



Women at the Springfield Armory

Primary Source Activity



The best way to learn about someone or something from the past is to examine primary sources. A *primary source* is an immediate, first-hand account of a topic, from people who had a direct connection with it. To learn more about the role that women played in the history of the Springfield Armory, you will examine newspaper articles and photographs from 1941 and 1942.

THE SPRINGFIELD SUNDAY UNION AND REPUBLICAN, SPRINGFIELD, MASS.: AUGUST 24, 1941

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING MAY BE GIVEN WOMEN

Shortage of Skilled Male Workers May Cause Arm- ory to Employ Women

Brig-Gen Gilbert H. Stewart, Springfield Armory commandant, said yesterday the shortage of skilled male labor may mean that women will be trained then employed for certain industrial jobs at the Armory.

Manager George F. Harding of the Springfield office of the state employment service predicted several months ago that the Armory would be one of several firms in this area which would eventually be forced to place women in industrial jobs to meet the labor shortage.

Gen Stewart said yesterday that funds have been asked to train women in some of the simpler industrial tasks.

During the World war women went to work in the Armory plant in order to release men for more skilled jobs in ordnance work, the general said.

In preparation for the employment of women at the Armory, questionnaires have been sent out to 18 industrial firms in this area from which tentative wage schedules will be prepared. Thus women employed at the Armory will be paid wages equal to those paid by private industrial firms.

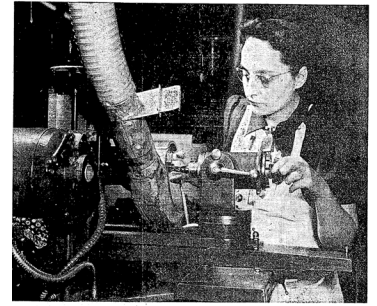
Do Now

A. What was going on in the world in 1941 that may have led to a "Shortage of Skilled Male Workers...?"

B. Does the author of the article and/or the people mentioned in the article seem to view hiring women in a positive or negative way? How can you tell?

Women at the Springfield Armory Photograph Analysis

Before reading the article from 1942, observe the 6 images in the article. Use the images to complete the following analysis. Use complete sentences to answer unless it states otherwise.



Part One:

1. Scan the photos. What do you notice first?
2. Do the photos have captions? (highlight or circle answer) YES NO

Part Two:

3. Describe the people and objects in the photographs. Make a list of at least 5 things you see. (Example: head scarf)
4. How are the people and objects arranged?
5. Write one sentence explaining what you think is happening in the photographs.

Part Three: (Answer the best you can. The captions, if available, may help.)

6. Where were the photos taken?
7. Why were the photographs taken? How do you know?
8. How do these photographs compare to modern times?

Women at the Springfield Armory Article Analysis

Use the following questions to examine and analyze the newspaper article from 1942.
Answer using complete sentences unless it states otherwise.



Part I:

1. What details indicate when and where this was published?
2. Look at the title of the article. What does the article tell you about the contents of the article?

Part II:

3. According to the article, when did women start working at the Armory? Why were they being hired?
4. What jobs were women performing at the Armory? How did the women interviewed feel about doing those jobs? How can you tell?
5. *"A young man keeps an eye on his production record when he realized there is a girl ready to step into his shoes and perhaps do a little better on the job. It has happened."* What does this line tell you about how women were performing in their jobs at the Armory?

Part III:

6. What can you tell about the point of view of the person who wrote the article? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
7. What does this article tell you about attitudes towards women in society during this time? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

Exit Ticket/Summarizer:

1. Using at least three sentences, answer the following using examples from the text to support your response.

Do you think that the inclusion of women in the workforce had a positive or negative impact on the Springfield Armory?

