

Resource Sheet#16

Document O-*Women's Perspectives on the Social Impact of Wartime Work*

Approximately one-third of all defense workers were married women and of those women half wished to continue working after the war (Gluck, 1987).

Charlcia Neuman, an aircraft worker during the war stated that she was “ready to go home... tired... and [she] didn’t feel any let-down (Gluck, 1987).” Neuman was like many married women who decided to contribute to the war effort for both patriotic and reasons of economic necessity. But, by the war’s end, Mrs. Neuman was anxious to go back to her life as a housewife.

Source: Gluck, S. (1987). *Rosie the riveter revisited: Women, the war, and social change*. Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers.

Background Information: Author Sherna B. Gluck sought to prove in her book that many women were enlightened by the opportunity to work in wartime industries and prove their worth next to men. Gluck’s interview with Charlcia Neuman changed that as Neuman vehemently argued that she desired nothing more than to return home to housework after the war and was tired of arduous work in the factory.

For me defense work was the beginning of my emancipation as a woman. For the first time in my life I found out that I could do something with my hands besides bake a pie... I had the conscious-raising experience of being the only woman in this machine shop...which stimulated my competitiveness and freed me to prove myself.

Source: Jeffries, J. W. (1996). *Wartime America: The World War II home front*. Chicago: The American Ways Series.

Background Information: Adele Evenberg recalled her experience as an aircraft worker during World War II.

Guiding Questions:

1. How many married defense workers wished to keep working after the war?
2. Why did Charlcia Neuman work in factories during World War II?
3. Explain Mrs. Neuman's reaction to losing her wartime job.
4. How did working in wartime industries impact Adele Evenberg's self-esteem?
5. Was it justified to lay-off women in order to provide jobs to returning soldiers after the war?