



Women at work during WWII

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, most Texas women either stayed at home as wives or mothers, or in traditionally “female” occupations such as schoolteachers, nurses, or maids. The war changed all that. First, some 600,000 Texans (the great majority of them men) entered the armed services and went off to fight in Europe or the Pacific. At the same time, manufacturing exploded in the Lone Star State, as the country geared up to fight the war. Steel mills, oil refineries, chemical plants, synthetic rubber manufacturers, and factories making bombs and torpedoes were opened in a short period of time. Half a million Texans left the farms and moved to the cities, where good-paying were to be had. When there were not enough men to fill all these new jobs, the factories began employing women. A popular song, “Rosie the Riveter,” celebrated these women, many of whom worked in the large airplane factories in Garland, Grand Prairie, and Fort Worth.