Chapter 20

Section 3  Life on the Home Front
Chapter Objectives

Section 3: Life on the Home Front

- Describe how the wartime economy created opportunities for women and minorities.
- Discuss how Americans coped with shortages and rapidly rising prices.
Guide to Reading

Main Idea

World War II placed tremendous demands on Americans at home and led to new challenges for all Americans.

Key Terms and Names

• Rosie the Riveter
• A. Philip Randolph
• Sunbelt
• zoot suit
• rationing
• victory garden
• E bond
An American Story

Click the Speaker button to listen to the audio again.
Women and Minorities Gain Ground

• Compared to the devastation in Europe and Asia, World War II had a positive effect on American society.

• It put an end to the Depression.

• The war led to the creation of almost 19 million new jobs and doubled the income of most American families.
Women and Minorities Gain Ground (cont.)

• The wartime labor shortage forced factories to hire married women in positions that were traditionally considered men’s work. “Rosie the Riveter,” a character from a popular song by the Four Vagabonds, became a symbol for the campaign to hire women.

• The campaign resulted in 2.5 million women entering the manufacturing workforce.
Women and Minorities Gain Ground (cont.)

- Factories still resisted the hiring of African Americans. **A. Philip Randolph**, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, a major union for African American railroad workers, took action.↓

- He informed Roosevelt of his plan to organize a march on Washington to secure jobs for African Americans.
Women and Minorities Gain Ground (cont.)

• On June 25, 1941, the president responded with Executive Order 8802, declaring no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or government.
Women and Minorities Gain Ground (cont.)

- In 1942 the federal government started the **Bracero Program**, which arranged for Mexican farmworkers to come to the United States to help harvest fruits and vegetables on farms in the Southwest.

- More than 200,000 Mexicans came to help with the harvest and to build and maintain railroads.
Women and Minorities Gain Ground (cont.)

How did women and minorities gain ground in the American workforce?

The wartime labor shortage forced factories to hire married women in positions that were traditionally considered men’s work. On June 25, 1941, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, declaring no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or government. To enforce the order, Roosevelt created the Fair Employment Practices Commission. In 1942 the federal government started the Bracero Program, which arranged for Mexican farmworkers to come to the United States to help harvest fruits and vegetables on farms in the Southwest. More than 200,000 Mexicans came to help with the harvest and to build and maintain railroads.
A Nation on the Move

• Roughly 15 million Americans moved west and south during the war to be closer to the new jobs available.

• The growth of southern California and the expansion of cities in the Deep South created a new industrial region called the Sunbelt.

• The federal government allocated over $1.2 billion to build public housing, schools, and community centers during the war to accommodate all the new workers.
A Nation on the Move (cont.)

- African Americans resumed the Great Migration, as they left the South and headed to cities in the North and West for factory jobs.

- In these cities, African Americans were often confronted with suspicion and intolerance, sometimes ending with violence.
Across the nation, crimes committed by youths rose dramatically.

The zoot suit, baggy pants and an overstuffed, knee-length jacket with wide lapels, appeared unpatriotic to many that were saving fabric for the war.

The zoot suit was worn by many Mexican American teens.
A Nation on the Move (cont.)

• When zoot suiters were rumored to have attacked several sailors, 2,500 soldiers and sailors stormed into Mexican American neighborhoods in Los Angeles.

• This racial violence did not deter Mexican Americans from joining the war effort.
A Nation on the Move (cont.)

• On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed an order allowing the War Department to declare any part of the United States a military zone and remove anybody from the zone.

• The West Coast was declared a military zone, and all people of Japanese ancestry were evacuated to 10 internment camps.
A Nation on the Move (cont.)

Discussion Question

Why did racism increase in the United States during the war?

African Americans resumed the Great Migration, as they left the South and headed to cities in the North and West for factory jobs. In these cities, African Americans were often confronted with suspicion and intolerance, sometimes ending with violence. The zoot suit was worn by many Mexican American teens, resulting in a raid by 2,500 soldiers into Mexican American neighborhoods in Los Angeles, and a ban on the zoot suit. After the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese, Americans living on the West Coast turned their anger against Japanese Americans. On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed an order allowing the War Department to declare any part of the United States a military zone and remove anybody from the zone. The West Coast was declared a military zone, and all people of Japanese ancestry were evacuated to 10 internment camps.
Daily Life in Wartime America

- President Roosevelt, worried about inflation, established the **Office of Price Administration (OPA)** and the Office of Economic Administration (OES).

- The OPA regulated wages and the price of farm products.

- The OES regulated all other prices.

- The War Labor Board (WLB) worked to prevent strikes that would endanger the war effort. American unions issued a “no strike pledge.”
Daily Life in Wartime America (cont.)

- **Rationing**, or limiting the availability of products, occurred as the demand for raw materials and supplies increased and created shortages.
- Each month a book of ration coupons was given to each household for processed foods and meats, fats, and oils.

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Daily Life in Wartime America (cont.)

- **Victory gardens** were planted to produce more food for the war effort.
- Scrap drives were organized to collect spare rubber, tin, aluminum, and steel.
- Americans exchanged bacon grease and meat drippings for extra ration coupons because fats and oils were so vital to the production of explosives.
Daily Life in Wartime America (cont.)

• To raise money for the war, the government raised taxes, covering about 45 percent of the cost of the war.

• **E bonds** were sold to Americans to help pay for the war.

• Through the purchase of these bonds, Americans were loaning money to the government.

• The bonds could be redeemed in the future for the purchase price plus interest.
Daily Life in Wartime America (cont.)

• Most Americans were united in the goal of winning the war.
How did Americans at home contribute to the war effort?

Americans rationed many consumer products to make sure enough were available for military use. To save gasoline and rubber, driving was restricted, and the speed limit was set at 35 miles per hour. Many Americans planted victory gardens to produce more food for the war effort. They held scrap drives to collect certain raw materials vital to the war effort. Americans bought E bonds to help pay for the war.
Checking for Understanding

**Define** Match the terms on the right with their definition on the left.

1. **B** the giving out of scarce items on a limited basis
   - A. Sunbelt
   - B. rationing
   - C. victory garden

2. **A** a new industrial region in Southern California and the Deep South developing during World War II

3. **C** gardens planted by American citizens during war to raise vegetables for home use, leaving more for the troops

Click the mouse button or press the Space Bar to display the answers.
Explain how the federal government expanded during the war.

New government agencies controlled the economy, raised taxes, and issued war bonds.
Civic Rights and Responsibility  What changes did American citizens and industry have to make to adapt to the war?

Industry and workers accepted wage and price controls and agreed to settle wage disputes by using WLB mediators. Citizens accepted rationing, planted victory gardens, recycled, and purchased war bonds.
Critical Thinking

**Evaluating**  If you had been a government official during the war, how would you have proposed paying for the war?

**Answers will vary.**
Click the Speaker button to listen to the audio again.
Migration in the United States, 1940–1950

Total Population Increase 1940–1950
- 400,000 and over
- 200,000–399,999
- 100,000–199,999
- 50,000–99,999

Population migration between regions
Tule Lake, California, was an internment camp where Japanese Americans were forcibly relocated and confined during World War II. These persons were denied their rights of due process and lost their homes, livelihoods, and good names.

**Directions:** Answer the following question based on the image and information at left.

**What can be said about the conditions many Japanese Americans endured at home during World War II?**

- **F** These persons moved voluntarily.
- **G** These persons were moved to prison-like areas with high fences and guard towers.
- **H** There was no forced relocation of Americans during the war.
- **J** The only persons interned were known spies.