



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

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. In 1941, many nations were involved in World War II. How might this 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?

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Photograph Primary Source Analysis – Before reading the article from 1942, look at 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: Meet the Photos

1. Scan the photos. What do you notice first?
2. Are the photos (highlight the answer) ... BLACK & WHITE COLOR
3. Do the photos have captions? (highlight the answer) YES NO
4. If so, what do the captions tell you?

Part Two: Observe its Parts

5. Circle what you see in the photographs. PEOPLE OBJECTS BOTH
6. What are the people doing in the photographs?
7. What are the objects used for in the photographs?
8. Write down three words that describe the photographs.

Part Three: Try to Make Sense of It (Answer the best you can. The captions of the photos may help.)

9. Where do you think the photographs were taken?
10. 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.



You only need to read the article until you get to the section titled "Short Cuts in Training"

Part I:

1. When and where this was this newspaper article published?
2. What is the title of the article?

Part II:

3. In paragraph 6, it says "*She is only one of several thousand women who have joined the ranks of Armory workers since the first contingent (group) of 13 entered the shops last November when it became clear that there were not going to be enough men to keep...production climbing.*" Based on this quote, when did women start working at the Springfield Armory? Why were they 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.*" From this quote, does it seem like women were doing well in their jobs at the Armory? How can you tell?

Part III:

6. Read paragraphs 1 & 2 of the article. The author says it is "*...something of a shock...*" to see women working at the Springfield Armory. Why might people in 1942 have been surprised to see women working there?

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?

