



ALBUM [WORLD WAR II WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES \(PRIMARY SOURCE LEARNING ACTIVITY\)](#)

Album Description

This learning activity uses a photograph series from the Office of War Information in 1942 to look at disabled Americans' contributions to the US war effort. With many of the country's young able-bodied men serving in the US military and wartime needs increasing demands on manufacturers, many women, Black Americans, disabled Americans, and other marginalized workers were able to get industrial jobs for the first time.

*Note: Before starting this exercise, discuss respectful language and historical terms (like handicapped) which are considered out of date and/or offensive today.

Consider splitting your students into small groups and have each group analyze one photograph using the [Observe, Reflect, Question approach](#). Then come back together as a class to discuss the questions below.

Potential Discussion Questions

1. What surprised you in these photos/captions?
2. What messages did the Office of War Information want to convey with this photo series? What makes you think this?
3. What ideas about disability are expressed by these photographs and captions?
 1. How does this photo series challenge older ideas about disability?
 2. What obstacles might disabled people have still faced in the workplace?
 3. What types of disabilities are represented in this collection of photographs? What types of disabilities are missing? What might be some of the impacts of these exclusions?
4. What can these photographs teach us about the World War II home front?

Once students have explored this wartime work, read the 1946 article, "DAV and AFH To Sponsor Handicapped-Job Effort" to discuss some of the long-term impacts:

1. What reasons are given in the article for why more disabled Americans should be included in the workforce?
2. What impact might the 1942 photo series have had on disabled workers in the postwar era?

This activity can also be expanded by asking students to search [Chronicling America](#) for articles about the war work accomplished by Americans with disabilities. The phrase "handicapped war workers" yields numerous results. For example, this 1942 article, "[Manpower Crisis Hinges on Policy,](#)" discusses how reluctant manufacturers need to start hiring marginalized workers (Black Americans, women, the elderly, and disabled workers) to compensate for labor shortages. (Note: this article uses the term Negro, which should be discussed with students beforehand)

This source set can be put into conversation with:

- the longer history of rehabilitation programs (from World War I to the modern day)
- ideas about work, patriotism, and productive citizenship
- general lessons on the WWII home front



Alt text for the photographs is available on the LOC website. Alt text for the newspaper articles is available in the reference note section for each source.

MANPOWER. HANDICAPPED WORKERS. DESPITE PHYSICAL HANDICAPS, THESE WOMEN ARE DOING WORK THAT'S VITAL TO UNCLE SAM'S WAR EFFORT. AT THE MARYLAND LEAGUE FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN, THEY'RE HAND-BURRING Y'S FOR AIRPLANE ENGINES, ON SUBCONTRACT TO A BALTIMORE ENGINEERING COMPANY.



Reference Link: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2017693405/>

Contributor Names: Rosener, Ann, photographer
United States. Office of War Information.

Created / Published: 1942 Aug.

Subject Headings: - United States--Maryland--Baltimore

Genre: Nitrate negatives

Notes: - Actual size of negative is D (approximately 3 1/4 x 4 1/4 inches).

- Caption card lists some of the printing history of image.

- Title and other information from caption card.

- Transfer; United States. Office of War Information. Overseas Picture Division. Washington Division; 1944.

- More information about the FSA/OWI Collection is available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.fsaowi>

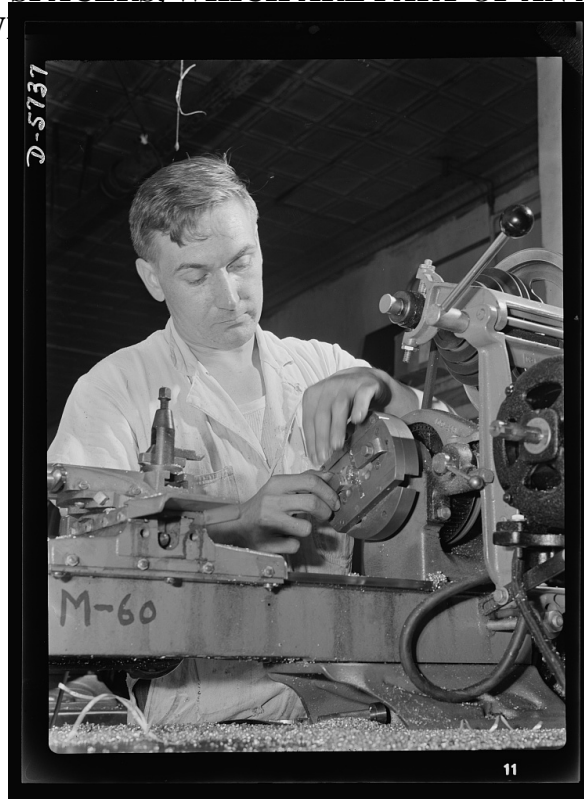
- Film copy on SIS roll 33, frame 15.

Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

Digital Id: fsa 8b07342 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b07342

MANPOWER. HANDICAPPED WORKERS. JOSEPH WITTE, TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS OLD, IS ONE OF UNCLE SAM'S DISABLED WAR WORKERS. WITH BOTH LEGS AFFLICTED BY INFANTILE PARALYSIS, HE'S NEVERTHELESS AN EXPERT LATHE OPERATOR AND ASSISTANT FOREMAN IN A BALTIMORE FACTORY. HE'S SHOWN HERE TURNING THE INSIDE RADIUS OF SPACERS, WHICH ARE PART OF AN AIRPLANE MOTOR'S SUPERCHARGER. WITTE, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND



Reference Link: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2017693402/>

Contributor Names: Rosener, Ann, photographer

United States. Office of War Information.

Created / Published: 1942 Aug.

Subject Headings: - United States--Maryland--Baltimore

Genre: Nitrate negatives

Notes: - Actual size of negative is D (approximately 3 1/4 x 4 1/4 inches).

- Title and other information from caption card.

- Transfer; United States. Office of War Information. Overseas Picture Division. Washington Division; 1944.

- More information about the FSA/OWI Collection is available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.fsaowi>

- Film copy on SIS roll 33, frame 13.

Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

Digital Id: fsa 8b07340 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b07340

MANPOWER. HANDICAPPED WORKERS. ERSTWHILE SEWER OF FINE SEAMS, MINNIE ROST, CRIPPLED BY INFANTILE PARALYSIS, HAS A NEW JOB WHICH IS VITAL TO AMERICA'S WAR EFFORT. SHE'S HAND-BURRING Y'S FOR AIPLANE ENGINES AT THE MARYLAND LEAGUE FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN. WHITE ENGINEERING COMPANY,



Reference Link: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2017693404/>

Contributor Names: Rosener, Ann, photographer

United States. Office of War Information.

Created / Published: 1942 Aug.

Subject Headings: - United States--Maryland--Baltimore

Genre: Nitrate negatives

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- Transfer; United States. Office of War Information. Overseas Picture Division. Washington Division; 1944.

- More information about the FSA/OWI Collection is available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.fsaowi>

- DDE: doesn't match lot; probably should be in 1974.

- Film copy on SIS roll 33, frame 14.

Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

Digital Id: fsa 8b07341 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b07341

MANPOWER. HANDICAPPED WORKERS. WITH BOTH ARMS AND LEGS CRIPPLED BY INFANTILE PARALYSIS, PRETTY MARY ELIZABETH CONWAY, TWENTY-ONE, DOES A WAR JOB FOR UNCLE SAM, AND LOVES IT. SHE'S PAINTING Y'S FOR AIRPLANE ENGINES AT THE MARYLAND LEAGUE FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN, WORKING ON A CONTRACT TO A BALTIMORE ENGINEERING COMPANY. WHITE ENGINEERING COMPANY,



Reference Link: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2017693407/>

Contributor Names: Rosener, Ann, photographer

United States. Office of War Information.

Created / Published: 1942 Aug.

Subject Headings: - United States--Maryland--Baltimore

Genre: Nitrate negatives

Notes: - Actual size of negative is D (approximately 3 1/4 x 4 1/4 inches).

- Caption card lists some of the printing history of image.

- Title and other information from caption card.

- Transfer; United States. Office of War Information. Overseas Picture Division. Washington Division; 1944.

- More information about the FSA/OWI Collection is available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.fsaowi>

- Film copy on SIS roll 33, frame 17.

Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

Digital Id: fsa 8b07344 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b07344

MANPOWER. HANDICAPPED WORKERS. INELIGIBLE FOR THE ARMY BECAUSE OF PHYSICAL HANDICAPS, JAMES C. SCHNEIDER (LEFT) AND JOHN D. ARROWOOD ARE TWO OF UNCLE SAM'S ABLEST SOLDIERS OF PRODUCTION. THEY ARE INSPECTORS OF AIRPLANE MOTOR PARTS IN A BALTIMORE FACTORY. TWENTY-YEAR-OLD SCHNEIDER HAS NOT LET INFANTILE PARALYSIS INTERFERE WITH WAR WORK, NOR HAS TWENTY-FOUR-YEAR-OLD ARROWOOD ALLOWED HIS POLIO-DISABLED LEG AND CURVATURE OF THE SPINE TO PREVENT HIS MAKING A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR EFFORT. WHITEHALL, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND



Reference Link: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2017693401/>

Contributor Names: Rosener, Ann, photographer
United States. Office of War Information.

Created / Published: 1942 Aug.

Subject Headings: - United States--Maryland--Baltimore

Genre: Nitrate negatives

Notes: - Actual size of negative is D (approximately 3 1/4 x 4 1/4 inches).

- Caption card lists some of the printing history of image.

- Title and other information from caption card.

- Transfer; United States. Office of War Information. Overseas Picture Division. Washington Division; 1944.

- More information about the FSA/OWI Collection is available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.fsaowi>

- Film copy on SIS roll 33, frame 12.

Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA



<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

Digital Id: fsa 8b07339 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b07339

MANPOWER. HANDICAPPED WORKERS. AUBURN-HAIRED, TWENTY-ONE-YEAR-OLD, BELVA FLETCHER, LEFT, HANDICAPPED BY PROGRESSIVE PARALYSIS, IS STILL ABLE TO DO A GOOD JOB FOR UNCLE SAM. WITH TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD HENRIETTE FURLEY, SHE'S PAINTING Y'S FOR AIRPLANE ENGINES AT THE MARYLAND LEAGUE FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN, WHERE THIS WORK IS DONE UNDER SUBCONTRACT TO A BALTIMORE ENGINEERING COMPANY. HENRIETTE IS BADLY CRIPPLED BY ARTHRITIS AND MUST WORK STANDING BECAUSE OF THE ARTHRITIC CONDITION FROM WHICH SHE S



Reference Link: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2017693408/>

Contributor Names: Rosener, Ann, photographer

United States. Office of War Information.

Created / Published: 1942 Aug.

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Genre: Nitrate negatives

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- Transfer; United States. Office of War Information. Overseas Picture Division. Washington Division; 1944.

- More information about the FSA/OWI Collection is available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.fsaowi>

- Film copy on SIS roll 41, frame 528.

Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

Digital Id: fsa 8b09731 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b09731

MANPOWER. HANDICAPPED WORKERS. A VICTIM OF INFANTILE PARALYSIS, ROBERT H. DRAKE, TWENTY-SIX, DOES A JOB ANY MAN WOULD BE PROUD OF. HE'S AN EXPERT DRILL PRESS OPERATOR IN A BALTIMORE FACTORY WHICH MAKES AIRPLANE MOTOR PARTS. DESPITE RESTRICTED USE OF BOTH LEGS AND HIS RIGHT ARM, ROBERT MAINTAINS HIGH PRODUCTION STANDARDS BOTH FOR SPEED AND QUALITY OF



Reference Link: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2017693400/>

Contributor Names: Rosener, Ann, photographer

United States. Office of War Information.

Created / Published: 1942 Aug.

Subject Headings: - United States--Maryland--Baltimore

Genre: Nitrate negatives

Notes: - Actual size of negative is D (approximately 3 1/4 x 4 1/4 inches).

- Caption card lists some of the printing history of image.

- Title and other information from caption card.

- Transfer; United States. Office of War Information. Overseas Picture Division. Washington Division; 1944.

- More information about the FSA/OWI Collection is available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.fsaowi>

- Film copy on SIS roll 33, frame 11.

Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

Digital Id: fsa 8b07338 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b07338

MANPOWER. HANDICAPPED WORKERS. WITH NO PREVIOUS INDUSTRIAL EXPERIENCE, THELMA LILLY LEARNED TO OPERATE THIS BURRING MACHINE THREE MONTHS AGO AND TODAY IS WORKING FULL-TIME ON Y'S FOR AMERICA'S BATTLESHIPS OF THE AIR. DESPITE CRIPPLING EFFECTS OF ARRESTED TUBERCULOSIS OF THE SPINE, MISS LILLY IS ONE OF AMERICA'S INVALUABLE WOMEN "BEHIND THE MEN BEHIND THE GUNS." SHE'S ONE OF A GROUP OF PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED WOMEN AT THE MARYLAND LEAGUE FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN, WORKING ON SUBCONTRACT TO A BALTIMORE ENGINEERING COMPANY. WHITE ENGINEERING COMPANY, BALTIMORE,



Reference Link: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2017693406/>

Contributor Names: Rosener, Ann, photographer

United States. Office of War Information.

Created / Published: 1942 Aug.

Subject Headings: - United States--Maryland--Baltimore

Genre: Nitrate negatives

Notes: - Actual size of negative is D (approximately 3 1/4 x 4 1/4 inches).

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- Transfer; United States. Office of War Information. Overseas Picture Division. Washington Division; 1944.

- More information about the FSA/OWI Collection is available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.fsaowi>

- Film copy on SIS roll 33, frame 16.

Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA



<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

Digital Id: fsa 8b07343 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b07343

MANPOWER. HANDICAPPED WORKERS. ALTHOUGH SUFFERING FROM SEVERE PHYSICAL HANDICAPS, ROBERT HUDSON MAKES A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATION'S WAR PROGRESS. OPERATING A BAND SAW IN A BALTIMORE FACTORY, HE PROCESSES ALUMINUM HEARTS WHICH ARE PART OF AIRPLANE MOTOR ASSEMBLIES. IN ADDITION TO BEING ONE OF THE "LITTLE MEN," ONE OF HIS FEET WAS AMPUTATED FOLLOWING AN INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT. WHITE ENGINEERING



Reference Link: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2017693399/>

Contributor Names: Rosener, Ann, photographer

United States. Office of War Information.

Created / Published: 1942 Aug.

Subject Headings: - United States--Maryland--Baltimore

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- More information about the FSA/OWI Collection is available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.fsaowi>

- Film copy on SIS roll 33, frame 10.

Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>



Digital Id: [fsa 8b07337 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b07337](https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b07337)

DAV AND AFH TO SPONSOR HANDICAPPED-JOB EFFORT (WILMINGTON MORNING

DAV And AFH To Sponsor Handicapped-Job Effort

Co-sponsored by the Disabled American Veterans organization, and the American Federation of Handicapped, "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week" begins today with the blessings of recognized groups throughout the nation.

Congress has designated the first full week in October each year to be recognized for this purpose. The initial nation-wide campaign was held in 1945.

Wide and unprecedented use of handicapped workers during World War II, when labor was at a premium, demonstrated the amazing fact that properly placed disabled employees are not only as efficient and productive as other workers, but are generally superior, it was said.

A comparatively new technique, "selective placement," is held by industrial experts as being reason for the success enwed by employers in hiring physically handicapped workers. It means fitting the worker to a ob that he is able to do, and not trying to make a job for the handicapped employee, the industrilists declare.

Actually, selective placement is

only a changed viewpoint on the part of the employer. It means looking at the handicapped worker from the standpoint of what he can do, rather than what he is unable to accomplish. It means stressing his abilities, rather than his disabilities, according to men who have successfully employed men with limited working capacity.

The DAV estimates there will be about 2,500,000 compensable disabled veterans of World War II, by the end of next year. With 500,000 veterans of previous wars permanently injured, and about 3,000,000 non-service connected physically handicapped veterans, a total labor market of 6,000,000 disabled veterans will be a fact in 1948.

Approximately one - half the world's supply of tin and three-fourths of its rubber are shipped from the great docks along Singapore's water front in normal times.

PLANT PEONIES

NOW is time. Special offer by nationally-known World's Fair landscape gardener. Finest selection reds, whites, pinks. Assorted, 6 plants \$1.50; 12 for \$2.50. Cash orders prepaid, or sent C.O.D.

Reference Link: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn78002169/1946-10-06/ed-1/seq-4/>

Wilmington Morning Star, October 6, 1946, p.4-A (article located in center under portrait photos)

Alt Text

DAV and AFH To Sponsor Handicapped-Job Effort

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Teaching Notes:

Brava, Ellie!

"Why didn't I hear about this in high school?" is what a young disability activist said to me when he first saw the photo of Robert Hudson (above), which is included in the [Library of Congress Free to Use and Reuse source set on Disability Awareness](#).

There is a great 2017 blog post on WWI Rehabilitation and its impacts at the Library of Congress. [Link to World War I: Injured Veterans and the Disability Rights Movement](#).

There is [Wise Guide on Real Life Rosie the Riveters](#).

I am excited to see the resources and teaching ideas from teachers.



Teaching Notes:

I remembered you sharing that story during the disability history workshop in June and it really stuck with me. What a great reminder about the impacts of teaching more inclusive history lessons!

And thanks for sharing these resources! I'm putting together an album on the 1918 Rehabilitation Act, (it should be up by early next week), which will help facilitate more of these cross-era comparisons.



Teaching Notes:

I just listened to a powerful NPR podcast from FreshAir on a new book by Lindsey Fitzharris called *The Facemaker* about reconstructive facial surgery on WWI veterans. In general, I am much more interested in the stories of advocacy by people with disabilities than I am in the history of medical technology. However, it is necessary for disability historians to understand the context of injury-disease and how society in general perceived and treated disabled people.

<https://www.npr.org/2022/07/20/1112547092/facial-reconstructive-surgery-in-wwi>



Teaching Notes:

I, too, heard the Fresh Air piece about the new book, and it reminded me that I had created an album here in the TPS Teachers Network a few years ago titled [World War I Era Disability Photos](#). Perhaps it will save others a little time searching for photos of such veterans, their post-war training, and device "accommodations," as we might say today.

The *Smithsonian Magazine* also published an article recently about the book titled [Inside a Trailblazing Surgeon's Quest to Reconstruct WWI Soldiers' Disfigured Faces](#).