

ABSTRACT
HOME FRONT IMAGES: SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE
UNITED STATES OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION

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Between 1935 and 1945 a team of some of the nation's most talented photographers took more than a quarter of a million photographs of American life. Beginning with the Resettlement Administration (later the Farm Security Administration) and during the war years (1942-45), the Publication Bureau of the United States Office of War Information, such gifted artists as Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Theodor Jung, Russell Lee, John Vachon, Jack Delano, John Collins, Marjorie Collins, Arthur Siegel, Gordon Parks, Fritz Henle, and others captured in images the rich panorama of American society.

Today some eighty-seven thousand of the original two hundred seventy thousand photographs of this collection are mounted with captions and are on file in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. Until recently, just a small percentage of these photographs had ever been seen, with only a mere handful ever reproduced with any degree of frequency. This lack of use was due to the difficulty of physically dealing with two hundred thirty-five file drawers of eighty-seven thousand unindexed photographs. Fortunately the entire collection is now indexed and available on microfiche.

The part of the collection that relates to the Second World War represents some fifteen thousand images of the American homefront. Every facet of domestic war-time America is captured by the camera's eye. This part of the collection offers to the historian a largely untapped source of World War II Americana that evokes the spirit and soul of this past age with each image. The rich diversity of these pictures makes an invaluable resource for the teacher and writer. The following slides represent a brief glimpse of the variety and scope of this exceptional photographic collection. From the harnessing of American industrial might and patriotic storefront displays to the efforts of those from all walks of society these images reflect a time of much dislocation, considerable unpleasantness, oft-times excitement and always national determination. They were "Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph."¹

NOTE

¹Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph* (New York: McCann and Geoghegan, 1973).