

College of DuPage Theatre Department

Presents

Badger



By Don Zolidis

Directed by Amelia Barrett

The College Theatre Department sincerely thanks the Library for research support for classes studying the script and production, as well as for the cast, director and production team, working on the project.

Time and Place:

1944-45, Baraboo Wisconsin, The Badger Ordnance Works and environs

Characters:

Eleanor Murray, 20, a dreamer

Irene Jacobs, 21, a strong forceful woman

Rose, 18, a newlywed, nervous

Grace, 19, a free spirit, unattached, a bit of a hell raiser

Barbara, 23, a young mother determined to earn her own money

Chorus, comprised of men and women

Burt, an older worker

Timothy, 18, walks with a serious limp, from polio at a young age

Chester, 40s, a supervisor

Matthew, 19, married to Rose, on leave from basic training

John, mid 20s, Barbara's husband

Joe, a man in a training video

Gladys, a woman ordnance worker

Mary, a woman ordnance worker

Ben, 30s, a worker in the plant

Mr. Prentiss, Barbara's father-in-law

Mrs. Prentiss, Barbara's mother-in-law

Julie, John and Barbara's daughter

Newsreel voice

Adult Themes and language. Haze, Fog, and limited amounts of flashing light

***Badger* Director's Note**

spring 2022

The character of *Rosie the Riveter* is a mid-twentieth century heroine. As America's war machine initiated a campaign to recruit women into the labor force in order to replace the millions of men who had gone off to war, a wide variety of songwriters, illustrators and photographers effectively invented the archetype as a symbol of both the war effort and a historic change in the American workplace. In actuality, many historians cite the icon of *Rosie* as an inspiration for female liberation. The historic migration of women into the workforce challenges us to recognize the contemporary issues and social pressures we still confront today. More than a story about friendship and a society under extreme pressure during this historic period, let us examine what each of us value and how we seek to attain our own identity in the face of challenge. ~AB

Don Zolidis, the Playwright

citation: <https://www.playscripts.com/playwrights/bios/426>

Don Zolidis holds a B.A. in English from Carleton College and an M.F.A. in playwriting from the Actors Studio Program at the New School University. A former high school and middle school theater teacher, for the past decade, he has been one of the most-produced playwrights in American schools. His more than 125 published plays have been performed over 30,000 times, appearing in every state, every Canadian province, and 67 different countries. His first novel, *The Seven Torments of Amy and Craig (A Love Story)* was published in 2018 by Disney-Hyperion. His second book, *War and Speech*, was published in 2020 by Little Brown. He lives in Texas and splits his time with his partner in upstate New York.



Areas within the Badger Factory:

Citation: Zolidas, Don. *Badger*. Playscripts, Inc. 2019.

Much of the play takes place on the factory floor of the Badger Ordnance Works. In reality this area was dedicated to massive pressing machines, vats, and conveyors that created the smokeless powder in World War II.

Press House: Nitrocellulose is shaped into 50lb. blocks in a large pressing device. The workers shape and funnel the raw material - then remove the round blocks when completed. Constant cleaning of the area.

Mix House: The round blocks are loaded into another massive machine, where they are broken up with additional chemicals. The area is constantly cleaned - once the material is processed, it must be removed.

Cutting House: Strands of material rethreaded through a large comb like device into a cutting machine, creating something like spaghetti. Large sections of cut material are then loaded into vats.

Constructing and Deconstructing the Home Front: The Badger Army Ammunition Plant and Rural Wisconsin, 1941-1998.

Citation: Baum, Emily. "Constructing and Deconstructing the Home Front: The Badger Army Ammunition Plant and Rural Wisconsin, 1941-1998." University of Wisconsin-Eu Claire. 2017.

The first workers to flood into the Sauk Prairie came to build the Plant and their purchases at local businesses helped to bring the Sauk Prairie out of the Great Depression. So many of them came into the area that available housing was exhausted; some ended up living in attics and a few even lived in a chicken coop. Some farmers who had not been displaced but had lost friends in the process even opened their homes to the influx of people. To help ease the housing shortage, Badger Village was constructed right across the road for workers to live in.

From the outside, Badger Village looked like army barracks, but on the inside, they were thin-walled to the point that neighbors nearly lived with one another, though they had all new furniture, and wood burning ranges and water heaters. Badger Village was truly its own village as it had a post office, school, child care facility, grocery store and drug store for the people there and who worked right across the street, helping to create an atmosphere of a community around the Plant.

To help ease the burden on working parents, including those who worked separate shifts, the child care facilities and a school were opened for children to attend while parents worked.

When the Plant opened, labor was primarily being drawn from a 90-mile radius around the Plant. Due to rationing of gasoline and rubber, those traveling from further away had two options: they could carpool with neighbors who were working the same shift at the Plant or they could take one of the shuttle buses that was provided to transport workers. Eventually, shift change at the Plant was so massive, the first rural four lane highway in Wisconsin was constructed just to handle it.

There were three shifts at Badger: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., 4 p.m. to midnight and midnight to 8a.m. For some, the day was even longer than that because traveling to get to the Plant meant an additional 3-4 hours a day of traveling on World War II era roads at 55 mph on top of working an eight-hour shift. For many people, once they got accustomed to a shift, they were moved to a different shift, meaning they had to start the process of rearranging their entire schedule and transportation plans all over again.

Arriving for work meant presenting an ID badge at the gate, occasionally being pulled aside for a random search to ensure contraband (such as matches, lighters, alcohol, and cameras), was not being smuggled in, and then going into a changing room to store personal items and change into specially treated clothing that was meant to reduce static build-up to avoid sparks and, depending upon where one was working, it was either treated to be flame or acid retardant. The clothing was NOT resistant to these materials; they were meant to provide just enough protection for a person to evacuate or change clothes and get to a safety shower. After changing, people were loaded onto yet another shuttle and driven to where they were assigned to work face to face with materials that could explode at any time. An ID badge was meant to be worn at all times, and a temporary replacement would be given if the ID badge was left at home. It was embarrassing to wear a replacement badge because it meant everyone knew who had forgotten their badge that day, and left people to wonder if the badge had landed in the wrong hands and whether or not their Plant was in danger of being sabotaged.

As men were beginning to be drafted into the army, women were recruited to work at the Plant. Officials of the B.A.A.P. told a large group of women that were interested in learning more about the Plant that “a powder plant is the fourteenth safest industry in which to work— being much safer than housekeeping.” Officials went on to assure women that there were plenty of jobs for women to do even though “ordinarily, powder making is a man’s job” and that “it was a policy of [the owners] to hire local people whenever possible.” Slowly, women started to trickle into the Plant, first in “traditional female jobs” such as “clerks, receptionists, typists, nurses, cafeteria workers and cleaning staff.” By 1943, women were working in jobs on the factory floor. Women would often work in pairs in the more physically demanding jobs, and were paid less than their male counterparts. As this was the first factory job for many women, the leaders of the Plant hired female counselors to help the women workers through their transition from their previous occupations to the factory life.

Every woman who worked at the Plant was targeted by propaganda that was created during World War II, Rosie the Riveter being the most famous example. They were told that the “battlefields of America” were the production lines, and women were the “Hidden Army” of America; “an untapped resource” that will keep “Hitler and his hordes [from coming].” The reasons for women working at the Plant varied as they were from every walk of life; some simply wanted to do their patriotic duty, while others wanted to gain new experiences. Other women found a sense of purpose in working at the Plant, while others were working to keep a loved one overseas, whether they were a P.O.W., M.I.A., or on the front lines, safe.

People of color were not segregated from white people in the bathrooms or changing rooms, and it was too dangerous to segregate the people of color from the white people on the factory floor because the people of color were more likely to be inexperienced and needed to be

trained by those who were more experienced, typically white people. While attempts were also made to keep the people of color away from the white women, that too failed. “Jamaicans, Barbadians and Wisconsinites—male and female—worked side by side as the job required... integrated by necessity of war.”

After the Second World War ended, everyone was given a 48-hour holiday, the first “day off” since production had begun. The Plant kept producing material with fewer and fewer workers; when layoffs occurred, women often were the first let go. Every women worker had different experiences at the end of the war: some were ready and willing to leave their job because it meant everything was going to go back to normal and their loved ones returning from overseas. Other women loved the new jobs and independence that they had found and did not want to leave. Women who lost their jobs during this time period “felt like it was a big joke” because they had “thought that [they] were the new women,” due to the fact that “women are equally effective, and for some skills, superior, to males.” When the Plant was deactivated and placed on standby in August of 1945, only a few personnel remained to help maintain and guard the Plant. Those who lost jobs were left to find some place new to work, a cycle that would repeat itself in the future. Badger Village, on the other hand, found new life as housing for GI’s and their families while they attended UW-Madison on the GI Bill before moving on and beginning the next chapter of their lives.

Underpaid but Employed: How the Great Depression Affected Working Women

Citation: Rotondi, Jessica Pearce. *History.com*. A & E Television Networks. “Underpaid but Employed: How the Great Depression Affected Working Women.” March 11 2019. <https://www.history.com/news/working-women-great-depression>. 6 March, 2022.

During the Great Depression, millions of Americans lost their jobs in the wake of the 1929 Stock Market Crash. But for one group of people, employment rates actually went up: women. From 1930 to 1940, the number of employed women in the United States rose 24 percent from 10.5 million to 13 million. The main reason for women’s higher employment rates was the fact that the jobs available to women—so called “women’s work”— were in industries that were less impacted by the stock market.

“Some of the hardest-hit industries like coal mining and manufacturing were where men predominated,” says Susan Ware, historian and author of *Holding Their Own: American Women in the 1930s*. “Women were more insulated from job loss because they were employed in more stable industries like domestic service, teaching and clerical work.”

‘Women’s Work’ During the Great Depression

By the 1930s, women had been slowly entering the workforce in greater numbers for decades. But the Great Depression drove women to find work with a renewed sense of urgency as thousands of men who were once family breadwinners lost their jobs. A 22 percent decline in marriage rates between 1929 and 1939 also meant more single women had to support themselves.

While jobs available to women paid less, they were less volatile. By 1940, 90 percent of all women's jobs could be catalogued into 10 categories like nursing, teaching and civil service for white women, while black and Hispanic women were largely constrained to domestic work, according to David Kennedy's 1999 book, *Freedom From Fear*.

The rapid expansion of the government under the New Deal increased demand for secretarial roles that women rushed to fill and created other employment opportunities, albeit limited ones, for women.

Eleanor Roosevelt and Frances Perkins

Women during the Great Depression had a strong advocate in First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. She lobbied her husband, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, for more women in office—like Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, the first woman to ever hold a cabinet position and the driving force behind the Social Security Act.

Ironically, while Perkins held a prominent job, herself, she advocated against married women competing for jobs, calling the behavior “selfish,” since they could supposedly be supported by their husbands. In 1932, the new Federal Economy Act backed up Perkins' sentiment when it ruled that spouses of couples who both worked for the federal government would be the first to be terminated.

Discrimination Against Women

For those women who managed to stay employed, meanwhile, the fight for decent compensation got tougher. Over 25 percent of the National Recovery Administration's wage codes set lower wages for women, according to T.H. Watkin's *The Great Depression: America in the 1930s*. And jobs created under the Works Progress Administration confined women to fields like sewing and nursing that paid less than roles reserved for men.

While women were permitted to join certain unions, they were given limited impact on policy, Kennedy writes. Ultimately, smaller wages and fewer benefits were the norm for women in the workforce—and this was especially true for women of color.

Rosie The Riveter

By 1940, only 15 percent of married women were employed vs. nearly 50 percent of single women. But the stigma around married women taking jobs from men was set aside as America hurtled toward World War II. As men were deployed overseas, women were called to take their

places in manufacturing roles on the home front. Icons like Rosie the Riveter celebrated women's newly expanded contributions in the workforce—at least until the war's end.

American Women and WWII

Citation: History.com Editors. "American Women in World War II." *History.com*. A & E Television Networks. February 25, 2021. <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/american-women-in-world-war-ii-1>. 6 March, 2022.

Some 350,000 women served in the U.S. Armed Forces in World War II, both at home and abroad. They included the Women's Air-force Service Pilots, who on March 10, 2010, were awarded the prestigious Congressional Gold Medal. Meanwhile, widespread male enlistment left gaping holes in the industrial labor force and defense industry. Women were critical to the war effort: Between 1940 and 1945, the age of "Rosie the Riveter," the female percentage of the U.S. workforce increased from 27 percent to nearly 37 percent, and by 1945, nearly one out of every four married women worked outside the home. World War II opened the door for women to work in more types of jobs than ever before, but with the return of male soldiers at war's end, women, especially married women, were once again pressured to return to a life at home, a prospect that, for thousands of American women, had shifted thanks to their wartime service.

Though women had been joining the work force in greater numbers since the hardships of The Great Depression, the entry of the United States into World War II completely transformed the types of jobs open to women. Before the war, most working women were in traditionally female fields like nursing and teaching. Post-Pearl Harbor, women worked in a variety of positions previously closed to them, though the aviation industry saw the greatest increase in female workers. More than 310,000 women worked in the U.S. aircraft industry in 1943, representing 65 percent of the industry's total workforce (compared to just 1 percent in the pre-war years). The munitions industry also heavily recruited women workers, as represented by the U.S. government's "Rosie the Riveter" propaganda campaign. Based in small part on a real-life munitions worker, but primarily a fictitious character, the strong, bandanna-clad Rosie became one of the most successful recruitment tools in American history, and the most iconic image of working women during World War II.

In movies, newspapers, posters, photographs, articles and even a Norman Rockwell-painted *Saturday Evening Post* cover, the Rosie the Riveter campaign stressed the patriotic need for women to enter the work force—and they did, in huge numbers. Though women were crucial to the war effort, their pay continued to lag far behind their male counterparts: Female workers rarely earned more than 50 percent of male wages.



Working Conditions For

Title: Operating a hand drill at Vultee-Nashville, woman is working on a "Vengeance" dive bomber, Tennessee Palmer, Alfred T., photographer.
<https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/>

Women in World War II

With many fathers off fighting, mothers were faced with the burden of balancing childcare and work, and absenteeism became the symptom that caused factory owners—and the United States government—to finally acknowledge the issue. The Lanham Act of 1940 gave war-related government grants for childcare services in communities where defense production was a major industry. In 1942, Eleanor Roosevelt stepped in, encouraging her husband, Franklin D. Roosevelt, to pass the Community Facilities Act, which led to the creation of the first U.S. government-sponsored childcare center. Roosevelt also urged for reforms like staggered working hours at factories to allow working mothers to go to grocery stores—stores that were often either closed or out of stock by the time women clocked out of work.



TITLE: Frances Eggleston, aged 23, came from Oklahoma, used to do office work.

SUMMARY: Woman working, framed by oval section of airplane; a man wearing an apron facing her on opposite side of the metal piece they are working on.

Hollem, Howard R., photographer

https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/126_rosi.html

Not all women were treated equally in the workplace. African American women found that white women were not always welcoming at work—if they were even granted the same job opportunities in the first place—and were paid less than their white peers. Japanese American women fared even worse, as they were sent off to Japanese Internment Camps under Executive Order 9066.

Though women, as a whole, had access to more jobs than ever before, they were paid far less than men (roughly half, in most cases), and most found themselves pressured to relinquish jobs to the male soldiers returning home at war's end. But something had permanently shifted: World War II empowered women to seek new opportunities and fight for equal pay in the decades to come.

American Women in World War II: TV-PG 3:01

Watch this short video for more information.

It was all hands on deck as Americans pitched into a second World War effort after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

<https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/american-women-in-world-war-ii-video>

Working women endured harassment, miserable working conditions and low pay.

Citation: McDermott, Anette. "How World War II Empowered Women." October 10, 2018. <https://www.history.com/news/how-world-war-ii-empowered-women>. *History.com*. A & E Television Networks. 6 March, 2022.

Working women on the home front faced unique challenges, too. Those with children struggled with child care and caring for a household on their own. Many had to learn to manage their finances for the first time and cope with a tight budget further strained by war rationing and the call to buy war bonds.

At first, women weren't always welcomed into the workplace. They received less pay and some men looked down on them and felt they weren't up to handling a "man's job." They often faced sexual harassment, long hours and dangerous working conditions.

But as women performed their jobs admirably and the demand for workers increased, men's attitudes toward them gradually became more positive.

Women's roles continued to expand in the postwar era.

The call for working women was meant to be temporary and women were expected to leave their jobs after the war ended. Some women were okay with this - but they left their posts with new skills and more confidence. Women who remained in the workplace were usually demoted. But after their selfless efforts during World War II, men could no longer claim superiority over women. Women had enjoyed and even thrived on a taste of financial and personal freedom - and many wanted more.

Though progress was slow over the next two decades, serving their country in the military and at home empowered women to fight for the right to work in nontraditional jobs for equal pay and for equal rights in the workplace and beyond.

Uncovering the Secret Identity of Rosie the Riveter

Naomi Parker Fraley, the inspiration behind Rosie the Riveter, died in January 2018.

Citation: Pruitt, Sarah. "Uncovering the Secret Identity of Rosie the Riveter." *History.com*. A & E Television Networks. February 25, 2021. https://www.history.com/news/rosie-the-riveter-inspiration?li_source=LI&li_medium=m2m-rcw-history. 6 March, 2022.

In 1942, 20-year-old Naomi Parker was working in a machine shop at the Naval Air Station in Alameda, California, when a photographer snapped a shot of her on the job. In the photo, released through the Acme photo agency, she's bent over an industrial machine, wearing a jumpsuit and sensible heels, with her hair tied back in a polka-dot bandana for safety.

On January 20, 2018, less than two years after finally getting recognition as the woman in the photograph—thought to be the inspiration for the World War II-era poster girl “Rosie the Riveter”—Naomi Parker Fraley died at the age of 96.

Fraley's late-in-life fame came as the result of the dedicated efforts made by one scholar, James J. Kimble, to explore the history behind this American and feminist icon and to untangle the legends surrounding the famous poster. “There are so many incredible myths about it, very few of them based even remotely in fact,” Kimble says.

The poster in question was originally produced in 1943 by the Westinghouse Electric Corporation and displayed in its factories to encourage more women to join the wartime labor force. Created by the artist J. Howard Miller, it featured a woman in a red-and-white polka-dot headscarf and blue shirt, flexing her bicep beneath the phrase “We Can Do It!”

Although it's ubiquitous now, the poster was only displayed by Westinghouse for a period of two weeks in February 1943, and then replaced by another one in a series of at least 40 other promotional images, few of which included women. “The idea that we have now that she was famous and everywhere during the war—not even close to true,” says Kimble.

Kimble, an associate professor of communication at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, began studying the “We Can Do It” poster due to his interest in the propaganda that was used on the home front during World War II.

During the war, Miller's poster was far less well known than the image of a female worker created by a much more famous artist: Norman Rockwell. Published on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* on May 29, 1943, Rockwell's painting depicts a woman in a blue work jumpsuit with a rivet gun in her lap, a sandwich in her hand and a copy of “Mein Kampf” under her foot. The woman's lunch box reads “Rosie,” which linked her with a popular song released that same year called “Rosie the Riveter,” by Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb.

But in the 1980s, Miller's “We Can Do It!” poster resurfaced with a bang, and was widely reprinted on T-shirts, mugs, pins and many other products. Kimble believes this resurgence was due to a combination of factors, including Reagan-era budget cuts, which led the National Archives to license the image to sell souvenirs and raise money; the 40th anniversary of World War II; and the continuing push for women's rights. Adopted as a feminist symbol of strength

and an icon of American wartime resilience, the woman in the poster was retroactively identified as Rosie the Riveter, too, and quickly became the most widely recognizable “Rosie.”

For years, people believed that a Michigan woman named Geraldine Hoff Doyle was the model for the poster. Doyle, who had worked briefly as a metal presser in a factory in 1942, saw a photograph of a bandanna-clad woman working at an industrial lathe reprinted in a magazine in the 1980s, and identified the woman as her younger self; she later linked this photo to Miller’s famous poster. By the 1990s, media reports were identifying Doyle as the “real-life Rosie the Riveter,” a claim that was widely repeated for years, including in Doyle’s obituary in 2010. But Kimble wasn’t so sure. “How do we know that?” he says of his initial reaction to reading that Doyle was the woman in the image that (supposedly) inspired Miller’s poster. “Everything else we think we know about that poster is dubious. How do we know about her?”

Though he already knew the artist had no descendants, and had left limited papers behind, with no clue of who his model might have been, Kimble began looking into the 1942 photograph. And after five years of searching, he found “the smoking gun,” as he calls it—a copy of the photograph with the original caption glued on the back. Dated March 1942 at the Naval Air Station in Alameda, it identified “Pretty Naomi Parker” as the woman at the lathe. Here is the original caption, which speaks volumes about how women working in factories during the war were seen:

“Pretty Naomi Parker is as easy to look at as overtime pay on the week’s check. And she’s a good example of an old contention that glamor is what goes into the clothes, and not the clothes. Pre-war fashion frills are only a discord in war-time clothing for women. Naomi wears heavy shoes, black suit, and a turban to keep her hair out of harm’s way (we mean the machine, you dope).”

Meanwhile, in California, Naomi Parker Fraley had already stumbled on the truth herself. In 2011, at a reunion of female war workers, she saw the Acme photo of the woman at the lathe on display and recognized herself. Then she saw the caption, with Geraldine Hoff Doyle’s name and information. Fraley wrote to the National Park Service to correct the error, but got nowhere, even though she had kept a clipping of the photo from a 1942 paper with her name in the caption.

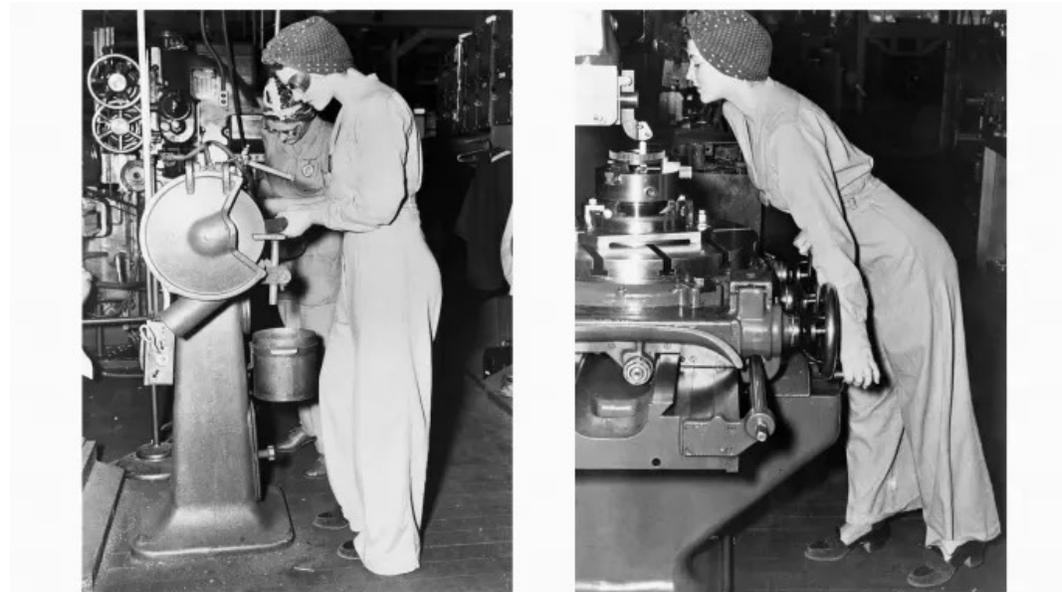
“Doyle’s tale was so believable by that point, and so widely accepted that even the original clipping couldn’t convince people otherwise,” Kimble says. “So when I called [Fraley], she was just delighted that someone was willing to listen to her side of the story.”

In 2016, Kimble published an article revealing his findings in the journal *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, called “Rosie’s Secret Identity.” At the time, the *New York Times* reported, Fraley gave an

interview to the *Omaha World-Herald* in which she gave a simple yet memorable description of how it felt to finally be known to the world as the real-life Rosie: “Victory! Victory! Victory!” People magazine also sent a crew to her rural California home, complete with makeup artist and lighting technician, and did a photo shoot of the then 95-year-old dressed like her presumed alter ego in Miller’s poster.

Doubt still remains, however, as to whether the photo of Naomi Parker—which was published in Miller’s hometown newspaper, *The Pittsburgh Press*, in July 1942—was in fact the inspiration for Miller’s image. Without confirmation from the artist, who died in 1985, there is only the physical resemblance between the woman in the photo and the woman in the poster—and, of course, the polka-dot bandana—to go by.

All that was beside the point for Naomi Parker Fraley, Kimble believes. “I think the most important thing to her was her identity. When there’s a photo of you going around that people recognize, and yet somebody else’s name is below it, and you’re powerless to change that—that’s really going to affect you.”



*Naomi Parker, more famously known as Rosie the Riveter, working in heels at the Alameda Naval Air station during WWII.
Bettmann Archive/Getty Images*

When he interviewed her, he says, “there was an anguish that she felt. A powerlessness. The idea that this journal article, and the media picking it up and spreading the story, helped her regain her claim on that photo and her personal identity was really the big victory for her.”

Rosie the Riveter: Real Women Workers in World War II: TV-PG 14:01

Watch this short video for more information. Sheridan Harvey explores the evolution of "Rosie the Riveter" and discusses the lives of real women workers in World War II.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/webcast-3350>

What Things Cost in 1945:

Source: <http://www.tvhistory.tv/1945%20QF.htm>

Car: \$1,250

Gasoline: 21 cents/gal

House: \$10,000

Bread: 9 cents/loaf

Milk: 62 cents/gal

Postage Stamp: 3 cents

Average Annual Salary: \$2,900

Minimum Wage: 40 cents per hour equivalent to \$6.27 in 2022

The Equal Pay Act

Citation: History.com Editors. "Equal Pay Act." *History.com*. A & E Television Networks. April 2, 2019. <https://www.history.com/topics/womens-rights/equal-pay-act>. 6 March, 2022.

The Equal Pay Act is a labor law that prohibits gender-based wage discrimination in the United States. Signed by President Kennedy in 1963 as an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act, the law mandates equal pay for equal work by forbidding employers from paying men and women different wages or benefits for doing jobs that require the same skills and responsibilities. The bill was among the first laws in American history aimed at reducing gender discrimination in the workplace.

Wage Gap

The Equal Pay Act was an effort to correct a centuries-old problem of gender-based wage discrimination.

Women made up a quarter of the American workforce by the early 20th century, but they were traditionally paid far less than men, even in cases where they performed the same job. In some states, female workers were also forced to contend with laws that restricted their working hours or prohibited them from working at night.

Efforts to correct the wage gap escalated during World War II, when scores of American women entered factory jobs in place of men who had enlisted in the military. In 1942, for example, the National War Labor Board endorsed policies to provide equal pay in instances where women were directly replacing male workers.

Three years later in 1945, the U.S. Congress introduced the Women's Equal Pay Act, which would have made it illegal to pay women less than men for work of "comparable quality and quantity." The measure failed to pass, however, and despite campaigns by women's groups, little progress was made on pay equity during the 1950s.

By 1960, women still earned less than two-thirds of what their male counterparts were paid.

The Equal Pay Act Of 1963

Calls for a federal equal pay law coalesced in the early 1960s during the administration of President John F. Kennedy.

Esther Peterson, head of the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor, was a vocal supporter of the proposed legislation, as was former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who chaired Kennedy's Presidential Commission on the Status of Women. Representatives Katharine St. George and Edith Green helped lead the charge for a bill in Congress.

Despite the opposition of powerful business groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Retail Merchants Association, Congress passed the Equal Pay Act in 1963 as an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

Civil Rights Act Of 1964

In its final form, the Equal Pay Act mandates that employers cannot award unequal wages or benefits to men and women working jobs that require "equal skill, effort, and responsibility, and which are performed under similar working conditions."

The law also includes guidelines for when unequal pay is permitted, specifically on the basis of merit, seniority, workers' quality or quantity of production and other factors not determined by gender.

The Equal Pay Act was among the first federal laws in American history to address gender discrimination. In signing it into law on June 10, 1963, Kennedy praised it as a "significant step

forward,” but acknowledged that “much remains to be done to achieve full equality of economic opportunity” for women.

Among other things, Kennedy stressed the need for child day care centers to support working mothers.

Other Equal Pay Laws

Following the passage of the Equal Pay Act, several other laws were enacted with the aim of reducing employment discrimination.

Perhaps the most important was Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned employers from discriminating on the basis of “race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.” The Educational Amendment of 1972, meanwhile, expanded the reach of the Equal Pay Act to include white-collar executive, professional and administrative jobs—categories that had been exempted under the original law.

Other important gender equity employment laws include the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, which strengthened protections for pregnant workers; and 2009’s Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which reduced time restrictions on wage discrimination complaints.

Effects Of The Equal Pay Act

Under the regulations of the Equal Pay Act, employees who believe they are being discriminated against can either file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or directly sue their employer in court. Combined with increased education and career opportunities for women, these regulations have been credited with helping to narrow the gender wage gap in the United States.

Nevertheless, studies show that women are still paid less than men on average. Estimates vary, but according to a study from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, full-time women workers in 2016 were paid 82 cents for every dollar men earned.

Other issues in the play:

What it was like to be gay in 1944 -- and other historic lessons in a USC archive

Citation: Branson-Potts, Hailey. “What it was like to be gay in 1944.” AUG. 30, 2015. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-adv-lgbt-archive-20150830-story.html>. 6 March, 2022.

The paper is yellowed now, the penciled cursive fading, but the letters from the World War II Women's Army Corps servicewoman to her sweetheart are romantic as ever.

"Good morning, darling. I'm so very used to going to sleep watching you smoke that cigarette (if I'm not in your arms) that I couldn't sleep."

It was 1944. The writer, a witty young "service gal" stationed in San Bernardino was in love — with another Army woman.

"It doesn't startle me at all," she wrote to her girlfriend, saying her mother would be shocked if she found out about them. "I know that I need you and want you with me and nothing about it seems remarkable or different. It's just a fact."

These were not activists or celebrities, just women in love at a time before being openly gay, let alone marriage equality, had achieved broad public acceptance. And that's exactly why their candid, intimate correspondence is so important, say archivists at the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives at the USC Libraries, where their letters are now stored.

"They're not always important people, but they're important because they lived in a particular era and they wrote about it," said Fred Bradford, a retiree and former member of the ONE board of directors. "For a long time the library systems around the world, if they had any books about homosexuality, it was in the abnormal psychology section."

The ONE archive is believed to be the world's largest collection of LGBT artifacts, including personal items from photo albums and letters to diaries.

While the LGBT rights movement has made tremendous strides in recent years, gay history is little known because it was kept out of the history books for so long, said Joseph Hawkins, director of the archive.

ONE archivists are working with the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Los Angeles LGBT Center to develop LGBT-inclusive history lessons that will be incorporated into the curriculum in the coming months to comply with the FAIR Education Act, a state law passed in 2011.

That law, the first of its kind in the nation, requires public schools to teach about the historic contributions of LGBT people. When it was passed, the Legislature suspended all adoptions of instructional material through eighth grade until 2015.

"So many young folks know a lot about marriage equality and about current struggles, but so few people know about what came before," said Hawkins, a USC professor of anthropology and

gender studies. “It is certainly not because they have been remiss, but because we were denied a history by the American educational system. From the conservative perspective, why teach anyone about the history of deviancy and perversion, which was how the right saw it.” Saving the stories of the past, archivists say, is often a race against time as older gays and lesbians age. But getting them to tell their stories openly remains a challenge.

On a recent Saturday, Hawkins stood on the porch of the female World War II veteran who wrote the letters, clutching a voice recorder. It was early morning, hot already, and he had driven more than two hours from Los Angeles to her San Bernardino County home to listen to her stories about her partner of more than 50 years.

Now 95, she declined to be named after a lifetime of keeping her true relationship with her partner quiet. They got by, she said, with people just assuming they were “two spinsters with a cat.”

Over lunch, Hawkins gently prodded her for details, as he’s been doing for a few years now. Her partner died several years ago, and it was a difficult, months-long decision to donate their private letters, she said. For years, they were stuffed in old boxes in the attic. At one point, desperate to keep them private, she burned many of the letters before a trip overseas. Hawkins cringed. But it wasn’t the first time he had heard that.

After the death of Don Slater, a founding editor of ONE magazine — a 1950s “magazine for homosexuals” that fought obscenity laws and FBI surveillance and went to the U.S. Supreme Court for the right to distribute through the mail — his bereft partner, Tony Reyes, began hurling records, letters, documents from the magazine and archive’s early days, into the garbage. Hawkins dug them out.

Over the years, numerous personal items, such as gay-themed magazines, have been brought to the archive as quiet donations after people’s loved ones died, Hawkins said. “People would come and whisper things like, ‘I found this under Aunt Harriet’s bed and thought you might want it,’” Hawkins said. “I’d tell them, ‘You don’t have to whisper.’ For others, it’s a legacy moment. They feel like if their stuff is here, they’ll live on forever. And some just want to get rid of all of it.”

Among the archive’s more than 2 million items housed in a former USC fraternity house are matchbooks from gay bars, political buttons, erotic paintings and discreetly labeled “address books” listing gay-friendly businesses.

There’s a catalog for an at-home electroshock therapy kit used to “reinforce sex preference” by shocking the wearer if he or she reacted positively to images of members of the same sex. There is the 1957 black-and-white photo of two suit-clad men, gazing into each other’s eyes,

exchanging rings before an officiant. A photo store owner who thought it was inappropriate never returned it to the customer after it was developed.

Then there are hundreds of magazines, for many people the only direct connection they had to other people like them. *RFD*, a magazine for rural gay men, ran articles in the 1970s about how to build your own cabin and letters from readers who loved the country life but were terribly lonely.

One of the archives' newest collections contains the personal writings and letters of Lisa Ben (a pseudonym for "lesbian"), who in 1947 created *Vice Versa: America's Gayest Magazine* for lesbians. She secretly typed them up at the Hollywood movie studio where she worked, making a few copies at a time on carbon paper and mailing them out or handing them to friends at a local lesbian bar — until someone warned her she'd get in trouble if a vice squad showed up. The new materials from Ben, a reclusive 93-year-old resident of an assisted living home, include trinkets: a leopard-print purse, a pin reading "Old Lesbian, West Coast Conference & Celebration 1987." In dozens of personal photos, she smiles broadly.

The collections of "ordinary folks put flesh on the bones of history and make it come alive," Hawkins said. "Our history was not just one oppressive dirge after another, but little tiny victories, hard fought and hard won, that equal a really rousing triumph for humanity."

Psychological Impact Of The Great Depression

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In March 1930 a bone-chilling wind assaulted two thousand men standing outside an Episcopal church on Twenty-ninth Street in Manhattan. The long line twisted its way up Fifth Avenue, filled with people who had heard that the church was dispensing food to the poor. A quarter of them were turned away when the rations ran out. The sight of the long line of needy New Yorkers unnerved the city's residents because many of those waiting for food were clearly in anguish over accepting charity to survive. Many people carried a great psychological burden during the Depression because they had become unwilling participants in the economic breakdown. Americans wanted to work and had believed they would be rewarded for their hard work; most who received welfare aid, from clothing to food and medical supplies, did so reluctantly.

Some critics claimed that people on welfare were freeloaders, but these criticisms did not take into account the shame felt by most able-bodied citizens forced out of work and only able to survive through government welfare programs and private charity. Regardless of class status, many families tried to hide their problems, acting as if they were doing well so those around them would be fooled.

Family life had been changing dramatically during the twentieth century and the transformation continued during the Depression. Family roles were muddled when the traditional male role of breadwinner became unavailable for many men. Merely keeping families together during economic duress became difficult as people lost their homes and livelihood. Some couples delayed weddings due to the uncertainty, while others put off divorce because they could not afford to separate. For many children, the Depression altered their role in maintaining family order. Children had to grow up faster during the crisis; many were forced to forgo formal schooling and get a job at an early age, while also often taking on parental roles to provide solace to those within their own families.

Historian Harvey Green argues that domestic violence and child abuse increased during the Depression. Family disputes over finances, food, and other basic necessities caused tensions to increase. Men and boys often simply fled the home out of embarrassment, frustration, or the inability to cope with the new economic reality. Thousands of people, young and old, became traveling hobos, riding the rails in search of work or some form of relief.

Men's self-image, which had been strengthened by the nation's victory in World War I and the subsequent prosperity of the 1920s, took a beating during the Great Depression. In many cases, men arrived at work to find the doors locked, with little or no explanation. Some families were able to make ends meet by having the wife and children work, a situation that could be humiliating for the husband and father. Studies, such those undertaken by sociologist Mirra Komarovsky for her book *The Unemployed Man and His Family* (1940), revealed that many unemployed or underemployed men suffered from impotence. Both historian T. H. Watkins and writer Edward Robb Ellis also state that the birthrate slipped as unemployment grew.

During the 1920s, many Americans had begun to equate self-worth with material possessions. Therefore, when times turned bad, people felt worthless. The nation's traditional optimistic outlook was replaced by the reality of economic chaos and confusion. Even among those fortunate or wealthy enough to avoid economic disruption, the Great Depression took a psychological toll. According to Green, psychiatrist's offices were packed in the early 1930s with those from the upper classes attempting to cope with the economic mayhem. The confidence of the average American fell to a general malaise and inertia as unemployment grew and the Depression set in. People waited for something to happen, spinning in circles as they fought to survive.

Suicide became a part of everyday conversation, particularly as the stories of bankrupt Wall Street traders jumping from tall office buildings entered the public mindset. Urban legend regarding mass suicides during the Great Depression far outstripped reality. However, the national suicide rate did increase in late 1929 and continued to increase until 1933—from 13.9 per 100,000 to an all-time high of 17.4 per 100,000. In one widely publicized example, James J. Riordan, president of the New York County Trust Company, killed himself in November 1929 because of the deep shame he felt over losing other people's money, as well as his own loss of funds. Fearing that news of his suicide would cause a run on the bank's deposits, the board of directors did not release a public statement until after the bank closed on Saturday afternoon. Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal began to reverse some of the psychological damage inflicted by the Great Depression. The New Deal relief programs helped people to realize that the collapse was societal, and not the result of individual failure. The New Deal enabled many Americans to deflect some of the guilt they felt for their personal economic failure.

The entertainment industry helped divert people's attention during the Great Depression. Hollywood actually entered a boom period, with about eighty million people going to the movies each week. Popular radio entertainers, including Bing Crosby, George Burns, and Gracie Allen, also helped distract Americans from their difficulties.

The Depression left deep emotional scars on the American psyche. The stock market crash destroyed the nation's feeling of invincibility and left its people anxious and guilt-ridden. For a decade, the Depression defined life in the United States, leaving an imprint on the nation that remains apparent at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Whenever the economy sputters, as with the late 1990s dot-com fallout and subsequent recession, many people are gripped by fears of another Great Depression.

Polio: A 20th Century Epidemic

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While many infectious diseases began to decline by the end of the 1800s, incidents of polio increased to epidemic proportions. What was going on?

Poliomyelitis (polio) is an infectious disease that can cause spinal and respiratory paralysis. Children are particularly vulnerable to the disease, which used to be called infantile paralysis. There is no cure and if the infection affects the lung muscles or brain it can be fatal.

Polio has been around for a long time, but it was never considered a major problem until the end of the 1800s, when something unusual began to happen.

Polio Epidemics On The Rise

Like many other infectious diseases, polio spreads from person-to-person through the ingestion of faecal matter, often in food and water. But while improvements in sanitation such as clean water and sewage systems led to the decline of diseases such as typhoid and cholera at the end of the 1800s, outbreaks of polio began to increase.

The size and number of epidemics continued to increase in Europe and America throughout the first half of the 1900s.

A polio epidemic appeared each summer in at least one part of the country, and major outbreaks became more frequent reaching their peak in 1952 in the USA, with 57,628 cases. Each summer was spent in fear of the disease. And there were similar situations across the rest of North America and Europe.

What Caused The Epidemics?

For centuries, protection from polio was passed down through the generations. Mothers who had survived polio infection themselves passed on immunity to their babies in the womb and through breast milk.

There are two stages to the polio infection. In the first mild stage the infection stays in the digestive system and throat and doesn't reach the central nervous system. Most babies with maternal immunity are able to fight off the disease at this stage with only mild flu-like symptoms. At the same time, exposure to the first stage gives them their own long-term immunity.

But the unforeseen consequence of better hygiene and sanitation at the end of the 1800s was that babies in clean surroundings stopped encountering the infection while they still had maternal immunity.

So they failed to develop their own long-term immunity and were not protected when they encountered the disease later in life. And exposure to polio in late childhood or as an adult, was more likely to develop to the second, more aggressive stage of the disease.

The Symptoms Of Polio

Second stage symptoms are more severe and include fever, muscle stiffness and headache, and maybe some temporary weakness or paralysis. The weakness or paralysis usually confirms that the disease is polio.

The author Philip Roth describes the frightening symptoms in his novel *Nemesis*, set in Newark in 1944:

Finally the cataclysm began – the monstrous headache, the enfeebling exhaustion, the severe nausea, the raging fever, the unbearable muscle ache, followed in another forty-eight hours by the paralysis.

Philip Roth

In Roth's story, everyone knows what polio is but no one knows where it comes from or how it is transmitted, and everything from flies to fast food are blamed for its spread.

In the second or acute stage, the infection reaches the central nervous system, where it begins to damage the cells that control the muscles (motor neurons). If 50% or more of the motor neurons are destroyed, then paralysis is permanent. This happened to about 1 person in 200. If the infection reaches motor neurons high in the spinal cord or in the brain, death could result. The epidemic rise of polio led to renewed research into the disease and in 1908, Karl Landsteiner and Erwin Popper determined that polio was a viral infection. It was not until 1953 that the poliovirus that caused the disease was actually seen through an electron microscope.

Treatment And Rehabilitation

Early treatments for paralyzed muscles advocated the use of splints to prevent muscle tightening and rest for the affected muscles. Many paralyzed polio patients lay in plaster body casts for months at a time. But long periods in a cast often resulted in atrophy of both affected and healthy muscles.

Treatment of polio was revolutionized in the 1930s by Elizabeth Kenny, a self-trained nurse from Queensland, Australia. Kenny developed a form of physical therapy that used hot, moist packs and massage and exercise and early activity to maximize the strength of unaffected muscles and stimulate the remaining nerve cells that had not been killed by the virus. Kenny later established the Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute in America and by the mid-1900s her therapy was the accepted treatment for paralytic polio. And it is still used today.

Polio is a very painful disease and the recovery could take years of agonizing rehabilitation to regain the use of arms and legs. Philip Roth described his character's experience in 1944: He underwent four torturous sessions of the hot packs a day, together lasting as long as four to six hours. Fortunately his respiratory muscles hadn't been affected, so he never had to be moved inside an iron lung to assist with his breathing, a prospect that he dreaded more than any other.

The iron lung was developed in 1928 for patients whose lung muscles were paralyzed so they could no longer breath unaided. Most patients only had to spend a short period in the iron lung

before they regained the use of their lungs. But some patients with permanent paralysis of the lungs had to stay encased up to their necks in the large cumbersome contraptions for the rest of their lives.

Polio Vaccines

With no cure for polio, research efforts were focussed on developing a vaccine to prevent the disease. The first polio vaccine was developed by Jonas Salk, with the help of funds from the March of Dimes.

In 1954, Salk launched what was then the largest human medical trial in history, injecting nearly 2 million American children with a potential vaccine. The Salk vaccine, or inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV), contained a deactivated form of the poliovirus and was administered by injection

Things to think about prior to performance

- Notice the set, before you watch the production. What do you see on the stage?
- Notice the colors and the sound design before you see any action.
- Are you familiar with the massive industrial production during WWII in the United States?
- Are you familiar with issues of labor and equity in the United States during WWII?

Things to watch for in performance:

- How would you describe the main characters in the play? Do you identify with any of them and why?
- This set design is an example of what is called a unit set, which is a scenic design made up of pieces (or units) which can be used to produce more than one setting (or rearranged.) Was this set design helpful to the production? Why or why not?
- How is the passage of time and reality conveyed in lighting, sound, use of the set, costume pieces and in character action?
- Observe how the actors establish their relationship with one another. How do we “meet” each character? Does their circumstance affect how we empathize with them?
- Notice the costume design and the properties design. What do the visual cues tell you about the play?
- How does the factory setting effect your understanding of the circumstances?
- Listen to the sound design. What does the sound-scape communicate to you?
- Look for physical similarities in intimate scenes between actors.
- Listen to repeated ideas in the dialogue: money, love, freedom, internal desire, etc.

Things to think about the performance:

- What do you notice about this play? What stands out to you about the language, characters, setting and conflict? Does it remind you of anything else you have seen or read before?
- How are some of the themes brought forward in the play aligned with current topical issues?
- What lessons or messages have you taken away experiencing this play?

Other Analysis Tools:

- What happens in the very last moments of the play? Certainly, the last few minutes, but, more importantly, the last thirty seconds? In that time, WHAT happens or is said, and what does that say about what the play is 'about?' In a nutshell, how does the playwright drive his point(s) home?
- And what is the significance of the title? Why did the playwright decide that this was the most quintessential title for his work?

The running time for this production is approximately 1 hour and 35 min., including a 15 minute intermission.

Please join us for a **pre-show discussion Thursday, March 24 at 6:45p in MAC 140** preceding the preview performance. Note that pre-show discussions will include the director and designers, and will be a discussion of the approach to this production.

There will be a **post-show discussion** following the **Friday, April 1** performance. The post-show will be with director, cast and crew, and we will be fielding questions from the audience.

Please join us!