

The Impact of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and WAAC Branch No. 1 During World War II

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WAC Branch No. 1 Army Administration School Nacogdoches, TX, Volume 1. February 1943-August 1943. Army Administration School: Women's Army Corps Scrapbooks. East Texas Research Center. Ralph W. Steen Library, Nacogdoches, TX. Left: Page 14 Center: Page 4 Right: Page 48

Background: As men left to fight in WWII, women's involvement in home-front jobs and clerical jobs became a necessity to free up men for fighting. To train women for these tasks, army administration schools were created. SFA was the site of the first school training these women, the Women's Army Corps.

Thesis: WAACs benefited SFA, Nacogdoches, and women during WWII, for their station effectively supplemented local income as men left to fight in the war, set precedents for similar programs, and furthered acceptance of women in male-dominated fields locally and nationally, the impacts of which are still relevant.

Local Impacts

- Interaction with local economy and social events benefited Nacogdoches
- Prevented the SFASTC campus from closing during the war as enrollment declined

The administration school was President Boynton's attempt to ensure the school received federal funding as enrollment declined and the school faced closure. As the administration school utilized the SFA campus, SFA was compensated and the WAACs who trained there contributed financially to local shops and businesses.

Precedents

- Early classes worked out the challenges of the new program
 - Intense course load
- Class sizes and demographics

As WAAC Branch No.1 was the first of its kind, its practices became the norm for similar programs. There were a total of five administration schools in Texas and more in other states.

Integration of women into male-dominated fields

- Local interaction improved acceptance of the WAACs in Nacogdoches.
- Integration into the Army based on functional equivalence to men proved women were valuable
- Provided training and careers for women after graduation

Nacogdoches and the Army valued traditional gender roles, but the WAAC helped both learn to value women in new roles.

Relevance: It is important to look at the WAACs in terms of their local impact in keeping Nacogdoches and SFA afloat economically as well as their role within a broader national context. Their national contributions were integral to the war effort and the improved status of women. Their service established that women are valuable beyond the household which resulted in the empowerment of women and increased opportunities within society.