

World War 2 Argumentative Essay: Women and Minorities during the 1940's

Paloma Wood-Assemian
American Studies: Mr. Baldauf and Ms. Hale
March 20th, 2018

In 1941, when Pearl Harbor was bombed by Japan, America began contributing to the second World War, the biggest one seen to date. Everything changed after the Japanese attacked Pearl harbor; where food started to be rationed, 16 million men enlisted in the military, and industrial manufacturers started producing more and more for their troops creating more jobs.¹ Luckily, with the opening of job positions, over 6 million women signed on for manufacturing jobs just within the first month.¹ Although this helped get America through the war and ultimately changed history forever, how were women and minorities treated during and after WW2?

In [*History At a Glance: Women in World War II*](#),² the website points out how women started working jobs that they had never worked before, and their whole position changed. Women were no longer staying at home, cleaning the house and taking care of the children like they were before the war, they were taking care of their fathers, husbands, and brothers by taking all the jobs left over to help make and send supplies back to their troops. Quoting the website;

“Some women served near the front lines in the Army Nurse Corps, where 16 were killed as a result of direct enemy fire. Sixty-eight American service women were captured as POWs in the Philippines. More than 1,600 nurses were decorated for bravery under fire and meritorious service, and 565 WACs in the Pacific Theater won combat decorations.”²

Even after the war the racism and sexism continued, the industry started pushing women out of their work since the white men were coming home to take their jobs back². All the while

1. History: *American Women in WWII*
2. The National WWII Museum story at a Glance: *Women in World War II*
3. *Washington, DC and American Lives II Film Project. The War at Home*
4. Williams, Anna. "The "Indian Maiden". " *THE ROLES OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: TRIBAL SOCIETY VERSUS AMERICAN SOCIETY*
5. Reinhardt, Claudia, and Bill Ganzel. "Civil Rights for minorities." *Wessels Living History Farm*.
6. O'Neill, William L. *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II*. N.p.: arrangement with the Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1995.

coming back to a still racist America that just barely allowed for minorities to work in segregated parts of the military.³

After President Roosevelt signed the bill that forced for employers during the war to start hiring African Americans, more and more people of color started working for the war, but that doesn't mean that they always got the jobs they wanted or even deserved like their white coworkers.³

"Defense industries proved to be a critical battleground in the struggle for a victory for civil rights at home. As preparations for war accelerated in early 1941, minority groups hoped they would benefit as much as the rest of the country from the new jobs in military production. But black workers were often shut out of defense plants, and when they could find work, it was often in the most menial, dangerous, and low-paying jobs. One aviation executive stated, "While we are in complete sympathy with the Negro, it is against company policy to employ them as aircraft workers or mechanics... regardless of their training." The Standard Steel Company declared, "We have not had a Negro worker in twenty-five years, and we do not plan to start now."³

Even at work African Americans were discriminated against, both at home and at work. In another quote from the book *A Democracy at War* by William L. O'Neil, he explain more about what African Americans were experiencing in the war;

"In addition to suffering from reluctant commanders, segregation, and discrimination, Negro soldiers often were victims of violence, especially in the South, scores being killed or wounded during the war. Often these casualties resulted from fights between black soldiers and white soldiers and civilians, but even minor violations of local racial codes were punishable by death."⁶

Back on the home front, the latino community was also being terrorized in their own backyard. In los Angeles, racial tensions reigned supreme for that time, causing many fights between white sailors and latinos.³

1. History: *American Women in WWII*
2. The National WWII Museum story at a Glance: *Women in World War II*
3. *Washington, DC and American Lives II Film Project. The War at Home*
4. Williams, Anna. "The "Indian Maiden"." *THE ROLES OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: TRIBAL SOCIETY VERSUS AMERICAN SOCIETY*
5. Reinhardt, Claudia, and Bill Ganzel. "Civil Rights for minorities." *Wessels Living History Farm*.
6. O'Neill, William L. *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II*. N.p.: arrangement with the Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1995.

“Violence erupted in the Latino community also. The most notorious incident was the “zoot-suit riots” in Los Angeles in the spring of 1943. Tensions had been high in Los Angeles in the wake of isolated, violent confrontations between Anglo sailors on leave and Mexican-American “zoot-suitors” — hip, young teens dressed in baggy pants and long-tailed coats. Then, for ten nights in June, sailors cruised Mexican-American neighborhoods and ruthlessly attacked anyone wearing a zoot suit, tearing the clothes off their bodies and viciously beating them. Some Latino youth fought back, and when the violence ended, many Mexican Americans and Anglo servicemen were in hospital beds, and bitter resentment lingered for years.³”

Both women and minorities were discriminated against even after they contributed their lives to America for the war. Even after all their help, everything went back to the way it was as if America didn’t need women and minorities to win the war at all.

“When Black, Hispanic, and Native American soldiers returned they found a country that still did not grant them full rights, but a movement for the expansion of civil rights had been born. Some black soldiers who had left farm jobs in the South decided not to return home. Instead, they moved to cities, looking for work that was similar to what they had learned in the armed forces. This movement represented an intensification of the black migration that began around the turn of the century.”⁵

Let us not forget the Japanese Americans who were forced into internment camps because of American fear which was influenced by racism. American citizens were forced into internment camps because they were supposedly capable of espionage; but with later research, it was found that not one Japanese American was actually involved in the bombing of Pearl Harbor or a spy of any kind.¹ Let’s also remember that Native Americans were code-talkers in WW2 and even created a whole new language for Americans to gain an extra footer in the war. How were they repaid? With racist movies about their culture mocking “The Indian Maiden”.⁴

1. History: *American Women in WWII*
2. The National WWII Museum story at a Glance: *Women in World War II*
3. *Washington, DC and American Lives II Film Project. The War at Home*
4. Williams, Anna. "The “Indian Maiden”." *THE ROLES OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: TRIBAL SOCIETY VERSUS AMERICAN SOCIETY*
5. Reinhardt, Claudia, and Bill Ganzel. "Civil Rights for minorities." *Wessels Living History Farm*.
6. O'Neill, William L. *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II*. N.p.: arrangement with the Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1995.

America isn't known for treating its minorities well. Its history is full of hatred, selfishness, and racism that was embedded in its original constitution within its origin and never fully went away. This brings me to my thesis; Although minorities were a crucial part to America winning WW2, after the war ended minorities were discriminated against in the same way both during the war and after. Although the 1940's were a long time ago we should really be looking at our history as a sign of what America is capable of. Although America has been known to be especially ruthless to its women and minorities, we as American people need to look at our accomplishments and realize they aren't enough. America has accomplished a lot, but it can do so much more .

1. History: *American Women in WWII*
2. The National WWII Museum story at a Glance: *Women in World War II*
3. *Washington, DC and American Lives II Film Project. The War at Home*
4. Williams, Anna. "The "Indian Maiden". " *THE ROLES OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: TRIBAL SOCIETY VERSUS AMERICAN SOCIETY*
5. Reinhardt, Claudia, and Bill Ganzel. "Civil Rights for minorities." *Wessels Living History Farm*.
6. O'Neill, William L. *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II*. N.p.: arrangement with the Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1995.

Annotated Bibliography

History: American Women in WWII

Evaluating this source, I do believe it helps me with my topic and that the source is credible. The website relates all of its content to History, and all of my other sources backup the information. Information is added regularly and the last copyright date of the website was 2018 so I would say that it is up to date. There is no author mentioned, but the website is a company that takes ownership of all the articles. Since it is a company, the website does seem to keep their website and information very presentable, all while continuing to provide good information with a modern day bias, meaning they aren't sexist which I appreciate. The site talks about why women started working during WW2 and even provides videos to further explain in detail.

The source talks about how in 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bomb, many men went to war leaving their wives to occupy their spaces in their industrial jobs. The site talks about women in a general sense, instead of just zeroing in on one minority. It shows that women took over and started working, and even started advertising women working with the Rosie the Riveter ad, causing a lot of women to come to show support for their troops. Although, sexism in the workplace was an issue, women helped hold down america during this time, bringing aid to their troops and taking care of their families at the same time.

In my essay, I talked about how women were discriminated against before, during, and after the second world war. This website gave me most of my insight on how they were treated during the war, which helped me configure the basis of my essay. The video in the website especially helped me grasp the information I was trying to learn and taught me from a different perspective. In my essay I talked a lot about how sexist men were to women, trying to tell them that they were too dumb to do certain jobs or not bright enough to figure out a machine. I also talked about how women proved them wrong and did it anyway while helping their country.

1. History: *American Women in WWII*
2. The National WWII Museum story at a Glance: *Women in World War II*
3. *Washington, DC and American Lives II Film Project. The War at Home*
4. Williams, Anna. "The "Indian Maiden"." *THE ROLES OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: TRIBAL SOCIETY VERSUS AMERICAN SOCIETY*
5. Reinhardt, Claudia, and Bill Ganzel. "Civil Rights for minorities." *Wessels Living History Farm*.
6. O'Neill, William L. *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II*. N.p.: arrangement with the Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1995.

The National WWII Museum story at a Glance: Women in World War II

In this source, the website is run by another corporation. Although this one is a lot more well known than the last one, this website is a .org and is connected to a WW2 museum in New Orleans. Their contact information is available at the bottom of the website, and it is a real email address and phone number. They even have social media accounts to promote their website and museum for publicity. They have an entire page dedicated to their privacy policy and all of the information is relevant to my essay and doesn't contradict with any of my other sources. What I like about this website is that there is a definite bias and the website makes sure to announce that the museum gives full recognition to the "contribution that women played in the success of the Allied victory in World War II". The Museum sources itself, since it is a museum, and it does contain links at the very end of the site that leads to an exhibit from the museum that explains how they got this information.

The site is about how women took over the industrial business after men had to go fight in the war. Like the other website, it also explains why women had to fill those positions and what made the U.S go into the war. It also explains the jobs women took and how they stood united during the war. One thing that's different with this website is it talks about all the many jobs that women filled during the war. It also explained what happened to the women's jobs after the men came back from the war and how all the progress that was made was somehow forgotten once the men got back.

In my essay, I used a long quote from this website to describe what happened to women on the battlefield. Many don't know that women died on the front as well so I wanted to include that in my essay. I used this website to further fuel my knowledge of the jobs that women had on the battlefield and at home, while learning about what happened to women afterwards which really helped me understand and is mostly the basis of my argument. The website helped me mostly with how women were treated when the men got back from war, but still helped me a lot in the long run.

Washington, DC and American Lives II Film Project. The War at Home

This source gave me a lot of valuable information that I didn't know. After looking at four sources so far, I had not seen one that could give me this much information on the struggles of both the African American community and the Latin American Community. The site included a the publishing and copyright information at the bottom of the web page as well as the date of copyright. All of the information makes sense and this website seems to be the most unbiased website I have seen yet. The page is also the website for PBS (a well known channel used to inform the public)

1. History: *American Women in WWII*
2. The National WWII Museum story at a Glance: *Women in World War II*
3. *Washington, DC and American Lives II Film Project. The War at Home*
4. Williams, Anna. "The "Indian Maiden"." *THE ROLES OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: TRIBAL SOCIETY VERSUS AMERICAN SOCIETY*
5. Reinhardt, Claudia, and Bill Ganzel. "Civil Rights for minorities." *Wessels Living History Farm*.
6. O'Neill, William L. *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II*. N.p.: arrangement with the Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1995.

and it's a .org website.

Basically, the source begins by talking about the African American struggle during WW2. They talk about how African Americans were still segregated against even when WW2 began. Unlike other websites, they make the statement that the treatment of African Americans did not change during the War at all. They also touch basis with the treatment of Latin Americans in the War. This is helpful because most of my sources so far are either explain the treatment of women or African Americans. For my essay, I think this might be my main source (besides my book). I'm using two sources from this website. One to explain the struggles of African Americans during the War with it still being segregated. I'm using the other to explain the experience of Latino Americans during the War and even after.

"Post World War II: 1946-1970." Women and Work.

This website was created by pro women's rights organization so naturally it's biased. The Organization is called Striking Women Women and Work. The website contains a glossary and reference page and the content isn't contradicting in anyway. This site talk about women's struggles after the war, and how their rights changes decades later. The website has over 20 sources and references available on its page, and the sources don't contradict the page either.

This website is about what women did after the war. Unlike past sites that I've looked at, the authors talked about women's struggles during the war and how they were still fighting for women's rights even after they contributed so much during the war. I already know what women did during the war to help so it's helpful to find a website that explains later accomplishments that shaped the world today. This website basically talks about how women were treated from 1946 on.

This website provided me with a lot of useful information. For my essay, I used this to help the conclusion of my essay mostly. It's a good transition from the sexism that women faced to the rights that they do eventually get. It's good to mention that they do get a happy ending although the struggle for the rights was wrong and hard (it still is).

Williams, Anna. "The "Indian Maiden". THE ROLES OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: TRIBAL SOCIETY VERSUS AMERICAN SOCIETY

Compared to my other sources, this website has a lot more to evaluate on. The authors name is listed in this one, as well as the publishing date. It was published only in 2014, so it's pretty new still and the information doesn't contradict at all. The author seems to be bias towards cultural appropriation, as they mentioned that Europeans have been known to use and

1. History: *American Women in WWII*
2. The National WWII Museum story at a Glance: *Women in World War II*
3. *Washington, DC and American Lives II Film Project. The War at Home*
4. Williams, Anna. "The "Indian Maiden". THE ROLES OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: TRIBAL SOCIETY VERSUS AMERICAN SOCIETY
5. Reinhardt, Claudia, and Bill Ganzel. "Civil Rights for minorities." *Wessels Living History Farm*.
6. O'Neill, William L. *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II*. N.p.: arrangement with the Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1995.

abuse Native American culture. The entire website has four full resources that are in fact cited and it includes pictures.

Basically, the whole article talked about cultural appropriation regarding the Native American culture. It goes back all the way to World war 2 and explains why the film industry exploded. The author focuses mostly on what the industry exploded into, explaining how the fetishizing of Native American culture began. This evolved into the "Indian Maiden" which influences even the culture of today's America.

I am going to use this website to cite when I talk about how the treatment of Native Americans still hasn't change to this day let alone after WW2. This websites information contains just information about Native Americans which is the only source I have including them. So, I will be using this source mostly in my body paragraphs to explain the cultural appropriation and racism that still occurs today. This will help me draw in my paper to include all minorities.

Reinhardt, Claudia, and Bill Ganzel. "Civil Rights for minorities." Wessels Living History Farm.

This website was written on a website for a History Farm from York, Nebraska. It was written by two authors whose names are mentioned and there is also a bibliography attached for sources. There is also a contact page located on one of the last tabs of the website. The information helps me a lot because I am learning more about minorities instead of just women. All of the information makes sense, and the sources seem to check out as well. The authors seem to have a bias (of course) but its not as strong as past sites that I've looked at.

This site talks about how minorities were fighting in WW2 despite popular opinion of only white men fighting. The website focuses mostly on the struggles of African American men while lightly touching upon the topic of other minorities. The site explains what happened both during the war and after, showing the type of racism that happened and how it barely changed. I learned that after the war African Americans still lived in a segregated America, but luckily many of them left to use their newly learned crafts.

I used a quote from this website to explain how minorities were treated both during and after the war. The whole website has many other points that I also read through to learn and add to my final conclusion paragraph. The whole website was a great source because it's the only source I have that talks so in depth about the struggles of black people during that time. It also mentions many other ethnicities which helped me understand the struggle that all minorities went through.

O'Neill, William L. *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II*. N.p.: arrangement with the Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1995.

1. History: *American Women in WWII*
2. The National WWII Museum story at a Glance: *Women in World War II*
3. *Washington, DC and American Lives II Film Project. The War at Home*
4. Williams, Anna. "The "Indian Maiden"." *THE ROLES OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: TRIBAL SOCIETY VERSUS AMERICAN SOCIETY*
5. Reinhardt, Claudia, and Bill Ganzel. "Civil Rights for minorities." *Wessels Living History Farm*.
6. O'Neill, William L. *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II*. N.p.: arrangement with the Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1995.

Since this is a book and not a website, I will be evaluating it a little differently, while still using the cars sheet. The author seems very credible as they use dozens of sources in the bibliography and the book is sponsored by Harvard. The author has a page dedicated to publication and copyright as well. The author does seem bias, as everyone is, but again the bias is in a way the my research essay is leaning towards anyways. I looked at one of the sources on the book and it was another book that seemed reliable itself.

This book is actually a really interesting book that I'm glad I've found. The information actually pulls me in and that's surprising considering I don't read a lot of non-fictional books willingly. The book basically explains how America has changed through the years and how Democracy has been threatened through each year. The part I'm most interested in is when the author explains minorities and how they were treating in the 1940's. This explanation is brought with resources and knowledge that I can't get online.

I'm going to use this book to mainly site my sources throughout the paper. This book and one other website are going to be my main sources. This means that I will use them through my paper to use in a footnote or even quote. So far I don't know if I am going to quote the book yet since I already have so many.

1. History: *American Women in WWII*
2. The National WWII Museum story at a Glance: *Women in World War II*
3. *Washington, DC and American Lives II Film Project. The War at Home*
4. Williams, Anna. "The "Indian Maiden". " *THE ROLES OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: TRIBAL SOCIETY VERSUS AMERICAN SOCIETY*
5. Reinhardt, Claudia, and Bill Ganzel. "Civil Rights for minorities." *Wessels Living History Farm*.
6. O'Neill, William L. *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II*. N.p.: arrangement with the Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1995.