastically endorsed setting up a Magazine Division and believed it long overdue. They suggested she make frequent visits to New York and that she send them a periodic memo on themes the government wanted stressed in magazine stories.<sup>15</sup>

Editors wanted government direction in order to aid the war effort and to insure smooth functioning of the economy. Many of them, particularly the "pulp," "confessions," and movie magazines, wanted contact with some government agency to avoid being shut down by paper shortages and transportation priorities. They followed the survival strategy of the advertising industry through promoting



themselves as useful to the war effort and asking for government recognition of their key role as opinion shapers.<sup>16</sup>

The Magazine Division was established as an OWI Bureau in June 1942. Ducas pressured Cowles to enlarge its scope through the summer, arguing that magazines reached large audiences and were ideally suited for subtly influencing public opinion through fiction and advertisements.<sup>17</sup> By 1943, her staff had grown to thirteen, with two people located in the New York liaison office. The Bureau was to coordinate government policy with information disseminated by magazines. It proposed articles, fiction, and editorials which would further the aims of war agencies.

The Bureau maintained regular and extensive correspondence with the magazine industry and government agencies. During the early part of the war, it received an average of six hundred letters per month from editors and writers requesting information on background material for stories. It took an active role in ascertaining the publicity needs of war agencies, information about which was then sent out as suggestions for specific stories to individual writers. It also sent photographs, pamphlets, posters, and campaign books to editors which publicized government campaigns.<sup>18</sup>

To minimize misunderstanding of OWI programs, Ducas arranged meetings between magazine editors and government officials. The government was thus able to avoid resentment of wartime measures which required the cooperation of the public. Ducas attended all such meetings, as well as other meetings to plan campaigns, and met

regularly too with the War Manpower Commission and the War and Navy Departments.

In addition, Ducas' meetings with editors and writers in New York clarified war information needs. A typical visit occurred in March 1943, when she contacted editors of Fawcett Publications, This Week Home Institute, the Russian War Relief Committee, McCall's, Click, Dell Publishers, and Ladies Home Journal. Ducas arranged a meeting between a writer for the Journal and a member of the Russian War Relief Committee; smoothed the feathers of a pulp editor who was denied clearance for a story he saw in another magazine; obtained information for the WMC on a story it considered damaging to labor recruitment; met with a writer concerning an article combatting race hatred and suggested to Click that it publish the story; and encouraged the planned publication of an article on teenage war workers.<sup>19</sup> Toward the latter part of the war, these contacts were systematized by assigning staff members to specific magazine groups so that the special needs of each market could be incorporated into propaganda appeals.

The major activity of the Bureau was publication of pamphlets, memos, and the monthly Magazine War Guide. The pamphlets and memos provided editors with background information on various phases of the war effort--rationing, labor statistics, child care facilities, and community services. These were sent upon request and provided more facts concerning government campaigns than the monthly Guide. The Magazine War Guide was the major information conduit between OWI and the magazine industry. It began publication in July 1942 and ran

until April 1945. During the war period the Guide reached 400-600 magazines which had a combined circulation of over 140 million. By the end of 1943, it was being sent to over 900 magazine editors and staff writers and 400 government information officers. One thousand copies were distributed to free-lance writers by the Writers' War Board.<sup>20</sup>

The Guide was published and circulated three months in advance of the desired publication date of stories to give editors time to plan issues. The third issue, published in August 1942, identified three subject categories for stories the Guide wanted to encourage--the armed forces, the home front, and "the issues for which we fight." It concentrated on the last two since information on soldiers and the battlefield was available elsewhere. From a small mimeographed four-page fact sheet, the Guide quickly mushroomed into a 16-page comprehensive, slickly produced mini-journal.

Most issues provided three kinds of information. The first concerned timing and goals of campaigns. Magazines were asked to run editorials and develop feature articles which supported home-front campaigns such as fat salvage, rationing, War Bond drives, and labor recruitment. A second more important kind of information concerned government programs and policies. These were explained in detail, along with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of officials who handled magazine inquiries for war agencies. Suggestions were made as to how policies could be handled in different kinds of features--factual articles, editorials, food sections, or fiction--and which format would be most suitable.

The final and most controversial kind of information recommended emotional slants for stories that dealt with the war to create attitudes the government considered conducive to the war effort. In the December-January 1942 issue, for instance, the Guide advocated promoting an attitude of civilian toughness and willing sacrifice of material comforts as the basic philosophy for stories dealing with contemporary American life. There were several items which encouraged readers to hate the enemy, including one that advised showing how "Japanese upbringing, environment, and training have made them the ruthless, savage people they are."<sup>21</sup>

There were two categories of instructions for blending government propaganda into magazine fiction. One was to propagandize through setting, background action, and illustration. To discourage use of strained telephone and transportation lines, for instance, the Guide asked that lovesick heroines and lonely service wives not be portrayed calling the men in their lives for "trivial" conversations.<sup>22</sup>

The other category concerned plot and characterization. It urged that stories promote an overall attitude of "war-mindedness." Characters should be portrayed buying War Bonds, conserving scarce resources, and supporting the war. They should also show concern for soldiers and display cheerful stoicism.<sup>23</sup> Plot lines should include home-front problems and encourage readers to solve them. For example, to encourage readers to rent rooms to war workers in crowded boom towns, the Guide proposed glorifying characters who opened their homes to migrants in war production centers.<sup>24</sup>

### Propaganda Aimed at the Working Class

Publishers and editors of the "pulp" and "confessions," magazines aimed at a working-class audience, requested that the Magazine Bureau help them integrate propaganda into formula fiction. Ducas eagerly complied with the request and persuaded OWI to fund a Supplement to the Magazine War Guide. In a memo concerning the pulps, she explained the importance of reaching this audience, arguing that "persons of inferior education on the lowest economic level are most in need of understanding of the true issues of the war" and that these people were reached only partially by most mass-circulation magazines. To insure that blue-collar workers supported home-front campaigns, Ducas advocated translating OWI material into plot ideas which would present "emotionally, the story of democracy's fight, the attitudes of good Americans, the stakes of all of us in the war."<sup>25</sup> Leo Rosten, Deputy Director of OWI, expressed similar sentiments when he addressed a meeting of pulp editors:

Pulp magazines reach one of the largest and most important audiences in America. Propaganda is aimed to hit the readers of pulp magazines more than any other group. Thus, if the pulps and OWI could find a way to cooperate, it would be extremely advantageous.<sup>26</sup>

Arthur Leo Zagat, head of the Pulp Writers Division of the Writers' War Board and himself a pulp writer, was in charge of writing the Supplement, which began publication in September 1942. Zagat's headquarters were in New York, and his duties included holding conferences with editors, writers, OWI representatives, and public relations officers of war agencies. There was close cooperation between the pulps and OWI throughout the war, symbolized by the

appointment of Oscar Schisgall, another pulp writer, as head of the Book and Magazine Bureau in 1944.

The Supplement was distributed by the Writers' War Board to 400 to 600 writers specializing in magazine fiction.<sup>27</sup> Zagat provided them with examples of plots which combined their formulas with propaganda needs. For example, one issue recommended that sports magazines arouse anti-Japanese feelings by running a story about an American baseball team touring Japan which encountered "Japanese slyness, ruthlessness, and inability to comprehend the spirit of sportsmanship."<sup>28</sup>

The Supplement became increasingly less specific as the war progressed, both because writers claimed they did not need their imagination stimulated and because it came under Congressional attack in June 1943. As part of an anti-Roosevelt move which tried to limit executive power, Congress slashed OWI's domestic budget and Republicans attacked the Supplement as an example of Democratic boondoggling. Thereafter, it confined itself to explanations of government policy, information on campaigns, and propaganda needs.

#### The "Womanpower" Campaign

By the fall of 1942, an extensive information network had been organized to expedite and coordinate war information emanating from government agencies and intended for mass-circulation magazines. With the Magazine Bureau serving as a clearinghouse for editors and writers and with the Bureau of Campaigns funneling information about government needs to advertisers, the magazine industry was provided with an avenue of communication to government planners.

Public and private studies which identified women as a war-time labor reserve endorsed publicity campaigns to recruit female workers. A report on women in factory work prepared by the National Industrial Conference Board in 1942 included a detailed summary of British attempts to recruit women into factory work through advertising, and anticipated that "extended advertising campaigns" might be needed in the United States. The British urged that a national campaign be waged to provide local recruitment efforts with an ideological and emotional framework, a policy subsequently adopted by the War Manpower Commission.<sup>29</sup>

The recruitment campaign of World War II was far more extensive and sophisticated than that of World War I when the short-lived Division of Women's War Work of the Creel Committee and the unfunded Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense handled publicity for enlisting women's services.<sup>30</sup> World War II was a bigger and longer conflict which necessitated the use of many more women workers, and the media had grown in size and sophistication as well. A comprehensive propaganda campaign to recruit women early became the primary method used to get women into the work force.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the need for vigorous publicity to counter negative attitudes against married women entering the labor force, the recruitment campaign did not get fully under way until March 1943, when the War Manpower Commission launched its first intensive drive. This was followed by a fall campaign to fill positions in supply, service, and trade industries and one in March 1944 to fill civilian and military jobs. In addition to these major drives, there were smaller

campaigns for farm labor in the summers of 1943 and 1944, for government clerical workers, and for nurses. The WMC called a halt to national recruitment of women in the fall of 1944, although government agencies and propaganda groups continued to appeal to women to enter war production until well into 1945.

Magazines formed the backbone of the "womanpower" campaign.

In the summer of 1942, editors pressed Ducas for information about the need for women workers; she in turn urged Elmer Davis to develop a coordinated policy on the dissemination of information--how many women were needed for what kinds of jobs and where they could go for training. She also brought up the issue of day care centers:

"Magazine editors have been convinced that nurseries are necessary before the full womanpower of the country can be tapped." They had complained that there was no central source to consult for a list of centers and for procedures to get them established in war production areas.<sup>32</sup>

The Bureau reacted quickly to these requests and took credit for 63 stories on womanpower and labor needs that appeared in national magazines in the fall of 1942.<sup>33</sup> In addition, it published a booklet in October of the same year called "War Jobs for Women," which was in part a response to a complaint by the WMC that treatment in magazines of employed women was not properly proportioned. They were giving too much attention, for instance, to glamorous fields, such as modeling, and not enough to labor-short occupations in war production centers. This booklet listed the kinds of jobs for which women were needed, how to get training for them, and what the range of pay was

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for factory work. Ducas distributed 700 copies to magazines in October and by November, the demand had become so great that she ordered another edition of 50,000. Magazines printed sections of the text, reviewed it favorably, and used it as a reference for articles.<sup>34</sup>

This was the first of several publications put together in 1943 and sent out to editors by the Bureau to supplement the Magazine War Guide's coverage of women in war work. These included reports on how to meet the demand for skilled workers, housing for war workers, day care facilities, and a series of memos on women in labor-short occupations.

In addition to providing information through pamphlets on how to get women into the work force, Ducas made numerous visits to New York to visit editors and writers concerning stories on woman-power. She wrote detailed reports of these visits from May 1942 until April 1943 which reveal that many of her activities concerned gathering and disseminating information on recruiting women into the labor force. She urged several magazines to print stories on nursing, for example, since the Bureau made nurse recruitment one of its major efforts. She provided Harper's Bazaar and all the Sunday supplements with a picture spread, while suggesting stories to Cosmopolitan and Life.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, to recruit clerical workers, Ducas agreed to help Woman's Day with a story on housing for government workers, congratulated Redbook for serializing a novel in support of the campaign, and provided a suggestion to Fawcett Publications that a story be written about a worker who "sacrificed for her country and was

rewarded."<sup>36</sup> She also discussed stories with Mademoiselle and the Writers' War Board which glorified working in Washington and finally succeeded in placing material in 11 magazines on the subject.<sup>37</sup>

To counteract occupational sex typing, the Bureau arranged that stories be written about women in jobs considered "men's work." For example, Ducas negotiated a feature in Parade which concerned a woman executive, and persuaded the Post to run an article on women in factories and day care centers.<sup>38</sup> She also tried to discourage stories that fostered a negative attitude toward women in male jobs. In one instance, the War Manpower Commission asked her to chastise the persons responsible for an article entitled "Fired Because They Were Women" which claimed that women workers had been fired from a metalworking plant because they suffered from hyperacidity.<sup>39</sup> examples

Finally, Ducas asked magazines to print stories which generated a positive attitude toward women in the labor force. She suggested a series to American Magazine which defined female success in terms of a woman worker's happy adjustment to her war job.<sup>40</sup> She asked Fawcett Publications to run features on careers women were taking up in wartime and guided Katherine Brush, a well-known fiction writer, through a story about a suburban housewife who responds to the womanpower campaign and takes a factory job.<sup>41</sup>

These reports indicate that the recruitment campaign was of prime concern to the Bureau and to the magazines; they worked closely together in developing stories that would encourage placement of women in jobs where they were needed. Ducas took an active role in making suggestions to magazines with certain markets for stories suited to

those markets, in answering requests from editors and writers for background information, and in seeing that magazines were moving in the right direction. A New York liaison office, set up in August 1943, provided freer access to government information, although the visits from Bureau officials to writers and magazine editors continued until the Bureau folded.

Other indications that magazines published stories in line with government-determined needs for women workers are found in the Magazine War Guide and its Supplement. From a total of 222 items which the Guide carried from October 1942 to June 1945, 66, or nearly 30 percent, concerned recruitment of women into the labor force or armed services. The majority of items on womanpower appeared in 1943. The Guide set a goal of five million women for war work by the end of the year and announced that "the womanpower story . . . is the big story for 1943."<sup>42</sup> General appeals for workers appeared in three issues which guided magazines to approaches the WMC considered best for getting women into war jobs. Other items focused on specific occupations. These guidelines provided the following information: dates when stories should be run to coincide with labor needs; characteristics of women at whom the message should be aimed; obstacles to recruitment that needed to be eliminated; and addresses of people in the WMC who could answer questions.

The Bureau early publicized training programs for skilled factory work. The February-March issue of 1943 advertised the Engineering/Science/Management War Training Program of the Office of Education and urged women to enter supervisory or personnel work.

It also asked magazines which reached girls in high school to print editorials encouraging them to take science and math courses.<sup>43</sup> As late as the summer of 1943, magazines were asked to advertise training programs for women in vocational schools, and the August-September issue listed training programs for women around the country in aircraft, shipping, machine shop, and ordnance work.<sup>44</sup>

In addition to publicizing training programs, the Guide published a list of 24 jobs for which skilled workers were needed, prepared by the WMC, and exhorted women who had experience in these fields to migrate immediately to war industry centers.<sup>45</sup> So that magazines could report accurately on these positions, it provided the address of an information staff person in the WMC who could arrange visits for writers at war plants.<sup>46</sup>

Reflecting the middle-class orientation of most mass-circulation magazines, many womanpower items in the Guide concerned female college students. It discouraged magazine writers from indulging the fantasies of these young women to be actresses, dancers, and singers, common heroines of popular fiction. They were urged instead to portray heroines of college age abandoning volunteer war work and taking a full-time job in a war production factory or in a branch of the armed forces. In a sharp reversal of prewar attitudes, the Guide also asked writers not to glorify marriage as a full-time career. Finally, it asked writers to steer college graduates away from female fields like fashion designing to male occupations, such as drafting.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to encouraging magazines to publish stories on women in skilled work and heavy industry, the Guide proposed features on women filling other "male" jobs. Anticipating the labor shortage in supplies and services that developed in late 1943, the June-July issue asked magazines to feature women bus drivers, cabbies, ticket-takers, conductors, and other male-identified occupations. Another issue focused on women who trained Army and Navy pilots and received favorable reactions from their students.<sup>48</sup> One of the primary appeals used to advertise the Women's Army Corps was that WACs performed work normally done by men and found it rewarding work.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, a WAVE recruitment item in the March-April issue of 1944 recommended appeals based on the excitement of entering male jobs such as law, mapping and charting, machinist work, and metalsmithing.

A labor need arose at the end of 1943 for workers in the strained service, trade, and supply industries--laundries, restaurants, transportation, grocery stores, schools, and hospitals. Forty-eight-hour work weeks, boom towns, and the exodus of women workers to war plants created a labor vacuum that was never satisfactorily filled. Low salaries, minimal possibility for advancement, and the monotony of many of these occupations made it difficult to attract housewives and students who gravitated toward higher-paying work.

The Bureau's response to this labor shortage illustrates the ability of OWI to mobilize the media in support of campaigns to aid the war economy. It first sent a questionnaire to employers in the service and supply fields asking them for information on

training, wages, hours, extent of their labor needs, and suggestions for recruiting women workers into male jobs. This information and a list of critical occupations provided by the WMC were then sent to 146 magazines so that they could design Labor Day covers which concerned these jobs. As a result, the newsstands in September 1943 were filled with magazine covers depicting women as truck, cab, and bus drivers, railroad workers, mail carriers, gas station attendants, and in other jobs drained of workers by war production--all glorified as war work.

The final campaign, conducted in the spring of 1944, aimed at recruiting women into the military, getting more workers into labor-short local economies, and keeping women already working in the work force.<sup>50</sup> While the peak of war production had been passed, the WMC wanted to retain a large supply of female workers to ease the transition from war to peace. If women filled civilian production jobs that opened up as the war drew to a close, the WMC hoped men would not leave their war jobs to seek more permanent work in consumer goods industries; also, women would be easier to displace when veterans returned.<sup>51</sup> While the Bureau of Campaigns and advertisers handled the bulk of this campaign, the Magazine Bureau contributed by advertising the continuing need for women workers and service-women in several 1944 issues.

A major aspect of the Bureau's participation in recruitment of female labor was the publicity it gave on ways to lessen the work load of married women and mothers of young children. One of its campaigns was to cut housekeeping down to four hours a day. It

asked women's and home magazines to show readers how to budget their time, prepare quick meals, work efficiently, and parcel work to family members. It also publicized child care centers by providing details on the Lanham Act as well as information about a special fund for day care within the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services. Most importantly, it encouraged magazines to abandon the ideal of the full-time mother and to create a favorable attitude toward the use of child care centers.<sup>52</sup>

The Magazine Bureau recognized the importance of providing adequate community services to women war workers and emphasized that communities must provide more restaurants, laundries, and transportation facilities. The Guide, therefore, recommended that stories focus on communities that had solved some of their problems and on housewives who helped their working neighbors by pooling neighborhood resources and opening their homes as child care centers.

#### The Recruitment Campaign and Popular Fiction

The Supplements addressed themselves to the womanpower campaign as well but made more specific suggestions for weaving recruitment propaganda into fiction. One set of suggestions aimed to increase male acceptance of women in "men's" jobs. For example, one issue included this item on womanpower for adventure, air, and sports pulps:

The men in these fields must be prepared to receive women as co-workers. This can be done through stories showing the advent of women in the logging camps, on the railroads, riding the ranges, and showing them not as weak sisters but as coming through in manly style.<sup>53</sup>

For westerns, it offered the model of pioneer women: "Women fought rustlers, highwaymen, and bandits beside their men. Women helped to carve out an empire; it is only fitting that they help in the fight to preserve it."<sup>54</sup> Even science fiction pulps had a role to play:

An Amazonian economy might trace its inception to this war-enforced change in our mores. A story of the supernatural might be woven around a woman locomotive engineer, for instance, or a feminine bus driver meeting with eerie adventure in lonely streets.<sup>55</sup>

Other issues focused on the romance formula of love and confession magazines to reach the female audience of the working class: "Some heroines may be blind and deaf to their nation's call, be awakened to the situation through personal problems. The cloistered girl may find her mate when war takes her out of her ivory tower."<sup>56</sup> Similarly, romantic appeals were woven into propaganda to persuade women to enter specific occupations, such as skilled factory work or government clerical jobs: "Stories of girls and young women in the training schools, the factories, and in Washington war agencies give an opportunity for romantic interludes with the impact of the war on the woman as the complication instead of on the man."<sup>57</sup> To recruit registered nurses, a major campaign in late 1942, the same Supplement provided an example of how to glorify the nursing profession within the confession formula:

A young doctor is struggling to maintain medical service in a town whose physicians are depleted. The girl tries to help, not being trained is inefficient. At a critical juncture she visits an ex-nurse, persuades her to help--giving writer a chance to put over message--thus saves the situation --and wins the doctor.<sup>58</sup>



The suggestions of the Supplement and the Guide demonstrate the government's willingness to influence readers through subtle manipulation of the media. OWI thus sanctioned the use of popular culture as propaganda. They also illustrate the ways radically new roles for women could be incorporated into the traditional formulas of popular fiction which had formerly glorified homemaking. The glorification of women's war work in romances during the war indicates the enormous flexibility of entertainment formulas, which, in turn, helps account for their ability to survive and adapt to vast changes in cultural values.

#### The Response of the Magazine Industry to the Recruitment Campaign

Magazines followed the direction of the Magazine Bureau and willingly disseminated propaganda for the government. Not only did self-interest motivate them to advertise government campaigns, but Bureau reports and memos made numerous references to the cooperation of various magazines with OWI programs. For example, Ducas reported that This Week magazine used a Bureau reference on nurse recruiting in an Army Nurse story, the editor of Standard Magazines assigned four stories based on an early issue of the Guide, and 11 magazines published recruitment items for clerical workers in Washington as a result of Ducas' efforts.<sup>59</sup>

To determine the effectiveness of the Bureau, Ducas sent a questionnaire to editors asking if they used the Guide in October 1943. Of 348 replies, 163 said they read the Guide thoroughly and 166 said it was useful.<sup>60</sup> In addition, the Bureau kept track of

stories in 200 national magazines that promoted programs sponsored by OWI as a result of the Magazine War Guide. Articles, editorials, and fiction were listed which encouraged readers to comply with government programs. This listing shows that, from March 1943 to August 1945, 433 stories supported recruitment of women into the labor force, 399 promoted female jobs in the armed services, 138 concerned the nurse campaign, 58 advertised child care facilities, and 26 publicized streamlined housekeeping.<sup>61</sup>

#### Propaganda and Advertising

The other two media groups which influenced images of women in magazines also involved themselves in the recruitment campaign. The Writers' War Board expended much of its effort on magazines so that, when the War Manpower Commission began its recruitment drive in March 1943, the Board had a supply of stories ready for publication.<sup>62</sup> In addition to distributing the Magazine War Guide and Supplement to writers, the Board had a liaison committee composed of OWI officials and commercial representatives of the magazine industry which operated in New York and helped facilitate the flow of information between Ducas and Stout.

The War Advertising Council coordinated ads encouraging women to enter the labor force and the armed services throughout the war by receiving direction from the Bureau of Campaigns, which gave labor recruitment the highest priority of all the government programs.<sup>63</sup> It maintained regular contact with the War Manpower Commission as well through Raymond Rubicam, head of one of the biggest

advertising agencies, and who assisted Paul McNutt through covering promotional aspects of labor recruitment.<sup>64</sup>

In September 1942, a former NBC executive and advertising director for Colgate-Palmolive, Ken Dyke, was chosen to head the Bureau and became the Council's chief contact with the government. Although magazines were represented on the Council, Dyke helped keep track of what magazine advertisers were doing to further the war effort. For example, he asked the Intelligence Division of OWI to check magazines for advertising which complied with the Magazine War Guide.<sup>65</sup> The Council also appointed a full-time consultant to the Bureau and sent representatives to bi-monthly meetings of the Bureau with Gardner Cowles.<sup>66</sup> The Bureau also published a monthly War Guide for Advertisers which gave information to advertising agencies on public relations tasks that would be of use to the government.

The most extensive cooperation between the Bureau and the Council concerning female labor recruitment occurred in early 1944 when the national "Women in the War" campaign was planned. This campaign, intended to last throughout the year, aimed to recruit women into civilian work and military service. The WAC asked advertisers to devote at least a portion of their ads to the theme of women war workers and advised them on appropriate appeals to use through campaign booklets sent out in the winter of that year.

While advertisers had been coordinating magazine ads to promote home-front campaigns since 1941, some companies still needed coaxing to participate. One of the 1944 booklets, in asking for

cooperation, appealed to economic self-interest. It recommended featuring women war workers as symbols of wartime, which would benefit the sponsor by associating companies with patriotism.<sup>67</sup> Propagandists, then, were aware of the expedience of featuring women in new roles. Not only did supporting the recruitment drive work toward the long-range interests of businesses by helping the economy function smoothly, but it allowed them to share in the glory of victory even if they were not manufacturers of war material.

During this campaign, the WAC supported the policy to use women as a temporary labor reserve by suggesting advertising appeals which glorified war work without challenging the homemaker ideal. Leila Rupp's recent study of OWI propaganda concludes that this was an important technique in fashioning an image of war workers compatible with the government's labor policy.<sup>68</sup> She cites several examples of propaganda which simultaneously legitimized male roles for women and reinforced their role as homemakers. For instance, the WAC recommended that advertisers compare factory work to housework: "Many war factory jobs are very similar to running a sewing machine or vacuum cleaner, assembling a meat grinder, sewing by hand, and other familiar household tasks."<sup>69</sup> Similarly, Council guidelines found ways to combine the traditional support function of wives with propaganda for the armed forces: "It takes a girl in uniform to understand a service man. . . . Do you want a chance to share his life today--and speak his language tomorrow? . . . When it's all over, you'll have the same interests, the same viewpoint."<sup>70</sup>

Advertising propaganda presented traditional images of women, too, by associating servicewomen with the family in military recruitment ads. A WAC booklet, for instance, provided a model ad which pictured a mother flanked by a son and daughter in uniform with the caption: "I'm proud of my two soldiers."<sup>71</sup> Focusing on military women in family settings both encouraged acceptance of women in masculine roles and maintained their traditional identification with the home.

Not all of the appeals used in the recruitment campaign carried such double messages. Some, based on female self-interest, supported a firmer commitment to egalitarianism. The desire for high wages, getting involved in a world outside the home, the excitement of performing a task usually denied to women, and the chance to acquire skills that would lead to a better postwar job--all these were mentioned in OWI propaganda. Other appeals based on egalitarian principles were the ideal of partnership between women and men, the contributions of women to American history, and the reprehensibility of Nazi ideology regarding woman's place. These appeals, which had the potential to significantly alter sex-role ideology, illustrate both the willingness of government planners to increase role options for women when the economy needs workers and the pressure brought to bear on traditional notions about sex roles by the need for women to perform work normally done by men.

In addition to these guide books with their thematic direction, the Council provided the government with advertising agencies for individual campaigns. Young and Rubicam handled publicity for

the Women's Army Corps; Batten, Barton, Durstine, and Osborne that for the WAVE campaign; and J. Walter Thompson took care of the Army Nurse, Cadet Nurse, and "Women in the War" drives.<sup>72</sup> The Council also enlisted the support of manufacturers who sold products to a female market. Beech-Nut gum devoted a great deal of space to WAC recruitment; Canady Dry promoted the WAVE and the Cadet Nurse Corps; E. R. Squibb recruited Army nurses; and Bristol-Myers contributed to the "Women in the War" campaign.<sup>73</sup>

The activities of the War Advertising Council, the Writers' War Board, and OWI helped fill the needs of the war economy by following guidelines of government agencies which kept track of labor shortages as the war progressed. They fashioned appeals to first recruit skilled workers, then factory workers in war goods manufacture, and finally workers in service and supply industries. They advertised training programs and encouraged the socialization of homemaking by creating positive attitudes toward services such as child care centers. Along with supporting campaigns to cut down on absenteeism and job turn-over, these publicity efforts encouraged women to enter the labor force as they were needed and to remain there until they could be replaced by male workers.

### Demobilization

Unlike the explicit suggestions they made for recruiting women into war production, propaganda groups did not recommend ways to persuade women to leave their wartime jobs. The Magazine War Guide, for instance, did not ask magazines to encourage women to

leave their war jobs and return to the kitchen. The War Advertising Council provided no samples of advertisements designed to expel women from the labor force. This does not mean, however, that these groups did not encourage the movement of women back to their prewar roles.

While the Magazine War Guide provided no direct instructions to portray women leaving their war jobs in 1944 and 1945, it facilitated the female exodus from those jobs by asking magazines to advertise postwar labor needs in traditional female fields, such as teaching, nursing, and social work. It also replaced discussion of child care centers with items on juvenile delinquency, one of the social ills blamed on working mothers after the war and one of the major elements of the conservative reaction against working women.

In addition to the Guide's shift in emphasis from women in male jobs to advertising female fields, propaganda groups supported the temporary employment of women in atypical occupations by the nature of recruitment appeals. While the War Advertising Council recommended some egalitarian appeals, their effects were mitigated by those that used traditional imagery:

The new image did not mean that the ideal American woman had changed beyond recognition. Beneath her begrimed exterior, she remained very much a traditional woman. . . . Rose had left the kitchen for the factory, but the public image of the work she did made it clear that she was not intended to become a permanent part of the labor force.<sup>74</sup>

Despite the radical notion that women could perform male jobs competently, recruitment propaganda fostered retention of the ideological

base for occupational segregation by associating war work with traditional norms.

More importantly, however, the close connection between propaganda groups and the magazine industry throughout the war made unnecessary specific instructions to encourage the movement of women back to the home and to female fields in the labor force during demobilization. Fiction and advertisements which portrayed war workers leaving their jobs for domesticity, office work, and unskilled jobs in manufacturing largely resulted from information writers had received from the government for three years; information which was based on the assumption that new women workers would not remain in "male" occupations once veterans returned.

The campaign to recruit women into war jobs on a temporary basis did not work perfectly. It gave insufficient emphasis to skilled jobs, especially in the metal trades which numbered one-third of the new jobs required for war production.<sup>75</sup> Nor did it give adequate publicity to executive and supervisory positions. The need for clerical workers throughout the war was given minor attention, as were the specific needs of local war production economies, a task left up to individual communities ill equipped to deal with the problem.

These deficiencies can be partially attributed to an assumption that market forces alone would take care of some labor requirements. However, most of the errors can be attributed to the government's failure to fully coordinate labor mobilization. If the government had wanted to make full use of the magazine industry



to recruit women, it should have begun its propaganda drives in early 1942 to get women into training programs and into geographical areas where they were needed. The economy needed two million extra women workers in 1942, while aircraft production and shipbuilding reached their peak in early 1943--when the Magazine Bureau and the Bureau of Campaigns were just beginning their activities. Likewise, the strain on community services began well before the fall of 1943, when the campaign for women in necessary civilian services was launched. Finally, propaganda only partially addressed the need to have women in civilian production during 1944 and 1945. A memo to advertisers concerning that campaign complained that it was impossible to get accurate labor forecasts from the War Manpower Commission, and by the fall of that year, the WMC had ended its recruitment drives.<sup>76</sup>

Although they were hampered by inadequate government support and direction, however, propaganda groups had a large impact on magazine images of women and are significant in several ways. First, the Magazine Bureau filled the gap left by failure of the War Manpower Commission to centralize information on labor needs and was the major source of information for magazines on wartime policies concerning women workers. It performed a service for editors that they would have had difficulty in providing for themselves since so few publishers had regular contact with government officials.

Second, OWI coordinated information disseminated to magazines with labor campaigns so that stories would have maximum impact on the public. All the propaganda groups provided exceptionally good communication channels between government agencies and the

magazine industry, an important medium of persuasion. Since the government relied primarily on publicity to influence women's labor force activity, the role of these groups in explaining policy, promoting labor-short occupations, and publicizing campaigns was decisive in producing images of women congruent with labor policy and requirements of the war economy.

Third, OWI sanctioned the use of magazines as propaganda by encouraging advertisers to weave recruitment appeals into advertisements and urging writers to use them in formula fiction. The sample ads suggested by the Bureau of Campaigns, the sample plots of the Supplement, and the goals promoted by the Magazine Bureau constituted guidelines for ways to influence public attitudes through entertainment. While advertisers, writers, and publishers desired government direction, the media's subtle manipulation of public opinion during the war set a dangerous precedent.

Finally, the alignment of public information with a labor policy that was not committed to upgrading women's status in the work force facilitated the temporary employment of women in occupations normally closed to them. Through promoting images of women consonant with war production requirements, the media undermined the egalitarian potential of women occupying male work roles. As one historian of the war period has observed:

The demonstration by women that they could perform jobs hitherto assigned primarily or solely to men caused a reassessment not of the nature of women, but rather of the nature of the jobs they were doing so that they more nearly conformed to traditional preconceptions regarding women.<sup>77</sup>

Propaganda helped weaken the radical notion that women were capable of filling male occupations and provided ideological support for a policy which ignored the desire of war workers to retain their high-paying jobs.

The extent to which magazines participated in aligning images of women with government labor policy is partially indicated by OWI records, which point to significant cooperation between wide-circulation periodicals and propaganda groups. The Saturday Evening Post, a magazine of the middle class, and True Story, one of the "confessions" and a magazine aimed at working-class women, played an active role in the "womanpower" campaign. They both carried fiction and advertising liberally laced with propaganda and, as leading periodicals in two huge markets, they represent what most magazines were saying about women workers during the war.

Footnotes--Chapter II

<sup>1</sup>Allan Winkler, "Politics and Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945," Diss. Yale University, 1974, pp. 47, 66.

<sup>2</sup>See Winkler, *Ibid.*, and David Jones, "The U.S. Office of War Information and American Public Opinion During World War II, 1939-1945," Diss. SUNY at Binghamton, 1976 for a discussion of the divisions among government leaders over information policy.

<sup>3</sup>Fox, Madison Avenue, 1975, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from Chester LaRoche to Gardner Cowles, January 13, 1943, RG 208, Entry 20, Box 15, National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland. (Note that all citations from government records of the Office of War Information come from the National Records Center, Suitland, Md., Record Group 208.)

<sup>5</sup>Robert Landry quoted in Robert Howell, "The Writers' War Board: Writers and World War II," Diss. Louisiana State and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1971, p. 498.

<sup>6</sup>Richard Polenberg, War and Society: The U.S. 1941-1945 (N.Y.: J. B. Lippincott, 1972), p. 11.

<sup>7</sup>For a more complete discussion of the War Advertising Council, see Fox, Madison Avenue, 1975.

<sup>8</sup>Letter from Chester LaRoche to Gardner Cowles, November 21, 1942, Entry 20, Box 15.

<sup>9</sup>"Policy and Plan for the Total War Campaign of the Magazine Publishers Association," December 31, 1942, Entry 20.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>Howell, "Writers' War Board," 1971, p. 76.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>13</sup>Jones, "OWI," 1976, p. 315.

<sup>14</sup>Report from Dorothy Ducas, October 30, 1942, Entry 339.

<sup>15</sup>Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Ulric Bell, May 11, 1942, Entry 339.

<sup>16</sup>Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Gardner Cowles, November 12, 1942, Entry 20.

<sup>17</sup> Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Gardner Cowles, August 4, 1942, Entry 20.

<sup>18</sup> Report on Organization of the Magazine Bureau, 1943, Entry 339.

<sup>19</sup> Report from Dorothy Ducas to Harold Guinzburg, March 25, 1943, Entry 339.

<sup>20</sup> Memos from Dorothy Ducas to F. Girardot, September 17, 1943, and December 11, 1943, Magazine Bureau Organization File, 1944, Entry 339.

<sup>21</sup> Magazine War Guide, November/December 1942, Entry 345.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Magazine War Guide, March/April 1943, Entry 345.

<sup>24</sup> Magazine War Guide, June/July 1943, Entry 345.

<sup>25</sup> Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Ulric Bell, July 15, 1942, Entry 339.

<sup>26</sup> Editors Conference Report, April 5, 1943, Meetings for Magazine Editors File, 1942-45, Entry 340.

<sup>27</sup> Memos from Dorothy Ducas to F. Girardot, Magazine Bureau Organization File, 1944; Writers' War Board Annual Report, January 1944, Entry 339.

<sup>28</sup> Supplement for November/December 1942, Entry 345.

<sup>29</sup> Kidder, Women in Factory Work, 1942; Straub, "Policy," 1973.

<sup>30</sup> A brief account of the Division of Women's War Work activities is given in George Creel, How We Advertised America (1920; rpt. N.Y.: Arno Press, 1972).

<sup>31</sup> Straub, "Policy," 1973, p. 113; Rupp, Mobilizing Women, 1978, p. 90.

<sup>32</sup> Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Elmer Davis, September 23, 1943, Entry 339.

<sup>33</sup> Memo from Dorothy Ducas to William Lewis, March 3, 1943, Magazine Bureau Organization File, 1943, Entry 339.

<sup>34</sup> "War Jobs for Women," undated memo; memo from Magazine Bureau, August 25, 1943; Magazine Bureau Reports File, Entry 340.

<sup>35</sup> Report from Dorothy Ducas, December 16, 1942; memo from Ducas to Ulric Bell, May 19, 1942; memo from Ducas to Bell, June 30, 1942; Entry 339.

<sup>36</sup> Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Ulric Bell, May 11, 1942; memo from Ducas to Bell, May 19, 1942; Entry 339.

<sup>37</sup> Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Ulric Bell, June 30, 1942; memo from Ducas to William Lewis, December 21, 1942; Entry 339.

<sup>38</sup> Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Ulric Bell, December 30, 1942; memo from Ducas to Bell, June 23, 1942; Entry 339.

<sup>39</sup> Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Harold Guinzburg, March 25, 1943, Entry 339.

<sup>40</sup> Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Ulric Bell, May 11, 1942, Entry 339.

<sup>41</sup> Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Ulric Bell, May 19, 1942, Entry 339.

<sup>42</sup> Magazine War Guide, January/February 1943, Entry 345.

<sup>43</sup> Magazine War Guide, February/March 1943, Entry 345.

<sup>44</sup> Magazine War Guide, August/September 1943, Entry 345.

<sup>45</sup> Magazine War Guide, April/May 1943, Entry 345.

<sup>46</sup> Visits like these were often encouraged and sometimes arranged so that magazines could provide coverage of women in defense work and military service.

<sup>47</sup> Magazine War Guide, August/September 1943, Entry 345.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Magazine War Guide, February/March 1944, Entry 345.

<sup>50</sup> In February 1944, military procurement programs were cut \$12 million and many war plants began converting to consumer goods before the government wanted them to. Turnover among workers in manufacturing was extremely high as a result and women started leaving the labor force. Janeway, Struggle, 1951, pp. 340, 350.

<sup>51</sup> Memo from Allan Wilson to advertisers, undated, Womanpower Recruitment Campaign File, Entry 90, Box 587.

<sup>52</sup> Magazine War Guide, January/February 1944, Entry 345.

<sup>53</sup>Supplement III, October 30, 1942, Entry 345.

<sup>54</sup>Supplement I, September 3, 1942, Entry 345.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Supplement for Confession Magazines, October 30, 1942, Entry 345.

<sup>57</sup>Supplement for Love Story and Western Love Magazines, September 11, 1942, Entry 345.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Ulric Bell, June 2, 1942; memo from Ducas to Bell, June 30, 1942; memo from Ducas to William Lewis, December 21, 1942; Entry 339.

<sup>60</sup>Memo from Genevieve Herrick to Mary Keeler, December 20, 1943, Magazine Bureau Organization File, 1943, Entry 339.

<sup>61</sup>Magazine Editorials, Articles, and Fiction Stories on Programs Being Promoted by OWI, Entry 343, Box 1699.

<sup>62</sup>Howell, "Writers' War Board," 1971, pp. 112, 122.

<sup>63</sup>Jones, "OWI," 1976, p. 222.

<sup>64</sup>Report from the War Advertising Council, September 1942, Entry 39.

<sup>65</sup>For example, in a memo to Keith Kane, Chief of the Intelligence Division of OWI, Dyke asked that several magazines be checked for subjects of advertising in line with the Magazine War Guide, September 5, 1942, Entry 39.

<sup>66</sup>Report in Manpower Campaigns File, Entry 39.

<sup>67</sup>"Women at War" Campaign Guide, Womanpower File, Records of the Program Manager for the Recruitment of Women, Entry 90.

<sup>68</sup>Rupp provides a good account of these appeals and their double messages in Mobilizing Women, 1978, p. 152.

<sup>69</sup>"Women at War" Campaign Guide, Entry 90.

<sup>70</sup>"Waves Wanted," January 1944, Records of the Program Manager for the Recruitment of Women, Womanpower File, Entry 90.

<sup>71</sup>"Give Us More Wacs. . . ," Records of the Program Manager for Homefront Campaigns, Nurses File, Entry 84.

<sup>72</sup>J. Walter Thompson was also the advertising agency for the War Manpower Commission, "Words that Work for Victory," March 1, 1944-March 1, 1945, Report of the War Advertising Council, Entry 90.

<sup>73</sup>The chief support for the "Women in the War" campaign came from the Drug, Cosmetic, and Allied industries which contributed 5 percent of their advertising space and radio time, Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Rupp, Mobilizing Women, 1978, p. 152.

<sup>75</sup>Slichter, Economic Factors, 1941.

<sup>76</sup>Memo from Allan Wilson to advertisers, undated, Entry 90.

<sup>77</sup>Karen Anderson, "The Impact of World War II in the Puget Sound Area on the Status of Women and the Family," Diss. Univ. of Washington, 1975, p. 72. Anderson is here referring to comparisons made in newspapers between spotwelding and sewing, stamping parts and cutting cookies; these comparisons have also been remarked upon by Chafe, American Woman, 1972, p. 139.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE IMPACT OF PROPAGANDA ON IMAGES OF WOMEN IN THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

The Saturday Evening Post is a good magazine to study for gathering information on American values and normative beliefs. It has been described as the most typical of American magazines in the first half of this century, and it enjoyed consistently high sales until the 1950s.<sup>1</sup> It saw itself as the guardian of free enterprise, the family, democratic principles of government, and middle-class values, all of which makes it valuable as a record of dominant cultural beliefs. This is not to imply that all Americans believed in values promoted by the Post for 50 years, or that it always accurately reflected American life. Social histories are vastly more complex than the view of reality found in one item of popular culture or even in the most widely held belief system. It is, rather, as a major purveyor of middle-class values that the Post assumes historical importance.

The Post had a circulation of 3.5 million during the war years and published a special, monthly overseas edition for soldiers which makes it an important disseminator of information. It was aimed at a broad segment of the population and is a good indicator of how changes necessitated by the war were assimilated into popular

beliefs. A regular group of seasoned writers contributed fiction and factual articles on all aspects of the war. The professionals who wrote for the Post had mastered literary formulas of long standing and journalists reported on the battlefield with unusual competence and depth.

Due to its position as a mass-circulation "slick" and its reputation for publishing both credible articles and mainstream fiction, the Post had great potential for aiding in the recruitment of women. It could help make acceptable the employment of women in factories which were considered dirty, rough, disreputable places for women, and it would also increase the acceptability of married women working.

Several characteristics of the Post during the war indicate the extent to which it participated in the recruitment campaign and created images of women consonant with government labor policy. First, the attitude displayed in wartime advertisements and fiction toward women in male roles was a positive one, especially in occupations that were short of labor during the war--executives, managers, durable goods workers, and those in trade and transportation. At the height of the recruitment effort, females were encouraged to enter these labor-short occupations and toward the end of the war images of women became increasingly traditional.

Second, the attitude displayed by the Post toward working women in general, especially married women and mothers, supported the use of housewives in war production. Images of women in work roles improved as women were needed in the labor force and

middle-class norms concerning the full-time homemaker changed to allow for the employment of housewives. The traditional conflict between marriage and career, for instance, which characterized Post fiction during the 1930s, completely disappeared between 1943 and 1945.

Third, the definition of female attractiveness changed from glamour to strength of character once the recruitment effort was underway. Softness, prettiness, helplessness, and passivity have been staples of female sexual allure in popular culture; these qualities were replaced during the war, with others more compatible with the performance of male or blue-collar tasks--self-sufficiency, competence outside the home, physical strength, and emotional hardiness.

Fourth, it is clear that much of the fiction and advertising from the Post resulted from the activities of propaganda groups. Evidence from the Magazine War Guide and Supplement, brochures produced by the Bureau of Campaigns and the War Advertising Council, and other OWI records show that the Post participated extensively in the recruitment campaign.

Finally, a major characteristic of wartime images of women was that war workers largely retained their traditional homemaker identities. Because advertisements and fiction idealized the family as the symbol of a besieged America and portrayed women as both war production workers and housewives, they laid the basis for postwar glorification of the feminine mystique.

### Fiction Encouraging Women to Enter War Work

An analysis of all the lead stories featuring women during the war years shows that Post fiction encouraged the movement of women into and out of typically male occupations and labor-short fields as the economy required.<sup>2</sup> During 1943, 1944, and early 1945, it encouraged female readers to seek some kind of war work--voluntary, factory, community service, or military. In 1941, when war work was reducing the ranks of the unemployed and women were not yet needed in the labor force, female characters were in traditional work roles such as housewife, nurse, and teacher or in no occupation at all. (See Table 2.) In 1943, the number of female characters in typically female roles declined significantly, while the number of those engaged in war factory work or other male occupations increased. Conversely, stories appearing in the latter part of 1945 and early 1946 portrayed females in a way that encouraged readers to leave war work for homemaking and traditional female jobs. The number of women characters with no occupation increased in these years over prewar levels and those in male occupations dwindled to the same proportion as obtained in 1941.

Stories which encouraged the employment of women in war work had the following characteristics. Some portrayed the people who were important to the heroine--especially the love interest--rewarding and admiring her for engaging in war work. Others described the heroine's patriotism in glowing terms. Many placed a female war worker at the center of the plot and made her well-being and happiness dependent on successful performance of her job. Finally, several

TABLE 2  
OCCUPATIONS OF FEMALE CHARACTERS FROM LEAD STORIES FEATURING WOMEN  
IN THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, 1941-1946

Year	% in Atypical Female Occupations <sup>1</sup>	% in Typical Female Occupations <sup>2</sup>	% in No Occupation <sup>3</sup>	% in Occupations of Neither Category <sup>4</sup>
1941	16	44	30	7
1943	28	33	29	10
1944	28	18	33	18
1945 (Jan.-July)	47	20	33	0
Aug. 1945- March 1946	13	17	58	13

<sup>1</sup>Business executive, journalist, servicewoman, psychologist, factory worker, pilot, police-woman, commercial artist, farm owner, college teacher, taxi driver, engineer, shipyard worker, gas station attendant.

<sup>2</sup>Nurse, nurse's aide, housewife, teacher, office worker, clerk, waitress, maid, housekeeper, stewardess, cashier.

<sup>3</sup>No occupation mentioned, volunteer war work, student, adolescent, retiree.

<sup>4</sup>Entertainer, detective, spy, writer, resistance fighter, Red Cross Motor Corps, work not specified.

stories contained positive statements about women in war production or included minor female characters engaged in such jobs.

Out of 83 lead stories featuring females from 1943 to 1945, 30 encouraged the employment of women in war work. (See Appendix B for a complete list of these stories.) Eight of these were serials. There were many other nonlead stories which encouraged women to enter the labor force and armed services. However, since these stories come from an unsystematic random sample of 133 nonlead stories that featured females, the proportion of these stories that encouraged war work is not a meaningful statistic.

One of the major persuasive appeals used in stories with women war workers was the rewarding of the heroine with success in love as a result of her job. In "The Winning of Wentworth Jones Jr." (Richard Thruelsen 11/11/44 p.16), a clever and determined working-class heroine wins a Princeton graduate student by joining the Women's Army Corps and performing bravely in Italy. In "My Own Money" (Gertrude Schweitzer 5/6/44 p.18), the heroine makes no headway with a soldier until he discovers she is an aircraft worker:

"I should say that is an important job. You must be pretty good." His voice was warm and alive and interested, and he put down the plate and grabbed her hand. It was the first time he had touched her. . . . He was looking at her in a different way now. He was looking at her as though she were somebody special.

Often, the heroine was faced with a rival in her pursuit of love. The prewar resolution of this conflict favored a wholesome supportive character against a sophisticated beautiful wealthy rival, often a selfish career woman. In wartime stories, this became a

conflict between a war worker and a lazy sophisticate. Whereas the heroine of prewar stories won her man by the strength of her devotion to him and to basic values, the war heroine won him by reason of her devotion to her country.

For example, the heroine of "Regards from Mary" (Marguerite Epsen 11/6/43 p.12) is an aircraft worker who fears her callouses and dark circles will propel her soldier boyfriend into the arms of her wealthy gold-bricking neighbor. However, the soldier prefers the heroine because she is serious about aiding the war effort. A similar theme occurs in "Frost on the Orange Blossom" (Cliff Farrell 3/18/44 p.28) when the heroine wins the suitor of a glamorous flirtatious real-estate agent by pitching in to help her brother with his orange grove, while the rival fails to help her father with his. Finally, the feminine and frivolous rival in "When the Boys Come Home" (Phyllis Duganne 7/17/43 p.26) jokes with the protagonist about the friends they know doing male work and thereby hastens his return to the welder heroine who "could work in a factory or do anything the country needed her to do."

This female rivalry theme was also used to emphasize male indifference toward glamour and traditional notions of femininity, or as a device to demonstrate the superficiality of prewar beauty standards. In these stories the wartime definition of femininity changed from the sleekness and glamour of decorative sophisticates to the grimy hardiness of women in defense work:

In days of peace, the really attractive numbers were to be found at senior proms, night clubs, beaches and even, occasionally, garden parties. War changed all that.

The beautiful things are now discovered often wearing khaki or coveralls, driving recon cars at airfields, fitting gas-kets in a war plant or piloting a packed bus on a downtown street.<sup>3</sup>

Male approval of new standards of beauty is the theme of "My Own Job," in which the heroine almost loses her boyfriend on furlough by glamorizing herself and refusing to tell him about her aircraft job. Stories which concerned models-turned-defense-workers also encouraged the abandonment of "do-nothing" beauty in favor of good character and hard work.

Other stories reassured readers that war work would not destroy their beauty and sexual allure by portraying war-working heroines as unusually attractive.<sup>4</sup> Many also emphasized the small stature of heroines which preserved the femininity of women performing male tasks. They posed no contradiction between sexuality and new roles--the competent performance of male roles enhanced the heroine's attractiveness. Stories concerning servicewomen especially emphasized "womanly" attributes, like voluptuousness and capacities for nurturing wounded soldiers, which weakened the association of military service with masculinity.

Some stories that emphasized hard work over glamour had as their theme the reform of a frivolous socialite. In prewar fiction, this character was most likely to be cast in the role of egocentric man loser, but during the war, she salvaged happiness by learning to take the war seriously. The fun-loving glamorous heroine of "No Orchids, Please" (Travis Mason 4/7/45 p.13) is disdainful of the civic-minded friend of the soldier she loves and is cynical about war work:



The dream of herself in a WAC uniform, sticking to her post while cannon thundered and Mike appeared at the door, picturesquely haggard, . . . well, that was adolescent movie stuff, gooey enough to make her shudder.

However, her conscience starts to bother her when she wonders what she will tell young people 50 years hence when they ask what she did in the war. Gradually she changes her attitude toward pitching in: "It's better to be smug about galloping around doing good deeds, than to be smug about not doing them." Her changed attitude wins her the soldier.

The same theme occurs in "Lady Bountiful" (Robert Carson 3/6/43 p.9), a serial that appeared in March 1943. The heroine comes from a wealthy family, is selfish, superficial, and has a poor attitude toward self-sacrifice. She offends the soldiers at a USO dance by making inappropriately cynical wisecracks about the war and by wearing flashy clothes, but eventually, chastened by her lack of success with men, she takes an unglamorous clerical job at an Army base. By the end of the story, she has gained humility, compassion, and "war-mindedness."

These stories encouraged women to adopt a mature responsible attitude toward the citizen's role in war, and provided a transition from the Hollywood glamour and witty sophistication of the 1930s to the stoic qualities required for long hours in blue-collar jobs. Maturity meant staying on the job; swinging debutantes buckled down to jobs in defense plants; and lack of concern for the war effort was ridiculed.

Some stories combatted middle-class antipathy to blue-collar work for women. "Rough Turn" (Ray Millholland 8/7/43 p.21), for example, is about women working in a steam engine factory. The mayor's daughter had taken a job on the line, and he complains to the boss about her working in such "degrading surroundings." The employer's response--that women are needed at the plant, that they are separated from the men, and that he has hired only respectable workers--indicates the story's attempt to overcome this barrier. A similar attempt to overcome middle-class prejudice against blue-collar work is made in "Taxi! Taxi!" (Clarence Budington Kelland 4/14/45 p.9). The taxi-owner heroine comes from a disreputable family of the lower class, but she has excellent character and moves comfortably in middle- and upper-class circles. To legitimize blue-collar work, such stories portrayed working-class heroines as displaying more strength than women from wealthier backgrounds.

Other stories which encouraged the employment of women portrayed female characters performing competently and coolly in dangerous situations, thereby reinforcing an image of women compatible with the performance of challenging responsible jobs. The image of the competent assertive women in wartime fiction was inherited from prewar stories which had portrayed risk-taking heroines as early as 1931.<sup>5</sup> The adventurer of the thirties was most likely to fly an airplane, enter politics, become a spy, or find success as an entertainer and was distinguished by self-confidence, ambition, wit, and great energy.

The competent assertive heroine appeared throughout the early forties. A poised female spy helps crack a sabotage ring in "The Saboteurs" (John and Ward Hawkins 4/10/43 p.9) as does an editor in "Black Jack" (Robert Pinkerton 11/20/43 p.9). A policewoman captures a Nazi in "The Bride and Delehenty" (Thomas Walsh 9/11/43 p.12), and a resistance fighter battles Germans in the mountains of France ("Avalanche" Kay Boyle 10/23/43 p.9). All of these characters, by their bravery and strength, won the respect of the male protagonist.<sup>6</sup>

The risk-taking, courageous, competent heroine was an excellent model for creating an heroic image of women compatible with wartime. An important component of this assertive heroine was her high intelligence. War-related stories emphasized the thoughtful reflectiveness and quick wit of the ideal woman on the home front. As one character says: "Styles in beauty change . . . a blank baby stare [1920s style] will frighten even a college boy in 1943" ("An Afternoon Some Weeks Later" George Bradshaw 9/4/43 p.14). A common female character of the 1940s, one inherited from the previous decade, was the deceptively flighty chatterbox who could out-talk and out-think her enemies. This character was adapted to military recruitment in a series of stories written by Frank Bunce from 1944 through 1946, featuring a WAC named Dorrit Bly whose nonstop patter extricated her from humorous conflicts with the Army. Her phenomenal memory enabled her to cite Army regulations and civil laws which destroyed her opponents' arguments even when she was clearly in the wrong. Never irrational, she is so adept at arguing a case that she earns the admiration of her defeated antagonists.

In addition to exhibiting great intelligence, female characters were shown performing rationally and competently in work roles normally filled by men. A prewar formula which was used to illustrate the role shift from subordinate to managerial positions in sex-role ideology was the temporary management of a business by a female. "Dangerous Ways" (Robert Pinkerton 1/2/43 p.9) uses this story line to propel the heroine into managing a shipyard when the owner meets with a bad accident. Previously the shipyard secretary, she has a vast technical knowledge of shipbuilding and a good head for business, which enables her to handle the operation competently despite the presence of saboteurs. The formula is used again in "Heart on Her Sleeve" (Clarence Budington Kelland 5/29/43), another serial in which the daughter of a plywood company owner takes over the plant when her father is incapacitated. She also must single-handedly ferret out saboteurs and does so while ignoring the hostility of some of her male employees. Similarly, in "Taxi! Taxi!" the shrewd, sardonic sister of a taxi-fleet owner manages the business when he is drafted, and she hires brawny female drivers who have no trouble subduing rowdy fares. She not only takes care of the business, but makes it more efficient.

Such stories promoted confidence in female ability to occupy executive positions in fields essential to the war effort, and also legitimized the exercise of female authority over male workers. While prewar stories tended to feature male characters who helped this heroine deal with dangerous emergencies, war-related stories, while similarly integrating romance with adventure, focused on the

independent strength of the female executive. This slight but significant shift in emphasis points out the high degree of independence needed in women left behind to hold down the home front.

Another egalitarian theme found frequently in stories from the thirties--the overcoming of prejudice against women in male spheres--appeared in wartime Post stories. Prewar stories dealt with women battling as individuals to escape traditional stereotypes in order to pursue adventure as pilots or career women, but wartime heroines saw themselves as paving a new path for women as a group. In "Rough Turn," for example, the manager of a steam engine factory, now manufacturing guns for the Navy, has been forced to hire women as machinists by the War Manpower Commission. Within two weeks, he is at his wits' end as two male workers have quit and a superintendent is threatening to leave as a result of friction with the new workers. In desperation, he puts one of the women in charge of the others. She informs him that the women are angry and uncooperative because the men are assigned the most skilled work and "get to have all the fun." She convinces him that women are not only capable of performing such jobs, but desire them.

Similarly, the heroine of "The Wall Between" (Margaret Craven 9/25/43 p.14) is hired to supervise the insurance department of a war plant which employs many female assembly workers. She has confidence in herself but is discouraged by the negative attitudes of her male colleagues: "Ann knew that when working women got together and talked shop, they spoke frequently of the prejudice which men held against their sex in those top jobs where women compete with men."

However, she considers herself a trailblazer, enjoys the moral support of her boss, and manages to win the respect of many of the men. The story ends with the hiring of a female personnel director and a female chief accountant, thus symbolizing her victory over the traditionalists.

The target group of early government studies to meet war labor needs was the married woman past the age of 30 whose children were 14 or older. While the WMC discouraged the employment of mothers with young children, they made up an important segment of the wartime labor force. One way magazines could aid the recruitment effort, therefore, was to exemplify in fiction a positive attitude toward working mothers and to modify the normative ideal of the full-time homemaker. Several Post stories did this by portraying mothers in war work. One which spoke specifically to the objections of husbands to wives leaving home was "The Belittling Parent" (Isabella Holt 9/11/43 p.23). In this story, the husband has no respect for his wife's capabilities, ridicules her intelligence, and he and the children laugh at the idea of her taking a job at a munitions plant. The wife's sister chastises the family for their denigrating attitude and declares that being a homemaker should take second place to taking a war job: "This is wartime . . . the Government wants everyone to use his highest skills." She encourages the children to build up their mother's self-esteem so that she will have the courage to work outside the home and convinces them that their view of her as a mother only is a limited one. The husband is furious when she

signs up for a refresher course at the university but eventually at the prodding of his son accepts her new work role cheerfully.

A group of stories which indirectly encouraged the employment of mothers used the child care center as a backdrop for romance.

"Ten Days' Leave" (L.L. Foreman 2/19/44 p.15) is a comedy-romance about the battle between two soldiers to date a model-turned-lens-grinder. One of them agrees to relieve her from nursery duty at the plant and finds himself quarantined. The story concerns his humorous attempts to deal with the situation as he eventually traps the model into being quarantined with him. Another comedy written around child care centers was "Parties Are Out" (Paul Gallico 2/20/43), a story in which female war workers establish a factory nursery. The project unexpectedly mushrooms as other defense plants request information and one of the women becomes chairperson of the "United Our Babies Committee." In "Sea Change" (Phylliss Duganne 11/20/43, p.14), a shell-shocked veteran recovers while helping the heroine at a day care center where they fall in love.

While creating favorable attitudes toward working mothers was an important contribution to the recruitment effort, the Post's support of married women joining the labor force was even more dramatic. A tabulation of the married female characters in lead stories featuring women engaged in wage labor shows that in 1941, no married women were portrayed in occupations other than housework. In 1943, however, 18 percent of the female characters in the Post engaged in wage labor were married and half of these were in male work roles. Although the number of married working women remained the same in 1944, the

proportion of women workers who were married increased to 30 percent. In stories of the postwar transition period, there were more married women shown working than in 1941, but the proportion dropped to 11 percent. (See Table 3.)

TABLE 3  
PROPORTION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS PORTRAYED IN WAGE LABOR  
WHO WERE MARRIED IN LEAD STORIES FEATURING WOMEN  
IN THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, 1941-1946

Year	% of Females in Wage Labor Who Were Married	% of All Females in Wage Labor
1941	0	40
1943	18	57
1944	30	51
1945 (Jan.-July)	12	53
Aug. 1945- March 1946	11	38

A positive image of married working women was also developed through resolving the conflict between marriage and career and developing a positive image of career women--two characteristics of wartime fiction which distinguish it from pre- and postwar stories. The conflict between marriage and career was a major theme of prewar fiction, in which the working wife was a source of friction. She was often portrayed as a selfish, exploitative career woman who callously neglected her home duties for fame and wealth. An excellent example of this character is provided in "The Rising Star" (Alice Duer Miller



5/23/36 p.5). The protagonist is a loving prosperous husband and father who suffers from the ambition of his cold, self-centered wife to be a movie star. He raises their child with the aid of a sensitive, self-effacing nurse while his wife establishes herself in Hollywood. Typically, the wife is punished for her destructive pursuit of a career. When husband, child, and nurse move to Hollywood, the nurse attains stardom while the wife fails. Moreover, she loses her family to her rival who promptly gives up her success to be a homemaker.

Negative attitudes toward career women and working wives persisted throughout 1941. The prewar incompatibility between marriage and work outside the home is illustrated in "Heads, You Win" (Zachary Gold 8/30/41 p.14). The heroine of this story is a talented actress who quits her career to marry an architect. When she is tempted by a Hollywood agent to resume her career, the marriage flounders and eventually ends in divorce. After a year's separation, the couple reconciles when she gives up acting permanently.

The stereotype of the hard-bitten career woman who is a threat to men appears in "Thirty Days Hath September" (Dorothy Cameron Disney 2/8/41 p.9). The protagonist is upset when his wife expresses an interest in working for a businesswoman acquaintance. The acquaintance, a single woman, is described in the derogatory terms characteristic of the stereotypical career woman:

She was a natural member of that well-corseted, firm-jawed little band of determined females who have climbed from oblivion to well-publicized successes without the help of husband or children or other awkward connections.

Similarly, in "Prescription for Murder" (Hannah Lees 9/6/41 p.9), the director of nurses at a major hospital is a man-hating, arrogant, sadistic, domineering spinster. She values work only because it grants her power over people. As the murder victim of this mystery, she meets with the usual horrible fate of the selfish, ambitious female.

Single women and widows were the only characters in 1930s Post fiction who were portrayed positively in wage-work roles. Generally stories about them were romances which ended in engagement with the understanding that they would quit their jobs. While this role conflict persisted through the war years, the image of the destructive career woman virtually disappeared and the marriage-career conflict was minimized. One story that signalled the shift toward acceptance of wives in wage work roles was "Squeeze Play" (John D. Weaver 1/23/43 p.12), about the efforts of a PTA president to prevent the firing of an engaged female teacher. The resolution of the conflict in favor of the teacher is a significantly new twist on an old formula.

War-related stories, while focusing on single women, often featured war-working wives whose husbands encouraged them to work outside the home. The young service wife of "Have Fun, Kid," for instance, is tempted to quit her factory job because it is too tiring; she is convinced by her soldier-husband to stick with it and gain maturity through accepting the responsibility of paid work (Naomi Lane Babson 7/31/43 p.12). The mother of the heroine's boyfriend is a WAVE lieutenant and plays a key role in another story, "The Seventh Wave"

(Agnes Burke Hale 3/4/44 p.14). A dynamic speaker and competent executive, she is at the same time a warm and responsible family woman. Married women in wartime stories were unselfish, concerned about the welfare of their husbands and compassionate, yet also committed to their work. Role conflicts were either nonexistent or so well managed that the women met their obligations both to family and their jobs.

While there were some stories which failed to support the employment of women in war production by glorifying motherhood, or by featuring women performing war work incompetently, or abandoning jobs, the majority displayed positive attitudes toward working women. Of the 83 lead stories between 1943 and 1945 with prominent female characters, only two contained negative attitudes toward working women and these were ambivalent in that they simultaneously portrayed heroines competently performing war work. Thirty stories featured women employed in defense jobs or volunteer work and 20 portrayed women positively in work roles outside the home. (See Table 4.) In contrast, the year 1941 contained 13 stories that positively portrayed women in wage-work roles; 11 which mentioned no occupation outside the home or concerned children and the elderly; and 3 which contained negative stereotypes of working women.

Through their modifications of prewar story formulas and the conventions of the romance formula, wartime stories of the Post supported the recruitment effort. The disappearance of negative images of career women, the positive portrayal of women in male roles, the altering of beauty standards, and explicit appeals to enter war work

were all ways by which Post fiction presented images of women compatible with the labor needs of the war economy.

TABLE 4  
ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN IN WAGE LABOR AND DEFENSE WORK  
IN LEAD STORIES FEATURING WOMEN IN THE  
SATURDAY EVENING POST, 1941-1945

Year	Total Stories Featuring Women	Stories with Positive Attitude Toward Women in Defense Work	Stories with Positive Attitude Toward Women in Wage Labor	Stories with Negative Attitude Toward Women in Wage Labor
1941	26	0	13	3
1943	35	12	15	0
1944	26	12	2	0
1945	22	6	3	2

It is difficult to determine to what extent these stories resulted from the propaganda efforts of media groups, although it is clear that much of the fiction followed OWI guidelines. The Post fully cooperated with these groups in their publicity campaigns. It had ties to both the Magazine Bureau and the Writers' War Board. It was a member of the Magazine Advisory Committee and at the first meeting of this group, Dorothy Ducas advised that OWI "discuss [the] possibility of [the] use of background material by fiction writers to clarify the use of various bits of war information not possible by direct news releases." One of the tasks she suggested to fiction writers was "breaking down prejudices against women at work."<sup>7</sup> The

Post also was represented at various meetings the Bureau arranged with other government agencies.

The tabulation of magazine articles and fiction printed by the Post that were recommended by the Magazine War Guide shows it to have been a major contributor to the war effort from March 1943 to July 1945, when it ran 26 stories on labor needs and womanpower. Six of these dealt with women in war production, two were on child care centers, ten recruited servicewomen (five of these stories were fiction), and the rest publicized nursing and farm work.

In addition to these stories, others conformed to the labor recruitment campaign and to Guide suggestions, though they were not mentioned in OWI records. Stories with persuasive messages regarding factory work, for instance, were printed largely between March 1943 and June 1944 when the recruitment campaign was at its height. Nineteen out of 22 stories about women in factory work appeared during this period, ten of which were lead stories. Thirteen were printed in 1943 (seven of them lead stories), the year designated by the Magazine Bureau as one in which magazines should make womanpower their primary issue.

The Post also participated in the September 1943 cover campaign. The cover of the September 4 issue is a Norman Rockwell painting of a woman dressed in red, white and blue coveralls, rolling up her sleeve, and striding purposefully while loaded down with the bric-a-brac of defense work--air raid warning equipment, a wrench, and a service hat. Rockwell's figure reflects the campaign's emphasis on women in necessary civilian services with her milk bottles, railroad

lantern, farming tools, conductor's change carrier, oil can, and mop. At least six stories were printed that month which concerned women in defense work while five lead stories on the subject appeared from September through December 1943. The number of stories appearing in September far exceeded those in other months between March 1943 and June 1944, indicating the Post's extensive support of the fall campaign.

The Post also participated in the "Women in the War" campaign of 1944. Eight stories concerning women in factory work appeared in 1944, four of them in the spring when the campaign was launched. Ten focused on women in military service, a significant increase over 1943 when only two concerned the services, thus reflecting the campaign's military emphasis. That some of these stories were a result of the campaign is clear. Material advertising the themes and purposes of the campaign was prepared and distributed by the Bureau of Campaigns in January and February, and in an OWI progress memo, two stories from the Post were mentioned as examples of the kind of support the government desired from the media.<sup>8</sup> Other stories mentioned by OWI as supporting military recruitment were Frank Bunce's serial on Dorrit Bly and a story about a combat nurse which appeared in 1945. (See Appendix B for list of stories identified as propaganda.)

A comparison of stories identified as propaganda with those which were not so identified but which supported the employment of women in defense work indicates that OWI failed to mention in its propaganda checklist a great deal of Post fiction that supported the womanpower campaign. For example, two of the stories in Bunce's

series on Dorrit Bly were identified as recruitment stories, but the first story in the series was not--despite its being focused far more on recruitment appeals than the other two. Similarly, "A Wave for Mac" (Sidney Herschel Small 3/11/44 p.24) was identified as a recruitment story yet it contained no overt statements about women in war work, relying instead on the subtler appeal of success in romance. On the other hand, "Have Fun, Kid" was ignored even though the aim of the story was to tie patriotism and maturation to the heroine's war factory job.

Other overlooked stories which contained clear appeals supporting the recruitment campaign were "Lady Bountiful," about the transformation of a frivolous socialite into a serious war worker; "Regards from Mary," which rewarded the heroine for sticking to her aircraft job; and "The Belittling Parent," "The Wall Between," and "Rough Turn," all focusing on prejudice against women in war production. Moreover, "The Belittling Parent" concerned the kind of woman indicated by the WMC as the best source of war labor reserves, that is, the older married woman without young children. "Rough Turn" encouraged the employment of women in skilled work in the metal trades, the most severely depleted of the essential war production fields. "Taxi! Taxi!", a serial by one of the best-known popular writers of the period, Clarence Budington Kelland, was ignored as well, even though it was good propaganda for the campaign to recruit women into male occupations in trade and transportation.

These and other stories followed recruitment goals too closely to have been written without knowledge of or concern with the

recruitment campaign. The Magazine Bureau's monthly tabulation of articles, fiction, and editorials which followed suggestions of the Guide was obviously incomplete. The Post was only one of 200 magazines the Bureau tried to keep track of, and the womanpower campaign was one of several issues the Bureau noted. It is understandable that a small staff would not have had time to do a thorough job of perusing all the periodicals. As a weekly with an average of six fiction pieces and eight articles per issue, the Post published many recruitment items which undoubtedly went unnoticed.

Post fiction featuring women in war work generally followed the guidelines of the Guide in that it portrayed married women favorably in defense roles, showed college graduates devoting themselves to defense work, featured females in blue-collar male occupations, refrained from using mothers with young children as heroines in defense work, and favorably portrayed child care centers. The timing of stories also tended to follow campaign time-tables.

In some respects, however, recruitment goals set by the government were ignored. For example, the 1943 September campaign emphasized service, trade, and transportation work but the fiction that month focused entirely on managers, factory workers, WACs, and office workers. It was not until 1945 that two stories appeared that would have supported that campaign. The desire of the War Manpower Commission to relieve strains on community services in war production centers was never addressed effectively by the Post and the call for office workers in government agencies was completely ignored. Finally, the heroines of defense-related stories were primarily young



and single, even though the most plentiful source of workers was married older women.

Some of these discrepancies can be accounted for by the small staff and meager budget of the Magazine Bureau. Particularly after the massive budget cut of June 1943, it had few resources for encouraging participation in campaigns. In addition, the commissioning of fiction may have involved a greater time lag than the three-month period allowed by the Guide and Supplement. Another problem that may have interfered was inadequate understanding on the part of writers of war labor needs. Since the bulk of persuasive stories concerned factory workers and servicewomen, it may have been that writers failed to perceive the importance of recruiting women into service work.

A more likely reason for ignoring some aspects of war labor needs, however, stems from the nature of popular fiction. Though writers cooperated with the recruitment effort, they were constrained by the entertainment function of popular magazine fiction and by the conventions of their craft. Romances generally feature female characters and since courtship is the province of the young and unattached, the heroines of such stories naturally fell into that category. Furthermore, it was easier to create an adventurous fantasy around a young woman breaking new ground in male occupations or risking her life nursing wounded soldiers in battle than to create a romantic adventure around a middle-aged married office worker--given the culture's fascination with youth and danger. Using as heroines the groups of women designated as war labor reserves by government studies would have made it extremely difficult to satisfy the reader's desire

to identify with someone to whom exciting and romantic things happened. Popular culture has tended to feature young single beautiful heroines and, despite the heightened awareness of labor needs during the war, wartime heroines remained young, single and beautiful.

Other evidence that the Post participated in the recruitment campaign is provided by its links to the Writers' War Board. It had long employed the services of many writers who joined the Board after Pearl Harbor. Rita Halle Kleeman, J. P. Marquand, Stephen Vincent Benet, Walter D. Edmonds, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Kenneth Roberts, Sophie Kerr, Robert Pinkerton, and Paul Gallico were all active members of the Board and regular contributors of fiction to the Post. Pinkerton's "Dangerous Ways," the lead serial for 1943, featured a shipyard secretary who found romance and danger as manager of a shipyard plagued with saboteurs. Gallico contributed a story in February of the same year which portrayed two debutantes who took war jobs in an aircraft plant and set up a child care center.

Although the authors of other stories encouraging defense work were not active Board members, it is likely that they were asked by fellow writers to write stories for OWI campaigns. Rex Stout, chair of the Board, had been a frequent contributor to the Post for many years and made frequent contact with the Magazine Bureau. Since the recruitment of women was of major interest to the Bureau, it is reasonable to assume that Stout conveyed that emphasis to his organization. In addition, while some writers do not appear on the rosters of Board committees, the nature and quantity of the stories they wrote suggest contact with Board members. Robert Carson, for example,

wrote at least six stories which glorified heroines in war work. Margaret Craven and Phyliss Duganne also contributed stories with strong recruitment themes. Craven wrote about women working collectively to aid the war effort, the negative effects of prejudice against female war workers, and the maturation of a housewife performing volunteer work. Duganne created romances which encouraged positive attitudes toward women in blue-collar work and toward day care centers.

It can be argued that such wartime images in fiction were merely responses to changes brought on by the economy's shift to war production and the movement of women into new roles, rather than propaganda designed to encourage these changes. Some of the images undoubtedly did result from the propensity of popular culture to assimilate social change and to reflect contemporary concerns. However, the congruence of war-related stories with campaigns and suggestions of the Magazine Bureau--as well as the communication links between OWI, the Writers' War Board, and the Post--indicate that much of the fiction was aimed toward recruiting women into labor-short occupations. The intent of stories featuring heroines in defense work is obvious from the moral lesson which accompanied conflict resolutions and from the statements made in support of female defense workers. The use of formula fiction as propaganda was limited by the conventions of popular literature and by the limitations of OWI, but, nevertheless, it allowed for the alignment of female images with labor needs.

### Encouraging Women to Leave War Work

The influence on popular writers of the government's support of employers' postwar efforts to expel women from their war jobs is more difficult to determine. The Magazine Bureau did not gather information on stories which encouraged the movement of women back to traditional roles, nor did it launch publicity campaigns to accomplish that goal. Nevertheless, the dramatic postwar shift in popular fiction to traditional images of women maintained and, indeed, strengthened prewar definitions of female roles.

The normative image of the full-time homemaker did not disappear during the war; it was modified through a minimization of the marriage-career conflict, by emphasizing women in wage work roles (especially male roles), and by portraying married women and mothers as part of the labor force. Indications that this modification of sex roles was a temporary one appear in some of the early stories which encouraged women to perform war work. In "Dangerous Ways" the male protagonist admires the heroine for her competent management of a shipyard, but at the end of the story he concludes: "What Lou needed was to get away from ships. It wasn't a woman's game" (Pinkerton 1/2/43 p.9). Similarly, after accepting his fiancée's new welding job with pride in her contribution to the war effort, the protagonist of "When the Boys Come Home" looks ahead to postwar normality: "When he returned . . . she would be waiting, in a pretty dress, with flowers in her hair" (Duganne 7/17/43 p.26).

During reconversion, story writers created heroines who yearned for domesticity. In "Taxi! Taxi!", the heroine, after helping

destroy an international spy ring and successfully managing her brother's business, dreams of presiding over her own home: "No taxicabs, no telephones. Just a home and a long, drooping, sleepy man coming to it each evening and leaving each morning. And maybe some dratted kids" (Kelland 4/14/45 p.9). Likewise, a female aeronautical engineer and pilot in "Mission for Henry" is pleased when the male protagonist tells her: "I keep visualizing you in a rose-covered back yard, wearing simple coveralls and designing a baby carriage with retractable wheels" (Robert Carson 7/21/45 p.12).

The pairing of domestic images with female characters was a common story device in 1945 and early 1946. In "Diapers for Flight Six," for instance, a stewardess procures diapers for an abandoned baby on board and considers adopting it. A former poster model for recruitment during the war, a pilot who "knows aerodynamics backwards," and a no-nonsense career woman, this character undergoes a transformation in the eyes of the protagonist during the course of the story: "Hanscomb looked good holding the baby, dim-eyed and sweet and motherly. . . . Ladies should be having babies, not flying all around the country. . . . Hanscomb wasn't a Career Girl, after all." His initial assessment of her thus changed, he proposes (Win Brooks 3/30/46 p.12). A similar image change occurs in "The Reconversion of Johnny" (James C. Lynch 7/14/45 p.18), a story about a defense worker and a former WAC who is an expert in bomber instruments. Whereas a recruitment story would have emphasized her competence in performing a skilled task, this one focuses on her efforts to care for her deceased sister's baby. She also helps the production manager

construct a baby buggy out of airplane parts which the plant will manufacture upon reconversion.

By portraying the war worker as a traditional woman, eager to return to the home, have babies, and trade hardiness for femininity, the themes of these stories displaced those which earlier stressed the advancement of women's status as a result of their new roles, the sexual appeal of competence and strength, and the desire to pursue a career after marriage. Male approval shifted from admiration of unglamorous, serious heroines performing bravely in dangerous situations to delight in the vision of mothers in the home.

From August 1945 to March 1946, those heroines who did work outside the home were generally portrayed in traditional female occupations such as nursing, teaching, or clerical work. Some featured former war workers who took postwar female jobs. A pilot becomes a stewardess in "Diapers for Flight Six," for example, a WAC takes an unskilled factory job in "The Reconversion of Johnny," and Dorrit Bly leaves the Women's Army Corps to resume her secretarial career in "Dorrit Remembers a Riddle" (Bunce 2/23/46 p.12). The tabulation of occupations in which female characters are found in stories featuring women shows that the proportion of females in male jobs declined dramatically during the reconversion period to approximately prewar levels. The proportion of female characters in all wage work similarly declined. (See Table 2.)

Of as much or more importance to postwar images of women was the use of the family in propaganda as a symbol of democracy and Americanism. Wartime fiction and advertisements focused on the

family as the institution soldiers were fighting to preserve, to inspire patriotism. The family represented stability, safety, and love in a period of uncertainty and danger: "Things they had missed-- permanent companionship, homes of their own, children--seemed suddenly important to young men going to war" ("When the Boys Come Home"). The soldier-protagonist of "Just a Few People" expressed the intense longing of soldiers overseas for the families they had left behind:

Every damned guy in the Army had a picture of his girl. When they weren't talking about her, they were talking about mothers and fathers and kid sisters. . . . I found out that nothing made a damned bit of difference to any of those guys but people. . . . It was worth fighting for those few people (Eric March 11/18/44 p.23).

The sweet, innocent, old-fashioned homemaker was an integral, indeed the central part of this idealization of the family; she came to stand for security, nurturance, and peace. The welder fiancée of the soldier in Duganne's "When the Boys Come Home" is typical of the contradictory ideal of women found during the war years. She performs her job well while the men are overseas but, at the same time, "She was such a helpless, feminine girl. She was the ideal of what every man in the armed forces fought for--to preserve her world and to return to her in it." While heroines capably filled male roles and benefited from them during the war period, their use as symbols of vulnerability and peace paved the way for glorification of domestic roles after the war.

It may be that writers responded in this way to the structural changes of reconversion because they presumed that women desired those changes. Clearly, the pro-domesticity themes of wartime stories

were partly a response to the imagined need of the reader for the peace, stability, and prosperity that the home represented. The shift in heroines from hard-working, tough factory workers and combat nurses to soft-eyed mothers was one way to distinguish war from peace.

Aside from reflecting sentiments for normality, however, the glorification of motherhood and the portrayal of women in traditional roles stemmed from the tone, set by OWI throughout the war, concerning women's role in society. The wartime impulse to alter normative conceptions of the female role surfaced in stories that saw the war as ushering in a new era of equality between the sexes. But the information available to popular writers emphasized the temporary nature of women's atypical roles and indicated that, after the war, women would leave the labor force or return to female fields. The absence of directives encouraging women to stay in their wartime roles meant that popular fiction assimilated reconversion changes by redefining women as primarily full-time homemakers.

#### Images of Women in Advertising

The war had an immediate and dramatic impact on advertising. Even before Pearl Harbor, advertisements frequently depicted battle scenes and informed readers what companies were doing to defeat the Axis. Once the country was fully engaged in war production, such ads multiplied as advertisers switched from selling consumer goods to producing war material. To fill the vacuum left by this shift, many advertisers supported OWI campaigns. The recruitment of women for war work was given top priority among these campaigns.



Between 1943 and 1945, the Post ran approximately 400 advertisements which in some way encouraged women to enter the labor force or the armed services. Many of these made no product pitch and devoted the entire copy to recruitment. Companies which devoted 75 to 100 percent of their advertising space at various times during the war to recruitment goals were generally those which no longer produced consumer goods, especially household appliances, or which were directed at a female audience. Eureka vacuum cleaners ran a series celebrating all aspects of women's war work. Crosley and Servel refrigerators and Easy washers featured war workers manufacturing or using their products. Wayne gas company and Kelly tires devoted much space to women performing male jobs in service and trade. Food product ads, such as Maxwell House coffee, Canada Dry ginger ale, and 7-Up, also glorified women in war work, while the paper shortage freed Kleenex to play a major part in the "Women at War" campaign.<sup>9</sup>

Companies which needed female workers (with the exception of the national railroads) generally stayed out of the recruitment campaign, preferring instead to celebrate the weapons of war they were manufacturing and postwar products. Advertisements for DeSoto, Pontiac, and Nash-Kelvinator, for example, used battle scenes rather than making pleas for women workers. Likewise, the aircraft companies were more likely to feature strides made in aviation than female riveters. Companies with a female market carried the bulk of recruitment copy, perhaps because their advertisers were more familiar with female images and because their audience was the group that needed to be reached.

Many of the themes found in the fiction of the Post concerning women and war work appeared in the advertisements as well. There was, for example, a similar emphasis on women in work roles. A sample of ads from 1941, 1944, and 1946 in which the occupations of females were tabulated for nine issues from as many months showed that the number of women in them with no occupation dropped dramatically during the war. In 1941, 47 percent of those ads featuring women portrayed women in no occupation; in 1946, 57 percent of the ads did, while in 1944 only 14 percent featured women in no discernible occupation.<sup>10</sup>

The same admiration for female stoicism, capacity for hard work, and self-sacrifice was evident in advertising as in the stories but glorified to a greater degree. A Kraft ad entitled "Heroines ...U.S.A." is typical. It shows a mother pitching hay while her daughter drives a tractor with the caption: "Always on our dairy farms, women and girls have had plenty of chores to do. . . . But what they are doing now would amaze you" (7/1/44 p.87). Tributes to women praised them for their efficiency, intelligence, and uncomplaining performance of their job. Bell Telephone labeled its operators "Soldiers of Service," Crosley refrigerators applauded the "resourcefulness and ingenuity of American women" (2/12/44 p.75), and Eureka proclaimed "You're a Good Soldier Mrs. America" (1/9/43 p.50). The war, then, resulted in a marked improvement in the image of women by fostering a belief that they were reliable, tough, effective workers, invaluable in times of crisis.

Not only did ads encourage women to enter the work force by praising their capacities as workers, but to a surprising degree,

they supported the occupational shift that occurred among women already in the work force. Aircraft workers at Northrop Aircraft were described as "Women who were stenographers, home-bodies, sales-people" (3/18/44 p.87), Hammermill Bond featured office workers joining the armed forces, Canada Dry featured a taxi driver described as "formerly [a] housewife, manicurist or debutante" (11/20/43 p.101), and Hartford insurance pictured saleswomen who "not so long ago . . . were wives, assistants, or secretaries" (12/2/44 p.64). Advertisers encouraged the transfer from female to male occupations which OWI propaganda ignored, perhaps to take advantage of the market changes occasioned by war production.

In addressing themselves to this occupational shift, advertisers accustomed readers both to seeing women in male roles and assured them that women could perform male tasks. Kelly tires ran ads which alerted readers to the entry of women into male jobs in transportation: "Don't be surprised tomorrow morning if you see a pretty milkmaid behind the wheel of a modern milk truck" (9/16/44 p.59). Wayne Gas announced that women were working in gas stations just as efficiently as men. Similarly, the Pennsylvania Railroad informed readers that women filled jobs that required strength and coolness and had "proved they can fill these roles most capably" (5/13/44 p.64). Such reassurances provided implicit challenges to the notion that women and men were suited by nature to perform different tasks, one of the major ideological supports of occupational segregation. Such a radical departure from social norms required either a major change in the dominant ideology or an accommodation to

it. Advertisers chose the latter course of action as they assimilated the new roles within a traditional framework.<sup>11</sup>

One way advertisers preserved traditional norms while women performed male tasks was to make it clear that married women war workers were homemakers too. A Westinghouse ad, for example, congratulated a married aircraft worker for both building planes and running a home (1/16/43 p.41). Likewise, a Eureka ad described the mother of a soldier making gas masks as "a two-job woman, running a house for Dad O'Rourke of a morning, and making gas masks on Eureka's 4-12 shift" (11/20/43 p.94). War workers were often shown in housewife/mother roles--working with or taking care of their children or doing housework in factory overalls. These ads performed the dual function of urging married women to enter the labor force and of maintaining the homemaker role.

Some egalitarian themes bridged the gap between old and new definitions of women, but in a way that avoided recognition of their full implication. One of these themes emphasized the equal role of women in American life and saw men and women as partners, a theme suggested by OWI in its military recruitment propaganda. Rather than viewing women as equally entitled to and qualified for the jobs normally held by men, readers saw war workers as indispensable helpmates, equally shouldering the burdens of war. Bibb manufacturing pictured women and men marching with determination toward victory (3/27/43 p.95), Arvin manufacturing declared that "Women are doing their part to help win the war . . . working shoulder to shoulder with men"

(6/5/43 p.93), and an optical company praised women who "fight beside their men" (5/27/44 p.91).

In these advertisements, war work brought men and women closer together despite the challenge it posed to traditional male-female relationships and showed men appreciating women as equals in the struggle. A Eureka ad describes the marital rewards of working service wives:

When Jimmy joined the Air Corps, she thought the end of her world had come. But he set her straight . . . as always.  
 "This is something we can do together, kid. You make 'em . . . I'll fly 'em. It's still the firm of Us, Incorporated"  
 (10/30/43 p.67).

In a gesture of trust and friendship generally only exchanged between men, a Listerine ad similarly shows a soldier extending his hand toward the reader and saying, "Put it there, sister!" (7/15/44 p.1).

Ads also used images of equality and partnership, featuring the pioneer woman, one of the major symbols of women's role during the war. The National Life Insurance Company ran a series entitled "Protecting the American Home," stressing the bravery and strength of women of the Old West. Pillsbury also ran a series of pioneer ads which emphasized women's ability to withstand deprivation and to care for their families in the midst of danger. Some advertisements tied pioneer images directly to war work. For instance, the Pennsylvania Railroad entitled a picture of female railroad workers "Molly Pitcher, 1944" (10/21/44 p.90) and an ARMC0 ad referred to a female truck driver as "a 'covered wagon' girl":

"I got a job driving a truck when Paul went across. I'm hauling the stuff they fight with" . . . Hers is the spirit of the women who reloaded the long rifles as their men

fought off the Indians . . . the courage that helped build the kind of America we have today (4/15/44 p.103).

Using the image of the pioneer woman was one way to increase the acceptability of women in male roles, since it established the idea of female strength and toughness as a vital part of American history. At the same time, it mitigated the potential threat of war work to traditional norms by evoking an image of strong women who nonetheless stayed within the homemaker role. The pioneer woman represented a capable, supportive, and stoic partner who "kept the home fires burning" until things would return to normal.

While such ads informed readers that working outside the home in atypical occupations did not mean abandoning female roles, others assured them that the performance of male work did not mean loss of sexual desirability and femininity.<sup>12</sup> They emphasized that war workers were still interested in glamour, a concept largely promoted by cosmetic companies, which contributed a great deal of space to the recruitment campaign. In addition, they emphasized the war worker's small size. The following ad, for example, pictured a small female worker operating a huge machine and described her as:

Five feet one from her 4A slippers to her spun-gold hair. She loves flower-hats, veils, smooth orchestras--and being kissed by a boy who's now in North Africa. . . . How can 110 pounds of beauty boss 147,000 pounds of steel? . . . through the modern magic of electric power. The magic that makes it possible for a girl's slim fingers to lift mountains of metal (6/12/43 p.55).

Emphasizing the physical differences between the sexes minimized their essentially equal capacities for performing industrial and service work.

This prevailing concern about femininity was especially marked in advertisements recruiting women into the armed forces. A memo from the Office for Emergency Management concerning WAVE and SPAR recruitment indicates the problematic nature of military service and conventional notions of beauty:

There is an unwholesomely large number of girls who refrain from even contemplating enlistment because of male opinion. An educative program needs to be done among the male population to overcome this problem. Men--both civilian and military personnel--should be more specifically informed that it is fitting for girls to be in service. This would call for copy . . . which shows that the services increase, rather than detract from, desirable feminine characteristics.<sup>13</sup>

Advertisers spoke to this problem by picturing servicewomen in the company of attractive men in uniform and emphasized the beauty of the women themselves. Camel cigarettes ran a series on women in the armed forces which showed women in fatigues in one part of the ad and off-duty in evening gowns with officers in another part. Canady Dry made a similar attempt to maintain feminine identities of servicemen; the company participated extensively in military recruitment and frequently ran advertisements saluting women in uniform. One of its 1944 ads illustrates the way feminine desirability was paired with masculine roles. It shows soldiers raising a toast to photos of women in various branches of the armed services with the caption "To the Ladies" (11/11/44 p.76). A Whitman's ad used a similar technique by showing a beautiful WAC receiving the traditional gift a suitor brings to his lady--a box of chocolates (1/9/43 p.8).

Military recruitment propaganda preserved traditional notions about women another way as well--by placing servicewomen in family

settings.<sup>14</sup> In a Kellogg ad, for instance, a WAVE serves breakfast to her family (11/20/43 p.60), while the manufacturers of Pontiac featured a fresh-faced WAC described as "your daughter, sister, sweetheart, or wife" (9/30/44 p.33). Maxwell House ran a number of ads picturing servicewomen, home on leave, surrounded by loving, proud family members. The bolstering image of the family appeared far less often in civilian labor recruitment propaganda. It relied instead on patriotic appeals which exploited women's guilt feelings about meeting their responsibilities to husbands or sons.

While the themes and appeals of advertisements adhered closely to the timetables, goals, and messages of campaigns waged by OWI, they sometimes differed. OWI suggestions generally ignored the subject of working mothers, with the important exception of promoting child care centers, while ads made strong pitches for their employment. Likewise, OWI ignored women already in the work force while ads portrayed women switching jobs from the female to the male sector of the economy. On the other hand, advertisers sometimes glorified the wartime role of the housewife which both failed to address labor needs and departed from government propaganda suggestions.

Ads which departed from OWI guidelines by featuring established workers and young mothers perhaps derived from a conviction on the part of advertisers that it was more important to urge all women willing to work to seek employment in critical war industries rather than to follow WMC policy to the letter. In addition, working mothers were pictured in a way that posed no threat to the normative image of the full-time mother, the WMC's major concern. While



some ads showed mothers and children cheerfully working together, thus combining motherhood with wage work, others portrayed mothers' work outside the home as a disruption of family life justified only by the exigencies of war. These ads showed children as unhappy about being left in the care of someone else. An ARMC0 ad pictures a woman on her way to work comforting her small son and explaining why she must leave him with his grandmother (3/4/44 p.103). A factory worker-mother goes before a judge to plead for her delinquent son's release from jail (6/17/44 p.91). These unhappy scenes contrasted with postwar ads which showed both parents at home with two children playing happily nearby.

Advertisers' glorification of housework largely resulted from upgrading images of all women during the war. The war promoted positive attitudes toward all the work women did, including the work they did at home. While such glorification seems puzzling, given the extensive participation of advertisers in a recruitment campaign which tried to bring housewives into the labor force, it makes sense when viewed within the context of wartime advertising which praised women's character and their capacity for hard work.

Advertisers, then, cooperated to a high degree with government agencies in fashioning images of women which would fill the war economy's need for workers. These same advertisers also helped to define women's postwar status. Ads which looked ahead to victory often equated peace with female leisure. Futuristic postwar ads pictured women in evening gowns pressing buttons in their new homes or floating in the clouds while the house cleaned itself. This contrasted

sharply with the image of the blue-collar woman of wartime. The world, including women's role in it, would be much different after the war.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, the ads, like wartime stories, depicted the same yearning for postwar domesticity. A soldier dreams longingly of returning home and says: "I want my girl back, just as she is, and that bungalow on Maple Avenue" (Nash-Kelvinator Corp. 2/27/43 p.7). Another soldier and his fiancée pore over a blueprint, saying "We've got a postwar plan" (Whitman's chocolate 1/15/44 p.8). The home was not only central to the promise of peace, but, like fictional accounts of soldier fantasies, the symbol of what the war was being fought for. Motherhood, in turn, was the symbol of the home. Women as mothers were important symbols in wartime advertising of what soldiers were fighting to protect, along with positive images of strong, self-sufficient mothers who worked. Both ads and stories made clear as well that women preferred being full-time homemakers to being members of the labor force, and that they had left the home only temporarily, largely out of self-sacrifice. Returning to her homemaking role was for the war worker what the bungalow on Maple Avenue was for the soldier--the reward for a job well done and the symbol of peace.

In addition to encouraging women to leave factory jobs by glorifying domesticity, Post advertisers encouraged the transfer of women from male to female jobs. A Smith-Corona ad pictures a metal assembly worker contemplating her factory badge who asks: "When you lose your war job, what'll you do? . . . Like our fighting men, you've earned the right to choose the work you enjoy" (11/4/44 p.92). While

the message supports the notion that one may work where one pleases, it also advises women to learn to type and carries a covert appeal for women to return to office work. In addition, virtually all of the women in ads from 1945 were nurses, housewives, office workers, or had no occupation.<sup>16</sup>

Advertisers supported the movement of women into nontraditional roles and out of those roles more explicitly than did the fiction, a fact which reflects their closer ties to the business community. The images they used and the groups they addressed were closer to recruitment goals and labor needs. They were also more explicit in tying deeply rooted myths and ideals in American society to the changing status of women. The frontier and the family are both sources of identity for Americans. They provoke strong feelings of nostalgia and provide inspiration for action. By relying on the emotional appeals of these mythic images, advertisers thus legitimized role shifts that fiction writers supported by their subtler manipulation of the romance formula. The messages which encouraged the return of women to traditional roles were tied to aspirations for stability, prosperity, and leisure. Advertisers were particularly adept at equating postwar living with domesticity. They served the interests of business by promoting images which underscored reinstitution of occupational segregation and which encouraged consumption of home products.

The Post represents the ways mass-circulation "slicks," geared to the middle class, handled government propaganda and the

movement of women into and out of wartime roles. It accommodated itself to the economy's temporary need for women workers and to the recruitment campaign while maintaining its middle-class orientation. True Story provides an example of how a magazine with different concerns and a different audience responded to the needs of war production.

### Footnotes--Chapter III

<sup>1</sup>James Wood, Magazines in the U.S.: Their Social and Economic Influence (N.Y.: Ronald Press, 1971).

<sup>2</sup>The following analysis is based on a sample of 122 lead stories from the years 1941, 1943, 1945, and January-March 1946 which featured female characters, as well as 133 nonlead stories from these years. Only lead stories were used for tables. See Appendix A for further explanation of methodology.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Carson, "Parting Is a Pain in the Neck," Saturday Evening Post, March 25, 1944, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>It should be kept in mind that heroines in popular fiction have generally tended to be beautiful and the emphasis on beauty was not only a wartime recruitment device.

<sup>5</sup>It is likely that magazine fiction of 1910 to 1930 also featured the risk-taking heroine, but more thorough studies need to be made of that period.

<sup>6</sup>There is an excellent discussion of assertive heroines in popular film during the 1930s and early forties in Molly Haskell's From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974). Betty Friedan elaborates on the assertive heroine of magazine fiction in The Feminine Mystique (N.Y.: Dell Pub., 1963).

<sup>7</sup>Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Palmer Hoyt, September 17, 1943, Magazine Advisory Committee file, Entry 340, National Records Center, Suitland, Md.

<sup>8</sup>Memo from Cliff Sutter to Dave Fredericks, March 23, 1944, Records of Program Manager for the Recruitment of Women, Entry 90.

<sup>9</sup>Other companies which devoted a great deal of advertising to recruitment were Camel Cigarettes, General Electric, Beechnut Packing Co., Whitman's Chocolates, Black and Decker, Budget Hoists, Sal Hepatica, Dr. West's Toothbrushes, Hammermill Bond Paper and Office Supplies, and Smith-Corona.

<sup>10</sup>All ads were examined from three issues per year--1941 (pre-recruitment), 1944 (recruitment period), and 1946 (reconversion period). The issues included in this sample were October 4, 1941; November 8, 1941; December 13, 1941; April 29, 1944; May 13, 1944; June 24, 1944; January 5, 1946; February 9, 1946; March 16, 1946.

<sup>11</sup>For further discussion of the ways advertisers integrated war work with traditional images of women, see Rupp, Mobilizing Women, 1978.

<sup>12</sup>See Straub, "Policy," 1973, and Rupp, Mobilizing Women, 1978, for further discussion of how propaganda made beauty ideals compatible with blue-collar work.

<sup>13</sup>Memo from Robert Simpson to Cliff Sutter, September 4, 1943, Records of the Program Manager for the Recruitment of Women, Entry 90.

<sup>14</sup>See Chapter II for discussion of OWI suggestions for handling parental disapproval of daughters enlisting in the armed services.

<sup>15</sup>Rupp mentions the early emphasis on women's postwar role as one of the ways traditional images were maintained during the war years, Mobilizing Women, 1978, p. 160.

<sup>16</sup>The only image which counteracted these traditional images was that of the servicewoman who appeared regularly until 1946.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE WORKING-CLASS WOMAN AND THE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN: THE CASE OF TRUE STORY

The audience for True Story has long been known to differ from that of big slicks like the Saturday Evening Post.<sup>1</sup> From its inception in 1919, True Story, like other "confessions," has been aimed at the wife or daughter of the working-class male, and its readers generally have not read middle-class women's magazines.<sup>2</sup> With a circulation of over two million throughout the war, True Story led the confessions group in sales and as part of the MacFadden Publishing empire, it is a good representative of reading matter for working-class women.

Its audience was an important group, since that group furnished many of the workers for war production who entered the labor force out of financial need and who were likely to continue working after the war. The typical reader was young, 18 to 24, and evidence from the magazines and later studies suggests that she was almost as likely to be a housewife and mother as she was to be single.<sup>3</sup>

Another feature of True Story which gives it significance for the historian is that its readers perceived it as mirroring their conflicts, as being realistic, and as providing them with solutions to their problems.<sup>4</sup> It billed its stories as truthful accounts of

real people who were struggling with common problems. MacFadden claimed that he printed only manuscripts that were sent in by readers and nonprofessionals which were "patched up" by editors. Despite the evidence that stories were written by people who had mastered the confession formula, readers perceived them as factual accounts written by people much like themselves.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the magazine represents the concerns and ideology of the working-class female as the Post does the middle-class, and its high degree of credibility with readers makes it an important influence on attitudes and behavior.

The formula of the confessions has been characterized as "sin-suffer-repent."<sup>6</sup> The heroine is misled into violating norms of behavior, suffers the consequences, learns a vital lesson about life, and vows to live by the lesson she has learned. The most common subject of confession stories has been the pursuit of love. Something interferes with the course of true love--a rival, past hurt, ambition, love of adventure--which the heroine must overcome to gain happiness. While grappling with whatever obstacle is causing her problems with romance, she untangles her conflicting emotions about men, her role in society, and her sexual identity, generally through blaming herself for not knowing how to love.

To understand how the extraordinary role changes brought on by the war affected this formula, some other characteristics of the confessions during the early forties must be taken into account. A story that contains many of the elements found in the magazines at the time of the war is "My Introduction to Love" (June 1941 p.26). The heroine has been raised by an alcoholic father in a boardinghouse,



is raped at 13, goes to an orphanage after her father's suicide, eventually gets a job with a circus, and lives with an animal tamer whose death is indirectly caused by her insensitivity.

This story illustrates a number of things about the confessions. It concerns the crises of a young woman entering adulthood who has to cope with important decisions about the direction of her life, and with the uncertainties and traumas of love and sex. Its heroine comes from a single-parent home which has known financial and emotional hardship. Heroines were often orphans or products of broken homes and forced to make their own way in the world as best they could. Not uncommonly, they cared for an invalid parent or took responsibility for the welfare of other family members. Finally, it indicates the dark, threatening atmosphere characteristic of the stories. Divorce, alcoholism, death of a spouse, child, or parent, and illicit sex were common aspects of life heroines had to deal with and often felt responsible for.

While the dark side of life is clearly at the core of the confessions formula, the values contained in the magazines reinforced conventional middle-class morality. A close-knit family, a love-filled marriage, monogamy, hard work, ambition, honesty, and loyalty were all highly valued. Characters who spurned these values were punished and suffered from regrets over past indiscretions and deceptions. The promiscuous flirt, for example, was either cursed with a brutal lover or loneliness and always lost the hero to her wholesome, steadfast rival.

The qualities most highly valued in women were those which were believed to make for a stable marriage. The patient, understanding wife was a common figure who gently chastised or silently endured the abuses of an errant husband. A young mother wisely tolerates her husband's mania for racing cars in "Courage to Love" (January 1941 p.11). The heartbroken heroine of "We Shall Build Good Ships" (November 1941 p.39) suffers the drunken indifference of her boyfriend until he reforms. The woman who tolerated an immature boyfriend or husband was rewarded with the loving reliable family head she desired.

Closely related to this emphasis on patience and forgiveness was the idealization of female self-sacrifice, kindness, and cheerfulness. Love was defined as selfless giving with no expectation of recognition or reward beyond that of the act itself. Selflessness and loyalty were accompanied by cheerfulness in the face of misery, and it was seen as the antidote to bitterness, a way to endure hardship until one's fortunes improved. Embittered negative characters only made things worse for themselves by warping their children or failing to risk falling in love.

While the ideal heroine based much of her identity on her marriage, the major definition of her femininity and success as a woman was motherhood--infertility was a deformity, a sign of immaturity, or a barrier to marital happiness. Many stories concerned the torments of barren women who either feared the responsibility of adulthood or were unable to conceive for physiological reasons. The childless heroine turned to such extreme measures as artificial insemination

and false claims of motherhood, or was unexpectedly faced with parenting someone else's child, which led her toward accepting her role as a woman. The clear implication in these stories is that children are necessary ingredients for a successful life and essential for a woman's identity. Those who cannot conceive adopt, those who have children and reject them are immature, and those who neither adopt nor bear are trapped in failed marriages.

The high value placed on self-abnegation, meeting the needs of husband and children, and cheerful kindness placed the prewar heroine in direct opposition to pursuit of a career. Consequently, confession stories which featured career women showed them as succumbing to the false rewards of ambition, power, and glamour. A common story type concerned the career heroine's exposure to a sophisticated, generally urban crowd where she finds an attractive lover who tries to draw her into debauchery. She eventually sees the error of her actions and returns, chastened, to her homemaking role. The co-owner of a dressmaking shop in "He Was So Charming" (March 1941 p.19), for example, refuses to give up her job when her fiance tells her he does not like career women. She breaks the engagement and visits some bohemian married friends who see no conflict between marriage and work. She is nearly seduced by a married man who assures her he would never ask her to give up her shop. She remorsefully asks her fiance for forgiveness, asserts she wants nothing more to do with careers, and vows to be content with a humdrum ordinary marriage.

The married career woman often lost the love of her family through devotion to her work. A doctor is the heroine of "Mrs. Medico"

(February 1942 p.35), a story about the attempts of an incompetent homemaker to combine family and work responsibilities. Not only does the husband leave her, dissatisfied with her failures as a housewife, but her daughter becomes a delinquent, pronounces her mother's life a failure, and leaves home to join her father. The heroine admits her wrongdoing and rejoins her family after quitting her practice. She discourages her daughter from considering a career in medicine and repeating her mistakes: "Perhaps she'll be a happier woman than I have been if she learns to knit sweaters and make a strawberry shortcake, and lets the world of pain--of hospitals and sickbeds--take care of itself."

These career women were generally orphans or products of broken homes who devoted themselves to work and developed their ambitions in response to painful family experiences. Sometimes their mothers have pushed them toward a career out of bitterness toward a husband who deserted the family, or they have thrown themselves into their work to avoid the memory of a failed love affair. These are heroines who like their work and, unlike the egocentric career woman of the Post, want their marriages to work. However, their ambition interferes with their roles as wives and mothers and they are forced to make a choice between success in work and success in love.

#### Women's Changing Status During the War and the Confession Formula

These were some of the major themes and values in True Story prior to the recruitment campaign, and they underwent significant changes in response to the demands of war production. True Story,

like the Post, ran fiction that supported the war effort and incorporated the changes that it brought about within prewar fiction formulas. It encouraged the use of women as a war labor reserve in various ways. First, many stories featured heroines engaged in war work. Out of 48 lead stories from 1941 to 1944, 12 or 25 percent were about women in volunteer work or labor-short occupations. (See Appendix B for list of these stories.) The portrayal of women in wage labor also increased during the time when women were needed in the labor force.<sup>7</sup> In 1941 and 1942, an average of 33 percent of the heroines in lead stories were engaged in wage labor while from 1943 to mid-1945, an average of 54 percent were. From August 1945 to March 1946, the proportion of heroines engaged in wage labor dropped to 38 percent. (See Table 5.)

TABLE 5  
HEROINES OF LEAD STORIES PORTRAYED IN WAGE LABOR  
IN TRUE STORY, 1941-1946

Year	% of Heroines in Wage Labor
1941	50
1942	17
1943	75
1944	41
1945 (Jan.-July)	57
Aug. 1945- March 1946	38

In addition to an increase in the number of women portrayed in wage labor, many of the same story devices which rewarded heroines in the Post for performing war work appeared in wartime fiction of True Story. The victory of a war worker over a nonworking rival, the discovery of romance on the job, the alteration of beauty standards in favor of hard dirty work, the equating of maturation with job responsibility, and the successful resolution of conflicts between marriage and work roles--there were all ways in which the confession stories provided a positive model of war workers.

Unlike the adventurous romances of the Post, however, these devices operated within the context of the confessions formula which emphasized obstacles to love, hardship, self-sacrifice, stoicism, and the importance of motherhood. The basic story line of learning how to recognize the value of true love through suffering from mistakes, adapted to the war through portraying wartime separations as tests of commitment and good character. In "Each Moment a Memory" (March 1943 p.35), the heroine is forced to make a choice between her war job and the man she loves. Her fiance thinks they should put love above any other consideration, but she argues that women have a great responsibility in war work and that if she leaves the aircraft plant to follow him, the manager will lose confidence in female workers. They decide to marry and live separately, feeling their love will survive duty to country: "We didn't say good-bye. We said, 'Keep 'em flying!' For we must turn out our hopes in shining aluminum. Build our dreams into winged weapons for our fighting men."

Another way that characteristic elements of the confession stories were used to support the recruitment effort was by relating self-sacrifice and cheerful stoicism, two virtues of the prewar heroine, to war work. A young secretary in "Young Girl's Secret" (October 1943 p.19), for instance, resents being transferred from her factory job to office work in a defense plant but is convinced by her employer that she should gladly do whatever her country asked of her: "Wherever I'm most needed, wherever I can be the most help--that's all I want." Similarly, in "We Shall Build Good Ships," a shipyard secretary is at first attracted to a cynical riveter who resents being exploited by the company. She changes her negative attitude toward the unpleasant work of the yard when a friend convinces her how important it is for the war effort.

This kind of patriotism was typical of war-related stories which stressed duty to country as justification for wartime disruptions and caused characters to experience a new-found sense of pride in their working-class origins. The 22-year-old daughter of a Polish immigrant coal miner feels transformed into somebody important when she is accepted into Army nurse training and shares her father's pride in her opportunity to serve America ("Army Nurse" September 1941 p.20). Another daughter of Eastern European immigrants finds pride in her cheerful, hard-working family in "The Pink Dress" (May 1943 p.19). The factory-worker heroine in "Education of John Manley by a Girl" (September 1943 p.22) chastises her snobbish mother for wanting her daughter to hide her working-class origins and quit work to attend college: "You can't frame the spirit that's back of the Stars

and Stripes! And the boys in the trenches, the ones that are fighting and dying, aren't asking for a diploma."

As well as strengthening characters' working-class identities, the stories emphasized the benefits of service to one's country in a way that reinforced prewar traditional sex roles. Women, for example, found the kind of fulfillment in war work that they experienced in meeting the needs of husband or children. The heroine of "Big Sister" (September 1943 p.32) feels depressed and unneeded when the brother she has raised joins the Marines. She overcomes her identity crisis when she realizes how much people need her at the war production plant where she is a personnel manager. The same transference of family to work role is evident in the story of a mother who "falls in love" with America and serves her country by taking a factory job. She describes her feelings about her work in maternal images: "It was part of me and I was part of it, fulfillment, contentment, finding new reserves of strength" ("In Love With America" June 1943 p.32). War-related stories incorporated the prewar emphasis on passionate devotion to selfless nurturing, and the importance of love in women's experience, into themes which channeled those concerns into war work.

Wartime stories also reinforced the male role by transforming weak, demoralized husbands and boyfriends into self-assured men capable of shouldering family responsibilities by joining the service or taking a war job. A former schoolteacher who has quit work to raise a family is forced to return to teaching when her husband loses his self-confidence after a serious illness and becomes a househusband in "It's Time to Remember" (October 1943 p.23). She loses her respect for him



and they verge on divorce until he enlists and returns a strong man. Another teacher wounds her husband's pride when she refuses to give up her career to accompany him to a new job. He leaves her, drinks heavily, and loses jobs until he finally straightens up by doing vitally important work in a copper refinery ("Bachelor Lady" September 1943 p.19). Stories equated working as a soldier or civilian to defend the country with self-respect in both men and women. However, war work developed respect for the heroine's class origins and reinforced the female support role, while it caused men to shoulder responsibility for a family and develop pride in their manhood.

There were significant departures from traditional roles for women as a result of stories glorifying war work, however. True Story minimized the conflict between married women earning a living and meeting family responsibilities, for example, much as the Post did. There were many stories in which the wife's working after marriage presented no problem. In "We Shall Build Good Ships," the heroine continues to work as a secretary after marrying a riveter in the yard. The heroine of "Miss Smith Goes to Washington" (December 1941 p.22) works in an aircraft plant after marriage, and a young mother married to a shipyard worker gets a war job in "Secret Behind a Love Story" (January 1944 p.15). Similarly, married women were more likely to be portrayed in work roles during the war than they were before Pearl Harbor or after reconversion. While five heroines of lead stories from 1942 to 1944 were working wives, none were in lead stories from 1941, 1945, and 1946.

Unlike the Post, which largely dropped the career-marriage conflict theme of the 1930s, True Story maintained but modified it in such a way that the married heroine engaged in war work was able to resolve her problems without giving up her job. The housewife-turned-factory-worker of "In Love With America" suffers the usual fate of the working wife and mother when her son becomes a truant and conflicts develop in her marriage. However, the catastrophic event which usually precipitates the career heroine's remorseful return to homemaking does not, in this story, cause her to leave the labor force. She instead manages to end her son's delinquency by making him proud of doing the housework she has no time to do herself. Similarly, the fatal temptation of urban sophistication lures a surgical nurse into marriage with a rake who abandons her. Her baby is still-born and she sees the false path she has followed. But instead of returning to her betrayed lover as a homemaker, she marries him and enlists in the Army Nurse Corps to regain her self-respect ("The Army Takes Over" September 1943 p.40).

Despite these modifications, anti-career messages appeared sporadically in True Story throughout the war, and the emphasis on motherhood continued unabated. Heroines continued to have babies, mourn miscarriages and infant deaths, overcome fear of maternal responsibilities, and devote themselves to their families. These stories coexisted with war-related ones which portrayed women primarily as workers or as wives and mothers competently handling two sets of responsibilities. Married working women did not suffer quite as much, nor did the driven woman of ambition appear as often.

However, these stereotypes never disappeared entirely. The major change brought on by the war was that a division was made between married women working to support the war effort and those who were working to satisfy their own ambition. The latter continued to suffer and repent while the former managed to bear healthy children and maintain their marriages.

There were no stories which showed women war workers returning to the home after the war as there were in the Post. Heroines in war work did not dream of full-time homemaking and motherhood, nor was there the same anticipation of postwar domesticity on the part of soldiers. Stories toward the end of the war concerned marriage and motherhood more than other topics, like factory jobs. However, since images of women as mothers and wives had been maintained throughout the war, the shift away from women in wage-work roles was less noticeable than the changes which occurred in Post fiction. During the recruitment period, wives and mothers in True Story often worked outside the home and managed both sets of responsibilities, whereas during the transition to peace, its heroines did not play double roles. Toward the middle of 1944 through 1945 and early 1946, heroines underwent traumas associated with widowhood, adjustment to returning veterans, and problems with maternity; they did not fantasize about domesticity. Similarly, confession stories did not show women leaving war work for female jobs, although when heroines worked--and fewer did than in 1943 or 1944--the job served only as a backdrop for romance.

A possible explanation for the failure of True Story to address itself more explicitly to the postwar role shift to domesticity

and female jobs is that war work had coexisted with traditional roles. War-working heroines were often wives with husbands present, in contrast to the Post which was more likely to portray service wives in war work with husbands overseas. This made inappropriate the anticipation of domestic bliss found in heroines of Post stories. The changes in roles brought on by the war were taken in stride in that working women continued to bear children and live with husbands. In the transition from war to postwar roles during reconversion, married heroines were not as likely to be in the labor force, and the emphasis on work roles of wartime heroines disappeared. However, the role shift was softened by the glorification of motherhood throughout the war and the absence of war-worker heroines from fiction at the end of the war.

### Nonfiction

As was true of the Post, more explicit messages regarding recruitment and postwar role shifts appeared in advertisements and nonfiction in True Story. Four regular columns dealt frequently with the life style changes and attitude shifts required by the employment of women in war production. The first of these was entitled "Home Problems Forum" and concerned the readers' family conflicts. Letters of advice were solicited from other readers, who won prize money if their letters were chosen for publication. By examining the nature of the problems in this column and the advice letters chosen for resolving them, it is possible to see to what extent they expressed values which accommodated the need for workers in wartime.

Several columns dealt with conflicts women experienced between their homemaking role and their participation in war work. The first of these appeared in September 1942, from a mother of three in her thirties who possessed mechanical skills from working in her husband's machine shop. She wrote in to ask if she should find work in a defense plant or remain a homemaker, as her husband wished, and do volunteer work. Both prize-winning letters support the recruitment effort by urging her to take a job since the country needed skilled workers.

Most problems concerning war jobs focused on home responsibilities and were resolved through suggesting ways the war worker could meet those responsibilities without quitting her job. Readers advised married women throughout 1942 and 1943 to engage in factory work despite the objections of husbands and the disruption to family life. While homemaking was perceived as important work and the responsibility of women only, strategies were suggested for circumventing the housewife's full-time role.

However, the accommodation to working wives was an uneasy one. As early as July 1943, letters appeared which supported full-time homemaking even when it meant giving up a war job. By 1945, support for working homemakers ceased. The following case signalled the shift from approval of factory work to work in the home. It concerned a returned veteran who wanted his wife to quit her war job and take care of their child. She, however, had disagreed with him for patriotic reasons. The first-prize letter was from a woman with a similar conflict. She related that she was finally moved to

return home when her husband read their marriage vows to her with tears in his eyes and advised the war-working wife to resume homemaking:

It is not normal to allow your mother to care for the baby. . . . It is unfair to deny your baby the mother's love that is his heritage. Lastly, hasn't Arthur earned the right to a full-time wife, companion and refuge of strength? If you fail to observe that right, and your first obligation, you are endangering the very rights for which men and women are fighting all over the world (January 1945).

While the column generally supported the recruitment effort, then, it did so with the ambivalence that characterized some of the fiction, an ambivalence that stemmed from the magazine's focus on motherhood as the definition of female success. Such ambivalence and the premature support given to women's return to the home indicates the limits placed on True Story's support of the recruitment campaign by its emphasis on the family and its highly conservative perspective on male-female relationships.

The second regular feature which encouraged women to engage in war production was "The Victory Homemaker" which began in October 1942. It supported the policies of the War Manpower Commission by asking single women and married women without children under 14 to find a job. It also publicized the policy that mothers of young children should bear primarily responsibility for their welfare. While child care centers were advised for mothers who had to work, home care was featured as the best method for raising children.

This column also suggested ways to streamline housekeeping and to involve husbands and children in housework. It featured households of women in war work and showed them successfully coping with the added stresses of a female breadwinner. It made clear that

the participation of other family members in housework was not only workable, but beneficial to individual self-esteem and family spirit.

A third column, entitled "What America Is Talking About," featured women performing war work from September 1944 to October 1945. Unlike the fiction, this section supported military recruitment. The egalitarian potential of the war is illustrated by the September 1945 issue, which included a lengthy and cogent discussion of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Finally, a series of portraits of notable American women appeared in February 1944 to replace a column entitled "Great Romances." It was called "Women Who Served America" and ran for 24 issues until December 1945.<sup>8</sup> The figures chosen from American history to represent the strength, courage, and determination to win the war desired in modern women fell into three categories. One, predictably enough, was service in wartime. Nurses and legendary figures from the Revolutionary and Civil Wars were spotlighted for their bravery. The second, pioneer women, emphasized the hardy qualities of those who helped their men settle the West and survive attacks by Indians. The third, social reformers and activists, were women strong enough to fight for their beliefs and for American ideals of freedom and social equality. Feminists appeared as well as trailblazers like Mary Lyon and Elizabeth Blackwell.

Significantly, all of the women featured were figures who predated World War I, a choice intended to emphasize the long tradition of female dependability in times of stress and to avoid, perhaps, more controversial selections from the twentieth century. While many of

the descriptions emphasized female heroism, achievement, and assertiveness, thereby reflecting the egalitarianism implicit in war work, the thrust of the series was patriotic service to one's country. The ideal of self-sacrifice which dominated the magazine, therefore, overshadowed its egalitarian overtones.

This series was replaced by one called "Today's Children," which solicited letters from readers describing an experience in which they had successfully guided a child. The shift from romance to heroism to maternity illustrates the capacity of popular culture to both absorb and create dramatic ideological changes within a short period of time, and demonstrates the extent to which female images conformed to labor needs.

### Advertisements

True Story advertisements were not as elaborate as those of the Post. The confessions had difficulty attracting advertising revenue because their audience had little purchasing power. Wartime prosperity, however, drew advertisers to True Story in great numbers, and they devoted a great deal of space to the recruitment of women into the labor force. Ponds, for example, portrayed college students in war work in nearly every issue from November 1942 to August 1945. Camel and Chesterfield had frequent ads supporting military recruitment and factory work, as did Kleenex, which carried appeals for women to enter the labor force.

As was true of the Post, advertisements praised female stoicism and loyalty and showed hardy, capable women workers who could



tackle male jobs successfully. A Kotex ad typifies the wartime emphasis on female strength:

Remember when the boys used to say that girls are made of sugar and spice and all things nice? Those days are gone forever . . . you're no sissy now! . . . You've learned how to be a good soldier . . . to keep going, keep smiling . . . no matter what! (August 1942).

Similarly, femininity was altered to discourage images of frailty. Beautyrest described slumbering women as resting after "doing a man-sized job," while Camel featured fashion-designers-turned-blueprint-artists and debutantes transformed into intelligence specialists. Ponds made femininity compatible with masculine roles by describing women as running farm machinery "with masculine ease and feminine charm," and Cutex advertised nail polish as "a red badge of courage for every fingertip."

In addition to emphasizing women's capacities for hard work without sacrificing their sexual identities, advertisers advocated the employment of mothers while maintaining their primary role as homemakers. Heinz ran a series of two-page ads depicting women who were also housewives and mothers doing war work, while Ralston, Johnsons, Drano, Del Monte, and others featured mothers successfully performing both family and work duties. This pairing of traditional imagery with wartime roles made it easier to reinstitute prewar norms after reconversion.<sup>9</sup>

Advertising filled the gap left by the fiction in its support of military recruitment. Though many companies ran identical ads in both magazines, the Post emphasized family appeals and portrayed women in uniform in the company of men, while True Story ads featured

servicewomen in isolation from men and families. Because cosmetic companies advertised more extensively in True Story and carried a large share of the military campaign, their choice of rather static images of glamour set the tone for that part of the recruitment campaign. While the magazine did support military recruitment, therefore, its impact on images of women was relatively minor.

Of more significance was the campaign in late 1943 and early 1944 to employ women in trade and service work. Unlike the Post, True Story's ads encouraged women to enter low-paid, traditionally female occupations as well as jobs vacated by men. This discrepancy is partly due to the kinds of companies which advertised in both magazines. The Post carried ads from tire and truck manufacturers, railroads and bus companies which could easily connect their product to the recruitment of women into male jobs in trade and transportation, whereas True Story did not. The greater emphasis in True Story on female civilian service work was also due to the differences in class backgrounds of the two magazines' audiences. As members of a lower socioeconomic group, True Story readers were less likely to enter managerial positions, while the more conservative perspective of the magazine led it to put less emphasis on women in male occupations other than factory work related to war production.

Advertisers encouraged the movement of women from the labor force to the home and from male to female jobs in three ways, all of which characterized ads of the Post. One of these was the maintenance of traditional images throughout the war. Even at the height of the recruitment period, housewives and mothers in ads were 40 percent of

the total number of women portrayed. While not as dramatic as the Post's emphasis on housewives as guardians of the nation, True Story's ads similarly equated housework with war work by including housewives in the company of servicewomen, welders, and riveters.

Another way women were encouraged to abandon wartime roles was the postwar dream ad of luxury and leisure used by utility companies and manufacturers of home products. Postwar ads contrasted women in factory work or military service with future housewives, equating peace with leaving the labor force. Other ads anticipated domesticity by shifting from recruitment to traditional images throughout 1945. Kotex switched from showing a teenager sticking to her factory job to one being counseled on housework. Seven-Up ceased claiming it could produce a good disposition in women in order for them to win a better job to claiming it could help them be happy homemakers; Beautyrest replaced its exhausted war workers with a mother tucking her child into bed.

The most important way for changing roles for women was the glorification of babies. True Story ads of 1944 to 1946 used images of babies to advertise products that had nothing to do with infant care. Karo Syrup, for example, adopted a baby as its trademark in March 1945. Sunkist advertised oranges with a toddler and the caption, "Little ones are mighty sweet now!" (October 1945). Babies were cast in adult roles and featured as counselors, authorities, and monarchs. Ivory and Ipana ads showed infants helping teenagers with romance problems, while tuna fish fed to a toddler was described as

"A Royal Dish to set before a King." Johnsons Products depicted an adult-sized baby scolding an infant-sized mother.

These advertising images were due to a glorification of domesticity as well as to the postwar baby boom. True Story advertised National Baby Week as early as May 1944 and featured a contest in August which offered a war bond to the winner's favorite baby. Covers which pictured mothers and babies began in January 1944 and by May, a "Beauty for Baby" column was instituted. Of course readers were bearing children during this period of domestic glorification, but evidence from the stories and columns suggests that though many readers were mothers in 1942 and 1943, no images of children appeared in ads during those years. Motherhood was an important, indeed a crucial, facet of the female role even at the height of the recruitment period, and the proliferation of baby images from 1944 to 1946 grew out of that emphasis. They served much the same function as Post images of wedded bliss, in that they drew reader attention to wife-mother roles.

The advertisements, columns, and fiction of True Story supported the recruitment of women for war production by presenting a positive image of working women during the war years, encouraging housewives and mothers to seek employment, and promoting images of female strength, durability, and stoicism. Conversely, as the war drew to a close, these images revolved around domesticity, especially motherhood, and on female-dominated occupations in the labor force. There is evidence that these images were, to a significant degree, the result of contact with propaganda organizations.

The Writers' War Board established pulp and confessions committees to coordinate magazines like True Story with the needs of the war effort.<sup>10</sup> In addition, pulp writers participated extensively in both Board activities and the Magazine Bureau, while formula writers and editors for the confessions had access to the Magazine War Guide and its Supplement.

Several links existed between OWI and the confessions group. Dorothy Ducas, Chief of the Magazine Bureau, made several visits to the Macfadden Publishing Company and specifically to True Story during her trips to New York in 1942 and 1943, while they in turn sent representatives to meetings set up by the Bureau between magazine editors and government agencies. Esther Kimmel, editor of the "Victory Homemaker" column, was a frequent representative to these meetings as was Henry Lieferant, editor of True Story.

The Magazine Bureau enjoyed an extensive and cooperative association with the pulps in the early stages of the recruitment effort. Ducas boasted having had "a great deal of success" in persuading editors to support labor recruitment and referred to the editor of Dell Publishing as "a most cooperative person."<sup>11</sup> She also mentioned pleasant relationships with True Story editors, and the general manager of Macfadden praised her highly for the way she was doing her job.<sup>12</sup>

The Bureau's tabulation of stories which followed propaganda guidelines also indicates how well the confessions cooperated with OWI. The Bureau's staff identified 13 confession magazines as having printed 136 articles, stories, editorials, and fillers recruiting

women into war production from July 1943 to August 1945.<sup>13</sup> Fifteen pieces of fiction were listed as well as 12 articles from True Story.<sup>14</sup> While True Story was not listed as having published fiction, other Macfadden publications were, indicating that its editors and writers geared fiction to propaganda purposes as well.

It appears that True Story, like the Post, was underrepresented in the Bureau's tabulation. An analysis of the magazine shows that it printed many more stories and nonfiction features in support of recruitment than the Bureau indicated. The fiction, for instance, was entirely overlooked, yet between March 1943 and June 1944, the height of the recruitment campaign, 9 out of 12 lead stories portrayed heroines in war work. Similarly, the greatest number of heroines engaged in wage labor appeared in 1943.

True Story fiction also supported the campaign launched by OWI in the fall of 1943 to recruit women into civilian supply industries. The September 1943 issue contained five stories with patriotic themes about female war workers. One concerned a married teacher who became pregnant and decided nevertheless to work in a copper refinery "where they need women" ("Bachelor Lady" p.19). Another featured a high school graduate who abandoned her college dreams for an aircraft plant while a third was about a married nurse who joined the Army Nurse Corps. In addition, the cover of that issue featured a female taxi driver and displayed the womanpower recruitment symbol. Out of 29 stories which had war-working heroines from 1941 to 1944, nine appeared in the months of the fall campaign.

There were several other stories which reflected the goals of the War Manpower Commission and which conformed to plot suggestions provided by the Magazine Bureau's Confessions Supplement. For example, the October 1942 Supplement suggested featuring a family that opens their home to war workers as a way of coping with the housing shortage in boom towns. In "The Education of John Manley by a Girl," the heroine convinces her parents to rent one of their rooms to a war worker. Not only does the story seek to overcome prejudice against blue-collar migrants, but it tackles the problem of womanpower and absenteeism by glorifying the heroine's factory job and relating her successful attempts to wean the roomer, a skilled factory worker, from alcohol.

The same Supplement encouraged confessions to depict how the misunderstanding and conflict that could arise between couples over the wife's desire to work outside the home might be resolved. At least two plots in the True Story sample were based on this theme-- "In Love With America," which featured a 35-year-old mother of two, and "Make-Believe Marriage," which concerned the efforts of an engaged factory worker to cope with her fiance's disappointment over her intention to work after marriage (October 1944 p.20). In addition, the "devil career" formula changed so that married war workers were able to combine work and family responsibilities satisfactorily.

In another variation of the romance formula, the Supplement asked writers to set romance against a background of war work, with the impact of the war on the woman as the complication instead of on the man. Yet another was to portray women finding a new sense of

purpose in their war jobs.<sup>15</sup> "Each Moment a Memory" combined both of these elements in 1943 as the heroine is torn between her desire to succeed in her war job and to be with her new husband. In addition, her feelings about her aircraft job are typical of the patriotic pride and heightened self-esteem heroines received from their new jobs in other stories:

I was so thrilled to be learning aircraft production that I didn't know anything else existed. The big Commanche Training Center . . . was the most glamorous place in the world to me. I thought nothing could be more deeply satisfying than to shape a piece of shining aluminum--carefully, conscientiously--knowing that a man's life might depend on the skill of my hands. . . . When my class finished the basic training I was so proud I thought I'd burst (March 1943 p.35).

Finally, the Supplement made several suggestions about how to glorify nursing and to recruit both trained and student nurses. Since nursing was one of the few professions to which working-class women could realistically aspire, nursing stories were both a response to reader interest and to the recruitment campaign. "My Beloved Nurse," the cover story for February 1943, featuring an intelligent, resourceful nurse who wins a doctor by helping him set up his practice, is typical of the war period. Likewise, "The Army Takes Over" glorified nursing:

It was that magnificent sense of a good and important and thrilling job of life-saving service rendered to a human being and the human race--a job perfectly done with all the science and skill of my nursing craft--that lifted me out of my plain little self and made my life and my work seem to take on the touch of divinity (September 1943 p.40).

Another major change that came quickly after Pearl Harbor reflects the participation of True Story in OWI campaigns--the disappearance from its stories of illicit sex and violence. Prior to



1942, these characteristic elements distinguished the confessions from family magazines of the middle class. Typically, the heroine loved someone who respected her but who felt sexually attracted to a promiscuous woman. Conversely, the heroine often felt respect for a stable though bland suitor, but passion for a disreputable man. These plots continued in the war years, but consummation of such affairs was omitted as was the violence which often accompanied them. References to suicide, rape, and unwed mothers also disappeared. In 1941 stories, it was not uncommon to find premarital sex and adultery condoned if the heroine genuinely loved the man she was involved with, and routine references were made to artificial insemination, abortion, and murder.

It seems unlikely that the values of the readers changed in so short a time. A new editor took over the magazine in June of 1942, which may partially account for the change. It may also be that the magazine tried to appeal to a more prosperous market to attract advertisers, or that the readership changed from primarily schoolgirls to women who were establishing families.

However, there is evidence that True Story's connection with government information agencies led it to tone down the more sensational aspects of the confessions formula in order to provide its readers with a more serious attitude toward the war effort. Illicit sex and violence were perceived as disruptive to the community and to the development of a spirit of unity. The government also attempted to eliminate prejudices against women performing blue-collar work, and since working in male-dominated working-class occupations was

considered damaging to a woman's reputation, reinforcing that image interfered with recruitment of housewives.

These concerns were expressed in the first Supplement for Confession Magazines which asked writers to portray female war workers discreetly:

May we suggest that care be observed not to create the impression that women engaged in any phase of war work, whether with the military services, in civilian war agencies or in war industry, are more tempted or more susceptible to extra-marital dalliance than others? War service, rather, should be depicted as a regenerative influence, by example. The whole subject of wartime temptation to loose living should be treated circumspectly in fiction dealing with any war activity in which girls, women, or young men are engaged.<sup>16</sup>

The Guide and Supplement emphasized the development of "war-mindedness" in readers through the promotion of stoicism and seriousness. It seems likely that the confessions cooperated by de-emphasizing sex and crime.

Not all war-related images were due to True Story's participation in the recruitment drive. For instance, some stories which advocated the entry of women into war work predate the Magazine Bureau and the formation of the Writer's War Board. While formula writers may have made individual attempts to gear their stories to the needs of war production, some of the positive images of women in war work, as with the Post, resulted from the tendency of popular culture to reflect social change. Similarly, the exit of women from war production jobs during reconversion would undoubtedly have been assimilated into magazine formulas.

Propaganda groups did not disrupt the activities of a magazine like True Story so much as make it easier for editors and writers to absorb labor-force changes into an ideology which supported the

war. They facilitated entry into and exit from labor-short occupations by coordinating media treatments of women in such a way as to exert maximum impact on public attitudes. Working-class women were thus encouraged to combine family and wage-labor roles, to find fulfillment in war work, and to become full-time homemakers when veterans returned.

Footnotes--Chapter IV

<sup>1</sup>Paul Lazarsfeld and Rowena Wyant, "Magazines in 90 Cities--Who Reads What," Public Opinion Quarterly, 6 (1958), 29-40.

<sup>2</sup>Lee Rainwater, Richard Coleman, and Gerald Handel, Workingman's Wife (N.Y.: Oceana Pub., 1959), p. 126; Lazarsfeld and Wyant, Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Johns-Heine and Gerth, "Values in Mass Periodical Fiction," 1949; Rainwater et al. estimated that 80 percent of readers were housewives in 1959, Workingman's Wife, p. 126; in addition, 33 percent of heroines from lead stories from 1941 to 1945 were married and the majority of women in a column concerning home problems were wives and mothers ranging in age from 18 to 35.

<sup>4</sup>Rainwater et al., Workingman's Wife, 1959, p. 127.

<sup>5</sup>Gerbner cites several articles in Writer's Market which support the conclusion that confession stories are written by professional writers, "Social Role," 1958. Theodore Peterson also states that editors of popular magazines relied primarily on professional writers at least from the 1920s, Magazines in the Twentieth Century, 1964.

<sup>6</sup>Gerbner, "Social Role," 1958.

<sup>7</sup>See Chapter III for a discussion of the argument that images of heroines in war work resulted from the propensity of popular culture to reflect social change rather than from propaganda.

<sup>8</sup>See Appendix C for a list of women featured in this series.

<sup>9</sup>Chapter II discusses the way this technique was used in recruitment propaganda by the War Advertising Council; see also Rupp, Mobilizing Women, 1978.

<sup>10</sup>Writers' War Board Annual Report, January 1944, Entry 339, p. 26.

<sup>11</sup>Memo from Dorothy Ducas to Ken Dyke, September 3, 1942, Entry 39; Memo from Elmer Davis, June 23, 1943, Magazine Advisory Committee File, Entry 340.

<sup>12</sup>Letter from Dorothy Ducas to Carroll Rheinstrom, October 21, 1942, and letter from Carroll Rheinstrom to Ken Dyke, November 10, 1942, Correspondence of Chief, Bureau of Campaigns File, Entry 39.

<sup>13</sup>See Appendix B for list of these stories and articles; "Magazine Editorials, Articles, and Fiction Stories on Programs Being Promoted by OWI," Entry 343.

<sup>14</sup>Middle-class magazines published 20 fiction stories promoting the womanpower campaign. Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Supplement for Love Story and Western Love Magazines, September 11, 1942, and Supplement for June/July 1943, Entry 345.

<sup>16</sup>Supplement for Confession Magazines, September 11, 1942, Entry 345.

CHAPTER V

CLASS DIFFERENCES IN THE PORTRAYAL  
OF WOMEN'S WAR WORK

The activities of propaganda groups and the policy of business and government to use women as war labor reserves had a decisive impact on the images of women in the Saturday Evening Post and in True Story. One of the most important results of women's wartime role was that women were portrayed more positively than at any time before the war. They were praised for bravery, loyalty to soldiers, intelligence, steadfastness, and competence.<sup>1</sup> The egocentric manipulative gold-digger of prewar Post fiction virtually disappeared, as did True Story fiction's promiscuous flirt. Negative images persisted, in the form of slackers and women driven by ambition or bitterness to their downfall, but these were counteracted by characters with positive qualities, and they were presented sympathetically for the most part. To a significant degree, negative stereotypes of women gave way to images of strength, dependability, and compassion.

Related to this overall improvement in the image of women was the increase in egalitarian images of women's role in society. The Post had portrayed egalitarian relationships in romances of the thirties in which competent assertive heroines matched wits with suitors, and these images carried over into the war years. But the

equality of women with men was further emphasized in its wartime fiction by the image of women blazing trails as a group rather than as individuals. Not only were women considered equally capable of shouldering work roles vacated by men, but women's work was depicted as equally important to men's work.

The same glorification of women's work occurred in True Story, although egalitarian themes in confession stories were much less pronounced than in the Post. It viewed women as equal contributors to and shapers of the nation. Information on and support of the Equal Rights Amendment appeared, signalling the extent to which the war moved even a conservative magazine like True Story in the direction of feminism.

While the dominant image of working women in both magazines was that of the self-sacrificing patriot who would return to traditional female concerns at the end of the war, women's war work produced strong egalitarian images which competed with these traditional ones. A story appeared in True Story in September 1945, for instance, which was totally out of character for a confession magazine. It concerned a female doctor who is attractive, hard-working, and trusted by nurses. She marries a surgeon and they team up in private practice. When she becomes pregnant, he insists she quit working, but she refuses out of a desire to maintain her identity:

I ached with longing for a perfect harmony we had never had, except in rare moments when I was willing to submerge my real self so completely that I practically became subservient to Dennis. And that wasn't harmony, if you looked at it squarely, but merely bondage ("Dear Patient" p.23).

Ordinarily, this heroine would suffer and repent of her audacious decision to leave her husband, but this story ends with the heroine assuming her husband's practice while he recovers from a serious illness. It is he who has been punished and who asks forgiveness, agreeing to reconcile on her terms which include following a career in medicine.

Similarly, ads appeared in both magazines which were favorable to career women. A Singer Sewing Machine ad in True Story featured a businesswoman with the caption "I'm a success!" in September 1945, while Nescafe featured a Congresswoman in March of 1946. A Listerine ad in the same issue portrayed a 16-year-old contemplating her future: "Whether it's marriage you're after, or a career, or both--always put your best foot forward." Likewise, the Post ran a Mutual Benefit Insurance ad in October 1944 in which a daughter informed her mother that she planned to marry, keep her job, and buy a life insurance policy designed for women.

These anomalous ads and stories were rather atypical of the reconversion period. However, they point out the complexity of sex-role ideology during the forties. Traditional and egalitarian images coexisted during the war, and while images of domesticity in the reconversion period overwhelmed those that fostered expanded roles for women, the impetus given by war work to changing conceptions of women in the postwar world was very great.

Another characteristic of wartime female images with egalitarian potential was that women's work identity was strengthened. Advertisements were far more likely to portray women at work or in



factory clothes than in the pre- or postwar years. In fiction, the feelings of heroines toward their work were more likely to surface than before the war, and their work was often the subject of the story. Women in the stories obtained great satisfaction from their jobs, even physically and emotionally demanding ones. War jobs heightened the self-esteem of heroines in both magazines and made them feel independent.<sup>2</sup> This was in dramatic contrast to prewar fiction when work created problems for married women.

One of the ways propaganda groups affected female images was that positive images of work roles were most likely to occur in stories which concerned heroines in labor-short blue-collar occupations. Stories and advertisements glorified factory work as psychologically rewarding, emotionally exciting, and as leading to success in love. Both magazines combatted class prejudice against factory work by portraying working-class men and women as diligent, patriotic, wholesome people. The Post fostered positive images of blue-collar work by describing the intellectual challenges of problem solving and praising American ingenuity involved in war production.<sup>3</sup> In addition, working-class women were resourceful, respectable, warm-hearted, and resilient. In True Story, positive images revolved around characters' pride in their working-class origins.

Story formulas in both magazines accommodated the need for women in war production, within the limits of those formulas. The Post adapted plot devices to wartime needs by showing women war workers as winners in love and as successful managers. The egalitarian romances from the thirties, in which self-confident competent

heroines verbally fenced with men, continued through the war years and featured women in uniform or entering male domains in the work force. The Post's support of the recruitment effort was limited, however, by the necessity of using adventurous young women in fiction for entertainment purposes. This meant that the target group and the goals of government recruitment drives were frequently ignored.

The confessions formula of "sin-suffer-repent" was adapted to wartime needs with repentant heroines entering war work, becoming "war-minded," and being spared some of the more painful consequences suffered by prewar heroines. The hazards of love were intertwined with the forced separations and role dislocations of war, and love was temporarily made subordinate to patriotic duty. At the same time, True Story's emphasis on self-abnegation and traditional family roles limited the extent to which it could glorify atypical work roles, and fewer heroines appeared in male occupations than in the Post.

Both magazines modified the career-marriage conflict of pre-war fiction. Whereas working married women of the thirties and early forties were selfish and destructive to their families, wartime fiction contained many heroines who successfully coped with both family and work responsibilities. The change was most marked in the Post, which dropped the marriage-career conflict theme almost entirely. The married woman possessed by the devil of ambition persisted in True Story, but with a distinction between working for self and working for country. Heroines who engaged in war work were not plagued with the difficulties of those caught up in personal careers. Both magazines featured more married working women as major characters

during the war, no doubt a reflection of the marriage boom of 1942, the increased participation of married women in the labor force, and the influence of the recruitment campaign.

Finally, the war affected images of women in both magazines by causing them to drop major story formulas. The Post avoided the marriage-career conflict, while the trials of heroines who engaged in illicit sexual activities disappeared from True Story. A good case can be made that these story types disappeared because the editors deemed them inappropriate for wartime conditions. The marriage-career conflict story undermined the government's attempt to recruit homemakers into war production. In addition, it depended on the stereotype of the selfish disloyal woman which was not consistent with the praise for women which dominated wartime images. Similarly, the illicit sexual activity and violent overtones of the confessions seemed incompatible with the wartime emphasis on patriotism and the recruitment of women into factory work.

These were ways in which True Story and the Saturday Evening Post adapted to the employment of women in war production. They both participated extensively in the recruitment campaigns of OWI and bear the mark of activities of the Writers' War Board. Nurse and military recruitment, the campaign to bring housewives into factories and essential civilian services, and the attack on middle-class prejudice against blue-collar work were all part of government-sponsored programs which the magazines supported.

While these important similarities indicate the extent to which common role elements linked women of all classes during the war,

the differences between the two magazines in images, values, and emphases clarify the divergent realities of those from different classes. One of the most striking differences is that few heroines in True Story were in male occupations outside of factory work, while the Post featured women as pilots, policewomen, taxi drivers, engineers, and servicewomen regularly. The number of True Story heroines of lead stories in atypical occupations was so low that it could not be used as a barometer of ideological change, whereas that statistic was a good indicator of role changes in the Post.

Women in True Story were concentrated in female occupations such as office work, teaching, and nursing, with a few doctors and businesswomen. While True Story glorified war work as much as the Post did, the role shifts in its stories and articles were not nearly as extensive. The Post encouraged middle-class women to enter high-paying professional, managerial, and skilled occupations vacated by men, while in True Story, the upward mobility of working-class women was confined to clerical and assembly line jobs in war factories. This divergence also indicates the ideological conservatism of the working class toward sex roles despite the labor-force activity of working-class women.<sup>4</sup>

Related to the less radical departure from female roles of True Story heroines is the absence of stories devoted to women in uniform. Only three stories from this sample concerned women in the military, none of which placed the heroines in combat. The Post, by contrast, ran 16 such stories with several placed in combat zones. This difference is due to the limitations of the confessions formula,

which emphasized erotic rather than physical adventure and female passivity. The woman in uniform as a symbol of wartime was thus featured in advertisements of True Story, but the rest of the magazine gave little encouragement to blue-collar women to join the service.

Another difference in the way war work affected women of different classes is reflected in themes relating to traditional female roles. The juggling of home and work responsibilities, for instance, was not nearly so likely a topic for Post stories as for those of True Story. Married women in the Post who performed war work rarely lived with their husbands nor were they mothers as a rule; therefore they had fewer conflicts of this kind to contend with. The married women workers of True Story, on the other hand, often had husbands who were themselves war workers and were more likely to have a baby to care for. This is perhaps a reflection of the fact that married women of the middle class with husbands present were less likely to seek employment than their working-class counterparts.

Because participation in factory work and other blue-collar or male occupations threatened middle-class definitions of femininity, the Post emphasized the beauty and allure of women in overalls or uniform, while war-working heroines of True Story were ordinary to the point of being nondescript. Though men admired them for their toughness and patriotism, they rarely commented on their sexual attractiveness. Some of this is due to the fact that confessions, written in the first person, do not lend themselves to detailed descriptions of the narrator. In addition, the credibility of the form

demands that the narrator not be extraordinarily intelligent or beautiful. However, a major reason for this discrepancy is that working-class femininity was not tied to physical attractiveness so much as to fertility. Factory work was not perceived as so great a threat to sexuality as it was in the Post, perhaps because blue-collar women were more likely to already have been regular members of the labor force.

Linking femininity to fertility helps account for the greater emphasis on motherhood in True Story throughout the war. The desire to bear children persisted in working-class heroines in spite of the wartime focus on work roles. Furthermore, when young mothers worked, child care centers were never mentioned in their stories. This is in contrast to Post stories which, while they integrated child care centers into comedies and romances, never dealt with heroines' feelings about motherhood until reconversion. Possibly readers of True Story were more likely to have children during the early part of the war, and motherhood was of more crucial importance to them than to Post readers in defining identity.<sup>5</sup>

Aside from True Story's emphasis on motherhood and its prewar concern with illicit sex and violence, the feature which set it apart most clearly from Post fiction was the nature of the ideal heroine. For both magazines, she was usually a 20-year-old woman involved in a romance which ended with engagement or marriage. While both focused on love, the confusion about sexual attraction characteristic of the confessions heroine was not present in Post stories. Characters in True Story were indecisive, torn by contradictory feelings,

whereas women of the Post generally knew who they were and what they wanted. Similarly, working-class heroines were buffeted about by sudden mood changes and by catastrophes. Consequently, they were more fearful of getting hurt, being deserted or punished, and losing love.<sup>6</sup>

The passivity and fear at the base of the working-class heroine's personality stood in stark contrast to the competent assertive heroine who overcame hurdles with self-confidence and wit, so typical of the Post. Post women were distinguished by intelligence, an ability to wield authority in an emergency or prod a self-doubting male into action, and possessed humor which functioned as character armor. The women of True Story experienced crises as punishment for wrongdoing, succumbed to flattery and wild living when in positions of authority, and viewed life with unrelieved seriousness. Though stoicism and strength were valued in both heroines, Post women demonstrated those qualities through decisive action while those in True Story did so through resignation and endurance.

The fundamental differences between these characters and their impact on stories designed for wartime recruitment are best demonstrated by comparing stories with similar plot lines. While the following stories encouraged the participation of women in war work, they did so within the particular formula framework established for each magazine's audience. One pair of stories concerns shipyard secretaries who have lost parents, find romance with a worker in the yard, and defeat sabotage. The working-class secretary in True Story, however, experiences greater deprivation and powerlessness than her

Post sister. She bears the scars of her parents' bitter divorce and has lived most of her life apart from her father. When her mother dies, she returns to her father and resigns herself to work in the shipyard which she hates. She falls in love with an irresponsible riveter who seduces and abandons her, and endures his desertion stoically until he returns.<sup>7</sup>

The Post's middle-class heroine also has experienced financial hardship and had a father who worked at the yard. However, though she is an orphan, she has enjoyed a happy home life, and the manager of the shipyard has taken her under his wing. Unlike her working-class counterpart, she loves the shipyard and is fascinated by the technology of shipbuilding. Her competence and intelligence attract a rootless innovator who helps her battle saboteurs when she is thrust into managing the operation. Whereas the True Story secretary suffered the consequences of seduction, the Post heroine resists temptation when forced to spend the night with her co-worker. He is as much a source of support to her as the True Story riveter is a source of pain. Passive stoicism contrasts with self-confident assertiveness in the two women, as does the fact that one remains in a female work role while the other becomes a supervisor.<sup>8</sup>

There was one example in this sample of confessions stories of a heroine placed in a managerial role, and it illustrates the negative value placed on assertiveness and female assumption of nondomestic authority in working-class popular literature. In the story, a printing shop secretary is promoted to assistant manager when the shop blossoms into a war industry. She is sent to New York on business and



enjoys playing the role of a successful executive. Typically, her enjoyment in wielding authority leads to heartbreak; she falls in love with a sophisticated bachelor and betrays her steady boyfriend-soldier. The bachelor abandons her, and she returns, repentant, to her sweetheart at home.<sup>9</sup> While the story approves the employment of women in executive positions, it does so ambivalently, exemplifying on the one hand the heroine's enjoyment of her work and, on the other, her work leading her to the dangerous illusions of false love.

Whereas positions of authority are likely to bring True Story heroines a great deal of trouble, Post characters use them to resolve crises; never let the pleasures of the position interfere with performance; and manage to simultaneously win at romance. The wise-cracking heroine of "Heart on Her Sleeve" (Clarence Budington Kelland 5/29/43 p.9), for instance, baffles men with her chatter while she manages her father's war plant. The crisis provoked by saboteurs brings out the best in her, and the resistance to her romantic overtures of the man she desires merely strengthens her resolve to win him over. Both stories end well in that the heroines succeed in love, but one is chastened and forgiven by her man, while the other wins him on her own terms.

Finally, the formula and value differences of the magazines can be seen in two stories which encouraged the employment of housewives with older children. Both concern the resistance of husbands and children to the heroine's taking a war job and resolve the conflict in favor of the wife's leaving home. In the True Story plot, however, the working mother feels guilty about the family havoc

created by her aircraft job and suffers from exposure to the cold when she tries to find her runaway son in a snowstorm. While she manages to end her son's truancy and win the approval of her factory-worker husband, she does so with difficulty and without any moral support.<sup>10</sup>

The husband of the Post story is a lawyer who objects to his wife's taking a factory job on the grounds that their two children need a full-time mother. While the heroine encounters marital conflict when she enrolls in a training course, she suffers none of the traumas of the True Story character nor must she handle her husband's objections alone. Her children and her sister support her, until her husband cheerfully accepts her new role.<sup>11</sup>

Both magazines responded to the wartime role of women and supported the recruitment campaign while maintaining vastly different formula structures, character types, and values. The greater assertiveness and self-confidence of the Post heroine and the passivity and self-blame of the heroine in True Story reflected social realities with which the ideology of wartime was intertwined. The confessions heroine suffered more blows from the outside world and the torments of self-doubt, which indicates the working-class woman's greater deprivation and insecurity. The more conservative ideology of True Story, then, was a result of a survival strategy which offered women the security of traditional family roles. The assertiveness of the Post heroine, on the other hand, reflects the social role of middle-class women which entails greater ideological equality with men.<sup>12</sup>

After the war, the image of the competent assertive middle-class heroine largely disappeared as the glorification of domesticity conflicted with her independent adventurous spirit. The egalitarianism of middle-class norms reached a peak in the war years, was adapted to labor needs, and then adjusted to the "togetherness" of the 1950s which continued to glorify homemaking. Both magazines, therefore, came to resemble each other more closely in their postwar portrayal of the ideal woman.

Footnotes--Chapter V

<sup>1</sup>Eleanor Straub mentions that praise of women was a prominent feature of wartime statements about the home front in "United States Government Policy Toward Civilian Women During World War II," Prologue, 5 (Winter 1973), 240-254.

<sup>2</sup>Lillian Rubin documents the psychological benefits working-class women receive from performing even low-status, low-paying jobs in Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family (N.Y.: Basic Books, Inc., 1976), p. 169.

<sup>3</sup>"South Toward Home" by Margaret Weymouth Jackson, Saturday Evening Post, April 19, 1941, p. 12 is a good example of the way factory work was integrated into middle-class ideals.

<sup>4</sup>Sharp role differentiation between wives and husbands of the working class is documented in Rainwater et al., Workingman's Wife, 1959; Rubin, Worlds of Pain, 1976; and Mirra Komarovsky, Blue-Collar Marriage (N.Y.: Random House, 1962).

<sup>5</sup>Support for the conclusion that working-class women bear children earlier than middle-class women and place more importance on their identities as mothers is provided by Rainwater et al., Workingman's Wife, 1959, p. 69; and Rubin, Worlds of Pain, 1976, pp. 60-68. These stories also reflect the failure of 30 to 45 percent of working mothers with young children to place their children in child care centers during the war. U.S. Women's Bureau, "Women Workers in Ten War Production Areas and Their Postwar Employment Plans," Bulletin 209 (Wash., D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1946). Rubin also mentions working-class distaste for institutionalized child care, pp. 86-87.

<sup>6</sup>Gerbner discusses the passivity of confessions heroines in "Social Role," 1958, as does Cornelia Butler Flora, "The Passive Female: Her Comparative Image by Class and Culture in Women's Magazine Fiction," Journal of Marriage and the Family (August 1971), 435-444. This passive model reflects the self-image of working-class women identified in sociological studies: Rainwater et al., Workingman's Wife, 1959, pp. 44, 59-60; Rubin, Worlds, 1976, p. 140. Phylliss Chesler discusses the centrality of passivity to normative behavior for women in Women and Madness (N.Y.: Avon Books, 1972).

<sup>7</sup>"We Shall Build Good Ships," True Story, November 1941, p. 39.

<sup>8</sup>Robert Pinkerton, "Dangerous Ways," Saturday Evening Post, January 2, 1943, p. 9.

- <sup>9</sup>"Nine Days Leave," True Story, August 1943, p. 19.
- <sup>10</sup>"In Love With America," True Story, June 1943, p. 32.
- <sup>11</sup>Isabella Holt, "The Belittling Parent," Saturday Evening Post, September 11, 1943, p. 23.
- <sup>12</sup>Rubin, Worlds of Pain, 1976, pp. 97-99.

## CONCLUSION

This analysis of images of women in popular magazines during World War II illuminates the nature of popular culture, class differences in sex-role ideology, and the failure of women's war work to produce stronger egalitarian values in the postwar period. The use of formula fiction as propaganda illustrates the flexibility of popular literature in its ability to integrate social change into the traditional constructs identified by popular culture theorists. Character types, plot devices, and themes in popular literature can be maintained through vastly different historical situations and adapted to dramatic structural shifts. Many of the same formula devices operated in fiction during the Depression, the war years, and reconversion, yet these stories contained radically different attitudes toward women's role in the labor force. Moreover, the divergent romance formulas of middle-class and working-class magazines were able to accommodate recruitment propaganda while maintaining the features which distinguished them. While not underestimating the changes war work made in both magazines, it is important to recognize the stability romance formulas demonstrated during the war years.

The use of popular magazines as propaganda also highlights the ideological function of popular culture which, during the war, was used to support the temporary employment of women as war labor reserves. Images were fashioned to channel women into and out of

occupations as they were needed, and while magazines certainly would have supported the war effort on their own, propaganda groups helped them do so in a more organized fashion. Popular writers, for example, were able to integrate structural changes in the labor force into romance formulas independently, but OWI provided guidelines for campaign goals which allowed for more coordinated treatment of women in war work. Since the government relied primarily on publicity to recruit women into war production, the cooperation of magazines with propaganda groups was important since it provided ideological support for the policy of using women as a wartime labor reserve.

In addition, the government recruitment campaign made efforts to suit propaganda to women of different classes by establishing communication channels with the pulps and confessions and devising guidelines for integrating recruitment appeals into working-class popular literature. Propaganda groups had a sophisticated understanding of class realities and the potential impact of popular ideology on labor recruitment. By adapting recruitment appeals to women of different classes, magazines encouraged middle-class women to enter managerial roles as well as blue-collar male occupations, while they also encouraged working-class women to enter less skilled work in traditional female fields. Though the crucial role of blue-collar workers in war production resulted in an improved image of the working class in popular literature, class divisions were nevertheless maintained.

Class differences were also important in determining the ways war work and recruitment appeals were integrated with literary formulas. While the need for women workers produced improved images for

women of all groups, middle-class magazines contained stronger egalitarian themes than did the confessions. The opportunity for women to enter new roles was often portrayed in the Post as leading to greater equality between the sexes, as consonant with middle-class notions of female assertiveness. True Story, more conservative in its appraisal of women's war work, emphasized female passivity and family roles. The potential of war work for changing norms concerning sex roles was in some ways greater for middle-class women--which casts doubt on the thesis that egalitarian images result from the nature of women's role in the economy. Despite the greater labor-force activity of working-class women, the ideology of sex roles was more conservative in True Story than in the Saturday Evening Post.

A possible explanation for this paradox is provided by examining the key elements of American ideology regarding sex roles as revealed by the impact of women's wartime role on popular images. One of these is that there is a strong egalitarian dimension in American ideology which views women as strong, reliable, self-sufficient, and capable of performing men's work. Mythic images of women on the frontier, in past struggles against national enemies, and as part of reform movements are deeply rooted in American culture and, though muted at times, are available as historical models of female equality and assertiveness.

Another facet of sex-role ideology revealed by the war is that egalitarianism can coexist with traditional notions of female capacities and be made compatible with them. The normative definition of women as full-time homemakers never disappeared during the war, despite



the emphasis on women's participation in the labor force. It was modified to allow for the entry of married women into war work, and homemaker images were maintained throughout the war as part of the glorification of women's work. In many cases, war work was made compatible with traditional norms by integrating traditional elements with images of women in male roles.

Finally, the failure of women's war work to produce stronger egalitarian elements in postwar norms can be accounted for by two factors. The first is that the alignment of public fantasies with a labor policy that was committed to the needs of war production, rather than to sexual integration of the work force, helped contain the egalitarian repercussions of war work. Similarly, the close ties between propaganda groups and labor policy makers and business made it more likely that the changes of peacetime reconversion would be interpreted to the public in a way that strengthened traditional roles.

Of equal importance to the defeat of egalitarianism was the use of the family as the main symbol of democracy, peace, and the American Way of Life. The emphasis on wives, mothers, and sweethearts as symbols of vulnerability, normality, innocence, nurturance, and the home front reasserted women's domestic role and reinforced their dependence on masculine strength. While the requirements of war production forced reassessment of female capacities, the simultaneous glorification of women as symbols of the home and soldiers as their protectors strengthened traditional sex roles. In addition, equating peace and stability with family life insured that women's

identities as wage laborers would be abandoned after the war in favor of the homemaker ideal.

While the role of women in the economy has an important impact on ideology, this study of the World War II period points to other factors as having equal importance. Certainly the use of women in war production had a dramatic effect on images of women in the media and illustrates the tendency of ideology to reflect and support economic needs. During the Depression, when demand for labor decreased, for instance, popular fiction portrayed married women negatively. Conversely, during the war, when housewives were needed in the labor force, magazine fiction featured married working heroines as positive role models and glorified male occupations for women.

However, the greater egalitarianism of middle-class fiction indicates the important role of elements other than economic factors in determining popular images of women. Despite the greater participation of working-class women in the labor force and the increased employment of women in the postwar period, conservative ideologies accompanied these activities. Women have participated in wage labor at a steadily increasing rate since industrialization, yet egalitarian images have appeared sporadically in popular culture and with little apparent connection to their activity in the labor force. While positive images of nonhomemakers partially result from changes in the labor force, they also depend on factors such as political movements and social attitudes toward the family. One of the most important lessons of the war period is that, while economic policies

toward women workers were largely responsible for the defeat of war-time egalitarianism, the use of the family as a symbol of normality, security, and identity in propaganda was extremely important in post-war glorification of the full-time homemaker.

## APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX A**

### **METHODOLOGY**

## APPENDIX A

### METHODOLOGY

#### The Saturday Evening Post

The sample of stories from the Saturday Evening Post includes 122 lead stories from 1941, 1943, 1945, and January through March of 1946. Since many lead stories were Westerns, male adventure pieces, detective stories, and other types of popular literature not directly useful to an analysis of women in war work, only stories featuring female characters were used. A story was considered to feature women if a major character was female, or if a female played an integral role in plot development. Only lead stories were used in tables to avoid biased sampling.

To flesh out the material on themes used in wartime and reconversion fiction, 133 other stories from the years mentioned above were selected for analysis on an unsystematic basis. While the selection may have been biased by the aims of the study, that possibility was countered somewhat by the nature of illustrations and story titles which gave misleading cues about the concerns and conflict resolutions of the story being introduced.

The lead stories featuring women from 1941 were used as a base for determining prewar images of women, as were 160 Post stories from the 1930s. The thirties stories were unsystematically selected for a lengthy study made in early 1973 before the proposal for this research was formulated. The reconversion period was judged to be August 1945 to March 1946, when women left the labor force in massive

numbers. Stories from this period were used as representative of images of women in the postwar years.

The occupational categories of Table 2 are as follows:

- (1) occupations normally filled by men and labor-short occupations during the war, such as factory work in durable goods industries;
- (2) occupations typically filled by women, including housewives;
- (3) no occupations, including students and volunteer workers; and
- (4) occupations which fall outside the boundaries of the labor market, such as spy and detective, non-sex-linked occupations, such as entertainer and writer, and occupations which were unspecified. This classification is an approximation of labor statistics and does not mean to imply that women were not ever found in occupations classified as "atypical" in the labor force.

### True Story

The sample of fiction from True Story included 66 lead stories from January 1941 to March 1946 and 22 unsystematically chosen non-lead stories. An effort was made to read cover stories or those which seemed to concern war work. As with the Post, illustrations were misleading and, for the most part, failed to indicate whether a story concerned war workers or supported the recruitment campaign. It is extremely difficult to locate confession magazines published prior to 1960. Most libraries do not collect them. The only complete set of True Story magazines, not in private hands, is owned by the Macfadden Group, Inc. The sample of True Story magazines used in this study comes from that set.

### Advertisements

All of the advertisements from both magazines for the years January 1941 to March 1946 which concerned women in war work were examined for characteristic themes and images.

### Archival Material

Reference material for the Office of War Information is located in the National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland. This group of records proved to be a rich source of information about domestic propaganda during World War II. The United States government has recently made it available to researchers.



APPENDIX B

MAGAZINE FICTION CONCERNED WITH THE RECRUITMENT  
OF WOMEN INTO WAR WORK

## APPENDIX B

### MAGAZINE FICTION CONCERNED WITH THE RECRUITMENT OF WOMEN INTO WAR WORK

#### Magazine Fiction Acknowledged by the Magazine Bureau of the Office of War Information as Propaganda for the Recruitment of Women Into the Labor Force and the Armed Services

##### The Saturday Evening Post

- "The Seventh Wave," Agnes Burke Hale, March 4, 1944, p. 14.
- "A Wave for Mac," Sidney Herschel Small, March 11, 1944, p. 24.
- "A Wac at West Point," Frank Bunce, July 1, 1944, p. 22.
- "You Can't Do That," Frank Bunce, December 16, 1944, p. 28.
- "The Lady and the Flat-Top," Stanley Washburn, March 17, 1945, p. 24.

##### Confession Magazines

- "Fair Weather Sweetheart," True Love and Romance, November 1943.
- "So I Married the Farmer," Real Story, July 1943.
- "Taxi Girl," Real Story, September 1943.
- "Dearest, Do You Miss Me?" Personal Romances, May 1945.
- "I, Too, Serve," Personal Romances, July 1943.
- "A Waac and a Soldier," Personal Romances, September 1943.
- "Love Was the Answer," Personal Romances, November 1943.
- "Never to Call You Mine," Personal Romances, August 1943.
- "If It Should Be You," Personal Romances, October 1943.
- "Absent Without Leave," Real Confessions, October 1943.
- "Too Selfish to Care," Real Confessions, October 1943.
- "Absentee Sweetheart," True Experiences, November 1943.
- "The Heart of Pvt. Julie Hall," True Experiences, April 1944.
- "Absentee Girl," Modern Romances, July 1943.
- "I Lied to Save a Soldier," Modern Romances, October 1943.

##### Other Magazines

- "The Lt. Meets the Waac," Cosmopolitan, July 1943.
- "Gravy Guy," Colliers, July 1943.
- "Rivet Bucker," Girl's Companion, September 1943.
- "Scared Stiff," Girl's Companion, June 1943.
- "Turnips or Typewriters," Girl's Companion, August 1943.
- "Kiss Me Good-by," Ladies Home Journal, December 1943.
- "Such Little Faith," Ladies Home Journal, February 1945.
- "The Lt. Changed His Mind," Family Circle, April 13, 1945.
- "I'm Alive Again," Redbook, July 1945.

- "Punch-in Susie," Scholastic, November 1, 1943.  
 "Glitter Girl," Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife, January 1944.  
 "Ma Dunnaway, Recruiter," Farm Journal, September 1944.  
 "Hospital Ship," Hygeia, July 1944.  
 "Mystery in Ward 13," Calling All Girls, September 1944.  
 "Underwater Wave," Calling All Girls, September 1944.  
 "Miss Ellen Grinds Dovetails," Woman's Day, March 1945.  
 "Furlough," Radio Mirror, March 1945.  
 "We'll Never Give Enough," Radio Romances, April 1945.

Fiction from The Saturday Evening Post Which Featured  
Heroines in War Work (Volunteer or Wage Labor)  
and in the Armed Services

1943 (Lead)

- "Dangerous Ways," Robert Pinkerton, January 2, p. 9 (serial).  
 "Lady Bountiful," Robert Carson, March 6, p. 9 (serial).  
 "They'll Love You," Paul Ernst, April 17, p. 12.  
 "Heart on Her Sleeve," Clarence Budington Kelland, May 29, p. 9 (serial).  
 "Yellow Is the Color of the Sun," Phyliss Duganne, June 12, p. 9.  
 "Speak No More, My Lady," Virginia Faulkner, July 3, p. 12.  
 "Have Fun, Kid," Naomi Lane Babson, July 31, p. 12.  
 "A Pain in the Neck," Lucian Cary, September 18, p. 12.  
 "Regards from Mary," Marguerite F. Epsen, November 6, p. 12.  
 "Camp Follower," Robert Carson, November 27, p. 12.  
 "Josie and the Duck Boat," Henry Beetle Hough, December 18, p. 12.  
 "All for the Love of a Lady," Leslie Ford, December 25, p. 7 (serial).

1943 (Nonlead)

- "For Women Only," Margaret Craven, January 16, p. 15.  
 "My Kind of Guy," Alice Lent Covert, March 27, p. 26.  
 "Count on a Sailor," Richard Howells Watkins, February 6, p. 18.  
 "Parties Are Out," Paul Gallico, February 20, p. 14.  
 "Trust Mother," Lucian Cary, May 22, p. 16.  
 "The Belittling Parent," Isabella Holt, September 11, p. 23.  
 "Sailor on Broadway," Gertrude Schweitzer, September 18, p. 16.  
 "The Wall Between," Margaret Craven, September 25, p. 14.  
 "Sea Change," Phyliss Duganne, November 20, p. 14.  
 "Devil Take the Hindmost," William Brandon, April 24, p. 26.  
 "Date With a Soldier," Dorothy Johnson, May 15, p. 28.  
 "When the Boys Come Home," Phyliss Duganne, July 17, p. 26.  
 "Rough Turn," Ray Millholland, August 7, p. 21.  
 "Honors for the 27th," Martha Jane Smith, September 25, p. 18.  
 "Love Me, Love My Cow," Agnes Burke Hale, September 25, p. 23.  
 "The Way It Happened," Thyra Samter Winslow, December 11, p. 26.

1944 (Lead)

- "Get Out and Get Under," Norbert Davis, January 1, p. 11.  
 "The General and the Ladybird," Margaret Craven, January 29, p. 12.  
 "Avoid All Combat," Richard Sale, February 5, p. 18.  
 "Parting Is a Pain in the Neck," Robert Carson, March 25, p. 12.  
 "Three-Day Pass," Frank Bunce, April 8, p. 12.  
 "Don't Talk About Love," Phil Stong, April 29, p. 9 (serial).  
 "Scratch Another Flat-Top," Robert Carson, May 6, p. 12.  
 "Devil on His Trail," Ward Hawkins, May 13, p. 9 (serial).  
 "After April," Frederick Faust, June 10, p. 9.  
 "The Lady Said 'Please,'" William Barrett, October 21, p. 12.  
 "Too Young to Know," Harlan Ware, December 16, p. 9 (serial).  
 "I Thought You'd Like to Hear," Lenore Hershey, December 23, p. 12.

1944 (Nonlead)

- "Ten Days' Leave," L. L. Foreman, February 19, p. 15.  
 "The Seventh Wave," Agnes Burke Hale, March 4, p. 14.  
 "You're in the Family Now," Lenora Mattingly Weber, January 1, p. 23.  
 "The Greatest of These," William Barrett, March 4, p. 24.  
 "Frost on the Orange Blossom," Cliff Farrell, March 18, p. 28.  
 "A Wave for Mac," Sidney Herschel Small, March 11, p. 24.  
 "My Own Money," Gertrude Schweitzer, May 6, p. 18.  
 "I Will Instruct My Sorrows--," Lenora Mattingly Weber, June 24, p. 21.  
 "A Wac at West Point," Frank Bunce, July 1, p. 22.  
 "Not So Very United," Norbert Davis, August 26, p. 21.  
 "You Can't Beat an Honest Man," Frank Bunce, October 7, p. 21.  
 "You Can't Do That," Frank Bunce, December 16, p. 28.  
 "A Faint North Wind," Edwin Peeples, October 28, p. 16.  
 "The Winning of Wentworth Jones Jr.," Richard Thruelsen, November 11, p. 16.  
 "Date in the Country," D. K. Findlay, November 25, p. 16.

1945 (Lead)

- "The Pool," Dana Burnet, January 20, p. 13.  
 "No Orchids, Please," Travis Mason, April 7, p. 13.  
 "Taxi! Taxi!" Clarence Budington Kelland, April 14, p. 9 (serial).  
 "Cold Comfort," Robert Carson, May 26, p. 12.  
 "Reluctant Reunion," Robert Carson, August 25, p. 12.  
 "Finders Keepers," Albert Treynn, October 13, p. 12.

1945 (Nonlead)

- "The Lady and the Flat-Top," Stanley Washburn, March 17, p. 24.  
 "Love's a Sham," Hermine Hall, June 2, p. 24.  
 "The Dark Room," Hannah Lees, August 18, p. 16.

1946

- "Had Wonderful Time," Frank Bunce, January 5, p. 21.

Fiction from True Story Which Featured Heroines in  
War Work and in the Armed Services

1941

- "Army Nurse," September, p. 20.  
 "We Shall Build Good Ships," November, p. 39.  
 "Miss Smith Goes to Washington," December, p. 22.

1942

- "Wives Without Wings," February, p. 43.  
 "Air-Raid Warden (Girl) Meets Air-Raid Warden (Boy)," March, p. 41.  
 "Love Is for the Free," March, p. 43.  
 "Ten-Day Honeymoon," April, p. 19.

1943

- "My Beloved Nurse," February, p. 26 (serial).  
 "Each Moment a Memory," March, p. 35.  
 "The Pink Dress," May, p. 19.  
 "In Love--With America," June, p. 32.  
 "Nine Days Leave," August, p. 19.  
 "Bachelor Lady," September, p. 19.  
 "Education of John Manley by a Girl," September, p. 22 (serial).  
 "Veteran of 20," September, p. 34.  
 "The Answer," September, p. 30.  
 "The Army Takes Over," September, p. 40.  
 "Big Sister," September, p. 32.  
 "Young Girl's Secret," October, p. 19.  
 "Surprise Wedding," November, p. 19.  
 "Moment of Parting," December, p. 19.

1944

- "Secret Behind a Love Story," January, p. 15.  
 "Make Believe: A Game of Love," February, p. 19.  
 "Straight from the Shoulder," March, p. 28.  
 "One Hour," March, p. 34.  
 "Two Boys--And a Girl," June, p. 21.  
 "Not Good Enough. . .," August, p. 32.  
 "You Never Know," August, p. 38.  
 "Make-Believe Marriage," October, p. 20.

APPENDIX C

WOMEN FEATURED IN TRUE STORY'S "WOMEN WHO  
SERVED AMERICA" SERIES

## APPENDIX C

### WOMEN FEATURED IN TRUE STORY'S "WOMEN WHO SERVED AMERICA" SERIES

Pocahantas  
Mary Ann Bickerdyke  
Lydia Darragh  
Narcissa Whitman  
Clara Barton  
Jane Addams  
Anne Hutchison  
Susan B. Anthony  
Dorothea Dix  
Sacahawea  
Frances E. Willard  
Mother Seton  
Martha Washington  
Elizabeth Blackwell  
Louisa May Alcott  
Molly Pitcher  
Betsy Ross  
Abigail Adams  
Mary Lindley Murray  
Dolly Madison  
Jemima Johnson  
Mary Lyon

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