

Local Women Join the Workforce



We Can Do It!



WAR PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

'Rosies' and 'Sallys' Step Up to Bat

When the able-bodied men of the U.S. were called to war, women of all ages and social status were needed to fill their places on the home front. These women worked diligently to keep the nation going and "keep the home fires burning" until the enemies of America were defeated.

"Rosie the Riveter" and "Swing Shift Sally" embodied the 19 million women who went to work in the aircraft factories, naval yards, and munitions plants. They were fueling the boys at the front by producing "the needed war supplies for VICTORY!"

Those women who never left the home also helped fight in many other ways. They

dealt with food rationing, became air-raid wardens, sold war bonds, collected scrap, organized book and clothing drives, and performed all manner of necessary war time duties as well as maintained the family unit on their own.

Women pitched in at every level, sometimes encountering extreme prejudice along the way, and helped win WWII by accepting new roles for women in the workplace and sacrificing creature comforts, making do with what little they had. All their efforts were to ensure that the man on the fighting front had enough to do his job and get home as soon as possible.



Gas station attendants
Ann and Matilda
Mikkelsen.



Female Gas Attendants in Valley City

Valley City Times Record, August 14th, 1942-

Valley City takes its place along with numerous larger cities where pretty girls are taking the place of male gas attendants at gasoline service stations. Over at the Sunset Station, on the western edge of the city, the two Mikkelsen sisters, Matilda and Ann, are assisting their brother in answering to the wants of the motorist during the summer months. During the school year, they are engaged in teaching.

Oriska Woman Operates Wayside Station Alone

Valley City Times Record, May 8th, 1945-

During the war, many pert young lassies put dust rags and vacuum cleaners away in the closet, donned sporty coveralls - and became filling station attendants for the duration. Grey-haired Myrtle Wolfley of Oriska beat the youthful gals to the job by several years, operating a service station with her son, Clarence, since 1933. When the army called Clarence, Mrs. Wolfley kept right on feeding oil-hungry engines and putting air in deflated tires, doing by herself all the greasy jobs involved in running a service station.

For four years now, Mrs. Wolfley has been alone on the job, living in the Wayside filling station, always on hand to help a troubled motorist. "I don't know much about mechanics - Clarence was the mechanic," she confided with a warm smile. "But whenever anyone has car trouble, I tell them to come into the garage here and we tinker away on the motor. I have many spare parts for sale and we generally get things pretty well fixed up."

Just Three of Our Area 'Government Girls'

World War II saw women taking on roles with the government they wouldn't have considered before. Lorraine Osen was working for her father as a bookkeeper at CH Carpenter Lumber in Valley City. When the U.S. entered the war in 1941, she took the civil service exam and was assigned as a bookkeeper to the Adjutant General's office in Washington D.C. Olivia Kjelland, a graduate of Green Consolidated School, found herself working for the Signal Corps in Washington D.C. as a cryptography clerk, helping to decode enemy messages. And Doris Lee Bashore, a 1939 Valley City High School graduate, was employed by the government in a welding research project conducted at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, CA; she was responsible for photographing spot welds with a special magnifying camera. These are just three of the many area women who served as 'government girls'.



(Far left) Lorraine Osen
Noles, (left) Olivia
Kjelland, (above) Doris
Lee Bashore.



This helmet is Alice Hochhalter's of Mandan and is similar to what Rhoda wore.



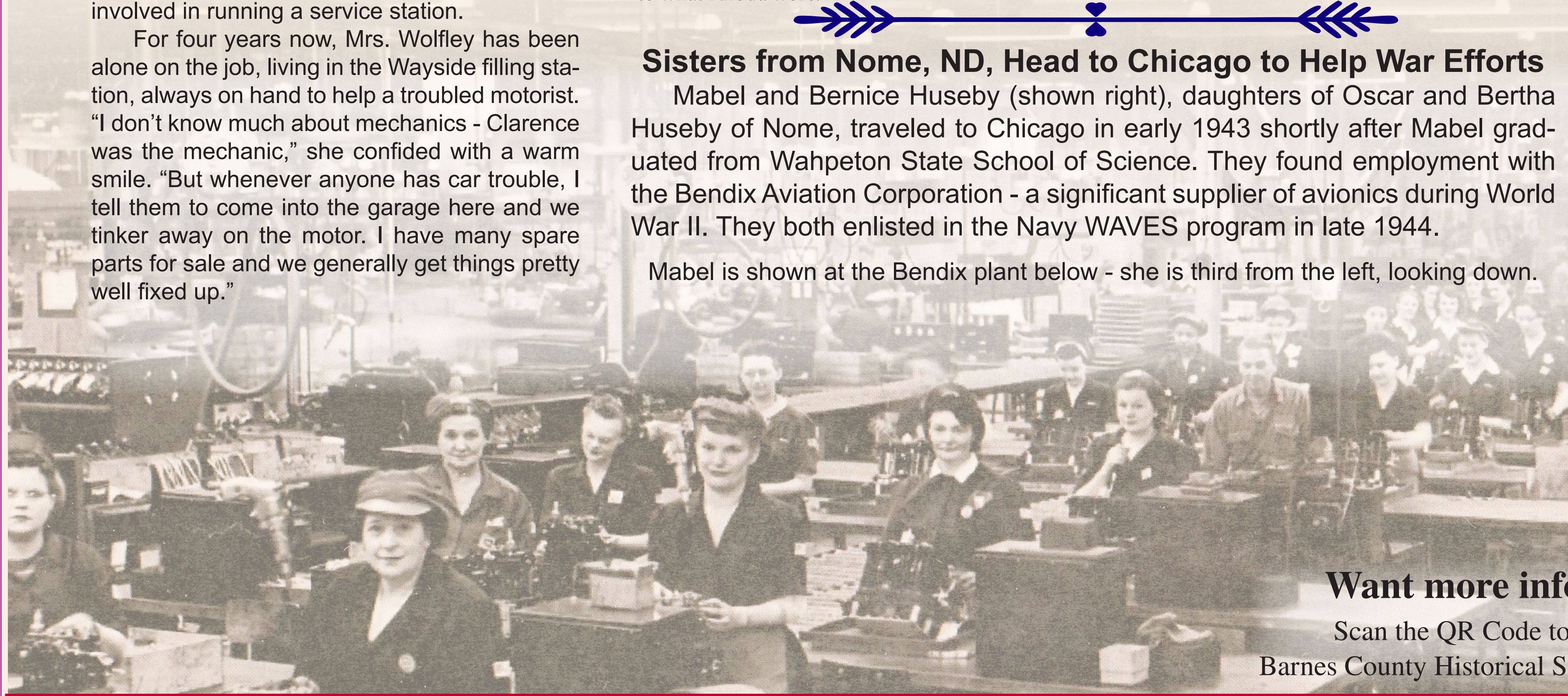
Local Girl Takes Her Welding Skills to the Shipyards

In 1940, Rhoda Grasswick Pomplun (shown left) believed, along with her sister Margit and three brothers - Arthur, James, and Carl, that it was only a matter of time before the U.S. entered the war in Europe. The brothers enlisted in the Army Air Corps. After the Pearl Harbor attack, while her brothers were in officer training in South Carolina, Rhoda and Margit went to visit them. While there, the two sisters decided to join the war effort. So in 1942, they went to work at the Charleston Shipyards. Margit worked in the office, but Rhoda was familiar with welding as her father owned a service shop in Valley City, so she became a welder at the shipyard. In 1943, Rhoda was one of five women nationwide to receive a Maritime Commission award for welding.

Sisters from Nome, ND, Head to Chicago to Help War Efforts

Mabel and Bernice Huseby (shown right), daughters of Oscar and Bertha Huseby of Nome, traveled to Chicago in early 1943 shortly after Mabel graduated from Wahpeton State School of Science. They found employment with the Bendix Aviation Corporation - a significant supplier of avionics during World War II. They both enlisted in the Navy WAVES program in late 1944.

Mabel is shown at the Bendix plant below - she is third from the left, looking down.



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