

OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION  
AND MACDONALD BROTHERS AIRCRAFT LTD.

1939-1947

by

Karen Wiederkehr

A thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
of the Universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

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**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

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## ABSTRACT

During World War II many Canadian women went to work outside the home into jobs that were directly linked to wartime production. As men's employment in the armed forces increased, so did employment opportunities for women in non-traditional industrial jobs once held exclusively by men. The hiring of women into new jobs and those jobs vacated by men became a necessity to maintain production of war and other essential industries. Women moved into occupations related to shipbuilding, aircraft and munitions manufacture. They became drill press operators, riveters, buckers, welders and crane operators and filled a host of other technical based occupations. At an unprecedented rate, women entered jobs previously closed to them because of the Canadian social ideology that viewed employment primarily in terms of being either men's work or women's work. Suitable work for the latter group was limited to employment that reflected accepted notions regarding the compatibility of certain types of employment for women with their roles prescribed by the sex and gender ideology of the day.

As women were encouraged to release a man for service in the armed forces by replacing him on the production line, they also discovered a limitation on such an invitation. The Canadian social ideology which cast occupations as

being either male or female was forced to accept the temporary disruption caused by the war, but did not alter significantly with regard to permanently expanding employment opportunities for women. Rather women found that although their war jobs did pay higher wages than those they had received in their pre-war occupations, they were usually in the lower skilled, lower paying occupations. If women performed the same work as a man, they still received women's wages.

This paper seeks to determine if such patterns of female work experiences could be found in the aircraft industry in Winnipeg, Manitoba during World War II. MacDonald Brothers Aircraft Ltd. of Winnipeg, Manitoba was examined as a case study, and former aircraft workers, both female and male were interviewed.

Contrary to commonly held beliefs, occupational segregation did not disappear during World War II from MacDonald Brothers Aircraft, but was simply altered in form to meet the realities of wartime needs. This alteration represented a temporary adaptation of the normal sex and gender ideology, not a permanent shift in ideology. The post-war period saw a resumption, by both women and men, of pre-war roles and activities. Such roles were considered both acceptable and desirable by the respondents interviewed for this project.

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## CHAPTER 1

The popular American image of women during the war years was captured by "Rosie the Riveter", a lovely, independent, no nonsense "gal" who was answering the call of patriotism through her work efforts on the home front. She embodied the reality that men were away at war and women were needed to take their place in factories at home. Yet the image of Rosie faded as quickly after World War II as it had surfaced during hostilities. Where did she go? The common belief is that she went home - back to the place she really belonged. Although Rosie was predominantly an American creation, she represented an image with which some Canadian women readily identified.<sup>1</sup>

The literature concerning women and their World War II experiences is extensive. Most of it is British or American. Canadian scholarship in the field has been minimal. Debate has centred around questions of the significance of the supposed employment gains of World War II and the translation of those gains into permanent and positive changes for women in the post-war era. The studies split into two camps over the question of the significance of World War II to women. One school of thought has seen the war and the opportunity it offered for the non-traditional waged labour force participation of women as an impetus for change in the accepted ideology of sex and gender roles, particularly in North

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<sup>1</sup>Many of the women interviewed for this paper used the term "Rosie the Riveter" to describe themselves and their war work.

America. The other claims that the war was merely a blip in the normal, and continuing, expression of the dominant sex and gender ideology of the day.

The view of World War II as a catalyst of social change for women was put forward by William Chafe (1972), who interpreted the war as a disruption of traditional social and economic patterns which pushed women into new areas of activity. The addition of 6.5 million women to the labour force, he claimed, made women aware of discrimination and injustices against them, and allowed a new set of expectations to emerge in which women demanded change. Gaps between exclusively male and female spheres narrowed, and society undertook to rethink the ideology of women's place. He argued that the stellar work performances of women during the war not only initiated a reassessment of the sex and gender ideology of the day, but also led to greater acceptance of female workers as equals by male co-workers. He concluded that the participation of married women in the workplace during World War II was of even greater importance because their more productive role in society and greater authority in the home led to changes in the dominant ideology which prescribed the division of labour by sex. While Chafe recognized the resilience of the concept of the ideal woman and her place in American society, and the continued wage differences between male and female workers, he asserted that women's increased labour force participation represented a "catalyst which broke up old modes of behaviour and helped to forge new ones" (Chafe 1972:247).

Chester Gregory, like Chafe, trumpeted the achievements of women during



world war two, claiming that "the face-to-face confrontation impelled a new look at American society and the place of women in it" (Gregory 1974:xx). He assumed at the outset of his study that the war had created greater equality between women and men and societal acceptance of women working in non-traditional industrial occupations. Not surprisingly, his conclusion was identical to his *a priori* assumption.

However, if a relationship between war-induced labour needs and permanent shifts in the ideological prescription of proper roles for women and men within a society exists, it is more subtle than Gregory's work admits. His glowing account failed to notice the mass post-war layoffs of women, and the implications this had for what he and Chafe identified as changed ideologies concerning the roles and values placed upon women in the American social fabric.

The work and conclusions of Chafe and Gregory stimulated a flurry of historical research on the long-term significance of world war two experiences in the lives of women, ranging from in-depth case studies of particular situations to anthologies of women's war experiences within a broad North American social context. Narrowly focused studies ranged from examinations of women's roles in the armed forces (D'Ann Campbell 1984; Ruth Pierson 1986), their experiences with unions (Nancy Gabin 1982; Ruth Milkman 1982; Ruth Milkman 1987), and universities (Nancy Kiefer 1984), the particular experiences of black women (Karen Anderson 1982), and the effects of war on childcare (William Dratch 1974; Karen Skold 1981). Several analytical studies sought ways to identify and

measure the presence of systemic discrimination (Edward Gross 1968; John Fox and Bonnie Fox 1987; Catherine Hakim 1979; Hugh E. Lautard 1976; Barbara Reskin and Heidi Hartmann 1986). Some broadly based cultural studies dealt with the impact of war on family life (Karen Anderson 1981), society's attitudes toward sex and gender and how they were supported and reinforced by government policies (Eleanor Straub 1973; Susan Hartmann 1978; Gail Cuthbert Brandt 1982; Margaret Allen 1983; Ruth Pierson 1986) and by wartime propaganda and media images directed toward women (Maureen Honey 1976; Leila Rupp 1978; Susan Bland 1983), and other prescriptive literature on appropriate feminine behaviour (Susan Hartmann 1978). A number of specific studies of actual work experiences of women during the war have also appeared.

Most of these researchers came to conclusions contrary to those of Chafe and Gregory. They identified a remarkable lack of change in traditional ideas of women's place during World War II. Research which followed Chafe and Gregory suggested that while the war was responsible for some temporary and superficial changes in gender roles, there were no large-scale shifts in the old, time-honoured ideology of sex and gender roles. Few people during and immediately after the war seriously challenged the old order, or thought in terms of permanent change in the status of women. Even the dramatic, large-scale entry of women into industrial occupations considered men's jobs had little immediate impact upon the existing sex and gender ideology of the day. The authors of the studies which followed Chafe and Gregory tended to see World War II as a

period during which there was not only marked continuity in society's perceptions of female and male roles, but which perpetuated rather than changed society's perceptions of female and male roles.

In the 1970s, sociologists and economists, as well as historians, began to look at the involvement of women in waged labour in an effort to understand if labour force experiences influenced ideological change. While historians explored the impact of the war on civilian populations, social scientists debated features of workplace organization and development, including the concept of occupational segregation in the workplace and the ways in which such segregation could be measured.

As early as 1972, Joan Trey had disputed the watershed theory with a counter argument that women as a labour source were simply manipulated in and out of the labour force as required during World War II, reflecting the view that women represented a reserve pool of labour to be mobilized during crises.

Further condemnation of the watershed theory came from Alice Kessler-Harris (1982) who re-examined and re-calculated Chafe's figures of female employment, adjusting for unemployment and the proportional increase of women in the American waged labour force since 1900. She insisted that out of a total 19 million American women who worked during World War II, less than 5 million women had not been in the workforce prior to the war. She further calculated, using averages of employment trends between 1900 and 1940, that an additional 1.5 million women would have entered waged employment during the 1940s due

to long term economic trends, war or no war. Kessler-Harris' figures do not confirm the watershed 6.5 million new female workers identified by Chafe. She argued that the increased numbers of women in the workforce during the war and immediately following the war reflected a continuity with pre-war attempts by women to obtain waged employment and to break out of traditional roles (Kessler-Harris 1982:276). Her conclusions indicated that the trend to increasing female participation in the American workforce had already been firmly established. Neither of these two scholars found a change in the ideology that saw different roles for women and men, rather there was an emergency to be managed.

By the late 1970s, some identifiable patterns and themes had begun to emerge from studies of female wartime employment. While women did move into a wider range of occupations, the pre-war employment realities of lower wages and restricted upward mobility remained (Alan Clive 1979; Skold 1981). Often women worked in occupations that were formally or informally classified as women's jobs and where few men were employed, or as a group were consistently found in low prestige occupations, while men held occupations of greater status or desirability (Milkman 1982; Milkman 1987; Pierson 1986; Nash 1989; Kessler-Harris 1982; Skold 1980). Generally women received limited training aimed at turning out an individual capable of immediately undertaking assembly line production (Pierson 1986; Skold 1980; Marilyn Noll-Clark 1977; Deborah Scott Hirshfield 1989). Such training would allow a woman to relieve a man from

civilian work, and release him for service in the armed forces. Outside of military service, instruction necessary to develop long-term skills was not made available to women (Pierson 1986; Skold 1981). Consequently, in the industrial workplace, women were often viewed as temporary replacements for the duration (Nash 1989; Milkman 1987; Pierson 1986; Amy Kesselman 1987).

While, in some researchers minds these elements add up to occupational segregation by sex, such a conclusion is overly simplistic. By focusing narrowly upon documenting the existence of occupational segregation, the works of Nash (1989), Milkman (1987), Skold (1981), Gross (1968), Hakim (1979), and Lautard (1976) overlook a critical factor influencing the organization of the workplace. The larger picture cannot be understood by simply counting instances of differing employment patterns of women and men or uncovering such features as differing wages, job status, classifications or training. These elements are essentially sub-features of the application of a widely accepted social ideology and the potential for ideological change. In the face of social upheaval caused by another world war, the application of a pre-war social ideology of sex and gender to the wartime workplace appeared as a recurring theme in the study of women and war work (Milkman 1982; Noll-Clark 1977; Pierson 1986), whether researchers acknowledged it or not (Skold, 1980, 1981; Nash 1989).

While studies focusing upon the segregation of jobs on the basis of sex appeared, many shared a common error; they confused and interchanged the terms "sexual division of labour" and "occupational segregation by sex." While

these terms have identified important features in understanding patterns of female employment, they are not equivalent nor specific enough to describe what was occurring in the workplace.

There is an important distinction between occupational segregation and the sexual division of labour. The sexual division of labour should be viewed as a conceptualization of the organization of work based on distinctions made according to biology. This distinction, by definition, does not mean that the value accorded to male work and female work is inherently unequal, yet many researchers make this assumption. Occupational segregation reflects the practice of a philosophy that separates women and men into different task areas based upon commonly held beliefs regarding appropriate feminine and masculine activities. The two terms are therefore not equivalent, although interdependent. As an example, the sexual division of labour might dictate that women bear children and men undertake tasks requiring great physical strength. While occupational segregation may be concerned with channelling women into jobs requiring childcare skills and men into jobs requiring hunting skills, it also ensures that if men are found in a childcare institution, they fill supervisory occupations. If women were found in an industry that utilized hunting skills, they would be found at levels of employment simplified to fulfil ideological prescriptions and therefore the lowest within the corporate hierarchy. Occupational segregation, then, is *built* upon the acceptance of the concept of a sexual division of labour. It *assumes* and *ascribes* different characteristics for humans based upon biology and

social constructs of gender.

Yet the term occupational segregation by sex is also limiting as it does not allow us to consider the importance of gender and its role in the creation of commonly held societal beliefs about women and men and work. Occupational segregation is not by sex – the biological given – alone, but also through consideration of the gender of individuals<sup>2</sup>. Hence we could argue that segregation in the workplace stems from the application of a complicated gender system at work in society. Arguably the two factors which largely shape roles and status within society, biological sex and socially constructed gender, work in tandem to maintain and reproduce the dominant ideology regarding proper behaviour of members of society. The result is the belief that certain characteristics which are gender-defined are, in fact, qualities inherent to our particular sex and therefore inseparable from it.

There is a distinct body of research dealing with occupational segregation. While some of the scholarship seeks to explain how occupational segregation came to be, it is those studies that seek to document changes in the degree of occupational segregation over time that touch upon important elements for this study.

A number of studies (Gross 1968; Lautard 1978; Fox and Fox 1987) may be criticized for their attempts to articulate universal laws to govern the

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<sup>2</sup>It is understood that occupational segregation may also occur through placing limitations upon members of racial or ethnic groups. These types of segregation in the workplace will not be discussed in this paper.

occurrence of occupational segregation. Their models tend to be abstracted and questionable. In the pursuit of a universal explanation, much of the scholarship concerning occupational segregation relies upon complicated mathematical modelling, not easily connected to the subject under study (Lautard 1978; Gross 1968; Fox and Fox 1987). Other scholars use these models without questioning the value of such an exercise (Skold 1981; Reskin 1986; Hakim 1979). In some instances, what the authors believe they are doing is not what the research methods they employ actually indicate. They resort to equations when reliable qualitative data would provide more accessible support for their claims.

One such approach is the use of the index of dissimilarity (or index of segregation as it is sometimes called) to calculate changes in occupational segregation. This method of analysis has been utilized by Gross (1968), Lautard (1976), Fox and Fox (1987), Hakim (1979), and Skold (1981). While of some use in the broad measurement of the division of workers by sex among occupational categories, the explanatory power of this method is limited.

The index of dissimilarity is arrived at by determining the percentage of workers who would have to change jobs in order to create an equal distribution of jobs between sexes. The index of dissimilarity defines equality as being the same occupational distribution for men and women. The method is commonly applied to census material over long periods of time, but has also been used in studies of specific employers. Researchers using the index of dissimilarity claim their results indicate not only the sex composition of jobs, but also the degree of segregation in



the workplace.

This is incorrect. In their respective studies, Lautard (1976), Fox and Fox (1987), Gross (1968), Hakim (1979) and Skold (1981) present numerical results that reflect a pattern of occupational distribution of men and women, not the extent of occupational segregation. The figures are descriptive of the numbers of employees by sex in specific situations. The numbers that show a particular pattern of occupational distribution of females and males *may* lead us to believe something unusual is occurring. We may then determine why certain patterns of occupational distribution are visible and/or attempt to provide an explanation for that particular set of circumstances. Any such analysis is dependent upon the specifics of the particular case under study. Further research may lead us to conclude occupational segregation exists in a certain instance, but simply utilizing the index of dissimilarity does not.

Another flaw with the application of the index of dissimilarity is its underlying assumption that if all things were equal and if there were no barriers to employment and if all individuals exercised free choice, that the distribution of women across occupations would be identical to that of men. This assumption allows no room for the consideration of the influence of culture and ideology upon otherwise free choices of women and men.

The information base of researchers using the index of dissimilarity is also questionable because rarely do researchers have complete or compatible information from which to perform accurate calculations. For example,

procedures of information gathering and occupational categories used in Canadian census information gathering changed considerably from census to census, forcing researchers to attempt to reclassify and/or standardize their data base (F.H. Lacy, 1983:np). Given the limited value of raw census information, attempts to use such data require significant manipulation of census figures to recast them into comparably measurable data. Unfortunately the results are open to suspicion.

Furthermore, census information is not always reflective of labour force trends. The ten year gap between census taking in Canada meant important economic, social and political upheavals were missed. Noah Meltz (1969:1) noted the June 1931 census was halfway through the economic downturn leading to the Great Depression and the June 1941 census was part way through the subsequent economic recovery.

Studies which apply the index of dissimilarity do not take into consideration human and social elements such as the strength of enculturation, human behaviour and the prescription of distinct female and male roles through ideological convention. Research methods utilizing only numerical evidence neglect to deal with such variables as dominant sex and gender role ideology, or human choice and provide no explanation of occupational segregation, or proof that occupational segregation exists.

Historical studies of occupational segregation took the approach of focusing upon actual jobs performed by women and men. In an examination of the auto and electrical manufacturing industries in Detroit, Milkman (1987)

stressed that during World War II the boundaries between women's and men's work changed location, but did not disappear (Milkman 1987:49). This is a consistent feature of the World War II workplace; a necessary alteration, but fundamental maintenance of job segregation by sex persisted during the war. Milkman insisted that after the war employers sought to re-construct the pre-war sexual division of labour. However, her evidence suggests it was less of a *re-construction*, and more of a *resumption* of what was considered the normal state of affairs.

Milkman (1987:101) hangs her explanation of continued job segregation by sex in the immediate postwar period in the automotive and electrical industry upon management and unions. She concluded that hiring policies purposely maintained pre-war sexual divisions of labour, which had a long history of operation in these industries. And it was these policies, according to Milkman, which served to exclude women from men's jobs.

Milkman also implicated unions in the drive to return to the *status quo antebellum*; she claimed they did little to protect women, and were, in fact, actively opposed to female employment in what they considered men's jobs. Rank and file unacceptance of women, Milkman contended, only reinforced corporate resolve to reconstruct the segregative employment practices that had existed prior to World War II. Milkman has produced a useful addition to the debate over segregation in the workplace by uncovering the role of institutions in reinforcing the ideology of the day regarding sex and gender roles. And while she recognized

the unmeasurable strength of "an externally imposed ideological emphasis on domesticity", she argued that, as an explanation, it is less than completely satisfactory. She questioned whether the assumption that the rigid application of "the ideology of domesticity" would easily persuade large numbers of women to voluntarily give up their wartime jobs and once again accept employment in jobs formally or informally categorized as women's jobs (Milkman 1987:103). She found that many women wished to retain their wartime factory jobs, contrary to the publicly accepted idea that such employment was to be temporary and would not outlive the war.

Skold (1981) also sought to examine sex segregation in the workplace through a comparison of actual work performed by women and men in the Kaiser shipyards located in three areas of Portland, Oregon during World War II. Through the application of the index of segregation she determined that differing patterns of occupational distribution for women and men were present at the Kaiser shipyards. Women were overrepresented as welders, helpers and labourers, and underrepresented as journeymen in other crafts (Skold 1981:92). After determining in which occupations the majority of women workers were found, Skold attempted to determine whether new patterns of occupational segregation were emerging as women were hired as production workers.

Women at Kaiser Shipyards were concentrated into three occupational areas: journeymen, helpers/labourers and trainees (Skold 1981:97). Skold determined that some unskilled job categories were filled almost exclusively by

women, and came to be considered women's jobs. While women were found in virtually all crafts at Kaiser, further examination found that they were not in all occupational levels within those crafts. Women were rarely found in supervisory positions and when they were it was as supervisors of helpers and labourers, two occupational categories in which large numbers of women were working and in which they supervised mainly all women crews (Skold 1981:111). In addition, women supervisors of helpers and labourers earned a lower wage than the average journeyman (Skold 1981:110).

Skold discovered further segregation between women and men workers within the same job categories. Women and men performed different types of work, with women usually found performing the lower skilled and more mundane aspects of the job (Skold 1981:111). She found that in the occupation of welder, women were more frequently working as tackers, a type of welding requiring less skill than other welding jobs. Women electricians were found more often in the electrical shops wiring lights, not installing them on ships (Skold 1981:112).

As the supply of men available for work diminished, women were hired to fill vacancies, yet Skold concludes that those vacancies were found in unskilled, lower wage occupations that came to be considered women's jobs. While Skold found substantial segregation in the workforce of the Kaiser Shipyards, she focused upon the existence and extent of broad segregation, only briefly exposing a much more detailed level of segregation that was also present. She suggests the persistence of sex segregation in the Kaiser shipyards "in the midst of dramatic

changes in the type of work done by women suggests its importance as a structural feature of the labour force" (Skold 1981:216). Yet she misses the point; elements of inequities that she documented were, in all probability, found in all institutions that women interacted with as it had its basis in a long established and accepted ideology concerning the proper role of women.

Presenting similar findings, Nash (1989) documented the resistance of the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) to the large scale employment of women into what were traditionally men's jobs. Women were concentrated in acceptable women's jobs: clerks, stenographers, telephone and switchboard operators. Fewer numbers of women were employed as coach cleaners, station callers, loaders, truckers and porters (Nash 1989:611). The common characteristics of these jobs were their placement in terms of hierarchy and status within the PRR. The jobs were outdoor, involved long hours and were at the low end of pay scales.

The theme of lack of ideological change was apparent as Nash documented the resistance of PRR management to the hiring of women, even during a labour shortage. He stressed that before women were hired in significant numbers, it was necessary to instill in the minds of management "a full acceptance of the fact that women must be used in lieu of men during the present wartime emergency" (Nash 1989:612). The subsequent employment of women at the PRR saw them concentrated into traditional female jobs and temporary job assignments as replacements for men at unskilled, low paying occupational levels.

The works of Milkman, Nash and Skold failed to pursue the strength of the

social ideology of the day and its application and relevance for different groups of female employees. For it appeared that what women had done prior to the war had a great deal to do with what they felt should happen after the war. For example, Gluck (1987) found that women who worked for wages prior to the war realized they would continue work for wages in the post-war era. Those women who did not work prior to the war and entered the workplace for the first time during the war emergency were more likely to return home once hostilities had ceased and expect that this would be the normal pattern for all women. For the former group, white middle-class ideological prescriptions consigned women to the reality of limited occupational choices in the post-war economy (Gluck 1987:268). She suggested that permanent change in sex and gender ideologies of the day required more than a temporary foray into a man's world, and while women's war work represented an important step in the process of social change, that "women continued to define themselves as wives and mothers" (Gluck 1987:269). Studies by Milkman, Nash and Skold suffer from neglecting to fully consider the extent to which some women actively participated in acceptance of the sex and gender ideology of the 1940s and how such an acceptance was subsequently reflected in employment patterns of women.

In an effort to explain the similarities of the wartime experiences of women with their pre-war activities, some researchers have examined different elements of wartime civilian life. In doing so, they have turned their attention to the ideological underpinnings of society in an effort to understand the implications of

ideologies concerning sex and gender for women during the war.

A brief chapter in They're Still Women After All (Pierson 1986), focused on Canadian civilian women's working experiences. Pierson's findings presented no startling new evidence on the subject of women's wartime employment, but did reflect the patterns found by Hartmann (1982), Allen (1983), Honey (1984) and Straub (1973) concerning women, work and World War II. She argued there existed an irrational fear on the part of the government and society in general that mass mobilization of women into non-traditional activities might undermine the sex and gender system existing in Canada at the time of World War II. She labelled the female role in that system as the ideology of femininity: "through dress, deportment, mannerisms, speech, facial expression, cognitive style, and emotive range and mode, femininity 'both signifies and maintains' women's differences from, deference toward and dependence on men" (Pierson 1986:20). The consequent visibility of women in unfeminine dress and roles evoked a fear of "women's slamming the door on domesticity and assailing the segregation of jobs by sex" (Pierson 1986:20).

She concluded that while the war emergency required some tinkering to include women in activities usually reserved for men, small alterations did not translate into a visible challenge to the "male dominated sex/gender system" accepted as the standard in post-war Canadian society (Pierson 1986:216).

Reflecting the American experience, Susan Hartmann (1982) points out that recognition of the emergency nature of the enlarged activities for women



allowed the American public to accept large scale participation of women in men's jobs without challenging fundamental beliefs as to the proper roles of women (Hartmann 1982:211). Like Pierson, she too documented an underlying social fear that women's expanded opportunities during the World War II emergency threatened the traditional sex and gender ideology. Pierson (1986) found such thinly disguised hysteria very much in evidence through Canadian government bodies such as the National Selective Service, whose recruitment policies and strategies sought to preserve, to the greatest extent possible, patterns of female labour mobilization that reflected the traditional value placed upon socially defined priorities of women.

The perspective of the war as a temporary distraction preventing women from fulfilling their real roles was also found by Nancy Keifer (1984) in her examination of the experiences of women enrolled in post-secondary education at the University of Toronto during World War II. She claimed that educators believed that female education should reflect society's view that women were "nurturers and the repositories of cultural, social and familial values" in order that female graduates would be fully prepared to assume their proper role in life (Keifer 1984:1).

Keifer concluded that the University of Toronto had two priorities during the war. While the first was to contribute as much as possible to the war effort, a close second priority was to preserve the status quo, and ensure "the male priority and privilege characterizing the university not be undermined" (Keifer 1984:122).

Although university practices were temporarily adapted to the war emergency, attitudes remained unchanged.

In keeping with university policies, the education and training that female students received was intended to prepare them to be the cheerful volunteer during wartime and the happy homemaker and mother once the war ended. The maintenance of traditional enrolment patterns resulted in the concentration of women in the Arts, Nursing and Teaching.

The theme of the transitory nature of war-necessitated accommodations of women was also surfaced in Maureen Honey's (1984) examination of two American magazines popular in the 1940s, Saturday Night and True Story. The two publications enjoyed circulation between a middle class and working class readership respectively. She sought to identify not only ideological trends, but also the ideological infrastructure that promoted full scale involvement of women into male dominated spheres, yet when expedient to do so, was able to demand a complete reversal at the end of hostilities with no apparent ideological conflict. Honey stressed the continuity of early and post-war images in the two magazines and concluded that the conservative traditional views stemmed from economic, social and ideological structures that withstood the temporary female foray into non-traditional sex and gender roles.

Susan Bland's 1983 research about the popular media has also documented the persistence of traditional ideologies which sought to maintain sex and gender roles during the war emergency. She addressed the question of whether Canadian

attitudes toward women's role in society changed during World War II by examining the relationship between advertisements and women during the war years and immediate post-war period as found in Maclean's magazine, 1939-1950. She noted that by the 1940s advertisements directed toward women in the 1940s illustrated what advertisers perceived as desirable female attributes, and how those attributes translated into appropriate sex and gender roles (Bland 1983:64).

Bland discovered that advertising featuring women workers existed only during the 1939-1948 period. In 1941, war images began to appear, and the roles women played in advertising started to change. Between 1940 and 1944, advertisements directed toward working women increased almost 13%. They focused primarily upon cosmetics or pharmaceutical products and relied heavily upon promotion of feminine images. By 1946, advertising was once again predominantly directed towards housewives and comprised 63% of all advertising directed toward women (Bland 1983:82). Advertisements aimed at working women in 1947 and 1948 were increasingly directed toward clerical workers. From 1948 onward, no advertisements in Maclean's featured working women (Bland 1983:77).

Bland concluded that while the roles of women in advertisements during the war years may have changed, the "traditional themes of 1939 remain" (Bland 1983:82). Advertising glorified women's sacrifices and contributions during the war, but their content still used feminine imagery and supported traditional female aspirations. Some advertising appealed to patriotic images, but the

fundamental message was the same, whatever women may have been doing during the war crisis, they were still women and must, above all else, preserve their traditional feminine qualities (Bland 1983:82).

Susan Hartmann's (1978) early research into the advice given to women about returning ex-servicemen and their re-integration into civilian life attempted to document the weight given to the preservation of the status quo. In an effort to understand why the potential for changes in sex and gender roles was not realised, Hartmann explored the idea that wartime needs strengthened traditional sex and gender roles as war pressures put a high value on the idyllic family which was at the centre of the American social structure. As the heartbeat of American family life, women as wives and mothers were the hope for the future of the family, which in turn, assigned all responsibility for post war stability to women. She concluded that women were expected to carry out this responsibility within traditional female roles, conveniently relinquishing and forgetting their wartime economic independence and sense of personal satisfaction. Self-actualization by women would destroy the foundation of American society. Hartmann found, scattered throughout the literature, the assumption that women would return to traditional sex and gender roles once hostilities ceased.

Taking a slightly different approach, D'Ann Campbell (1986) sought to understand why women returned to traditional sex and gender roles. Campbell argued the answer could be found by examining female wartime and post-war experiences in the context of the strong family centred beliefs of the American

wartime generation. In her analysis, many women actively made the choice to return home as their perceptions of themselves as women allowed them to accept the role of homemaker as natural and desirable. The ideology that prescribed certain roles for women was, for some, fundamentally connected to their definition of womanhood.

Along similar lines, Gluck (1987) commented that scholars seem to be convinced that social change could be measured by continued female employment in the same occupation that they held during the war. As a result, she argued, researchers have tended to focus upon the degree of change that World War II represented for women, rather than turn attention toward the study of the process of change (Gluck 1987:260). As the central feature of her 1987 research, Gluck's method was to develop an oral history project to attempt to capture the process of change and participation of women in the evolution of social ideologies. Gluck's 1987 presentation of ten life-histories of female aircraft workers documented the recurring theme that the "unintended effect of their wartime work experience was a transformation in their concept of themselves as women" (Gluck 1987:265).

Although such a transformation did not turn into an immediate or direct challenge of the status quo, it affected their roles at home. For the first time, many of the respondents spoke up and challenged the male decision-making prerogative, while their newly gained confidence allowed them to begin exerting some authority of their own (Gluck 1987:265-266). Yet Gluck's evidence showed that in the post-war period women continued to define themselves as wives and

mothers (1987:269).

How ever the individual experiences of women may differ, certain themes with respect to women and employment during World War II weave their way through much of the scholarship in this field. Many researchers have concluded the employment of women in non-traditional industrial occupations did not create equality of job status and wages between women and men, even briefly (Pierson 1986; Skold 1981; Hartmann 1982; Honey 1984; Nash 1989; Trey 1972; Milkman 1987; Kessler-Harris 1982; Gabin 1982). Nor did the mass mobilization of women into waged labour translate into a large scale social acceptance of women in non-traditional avenues of employment (Nash 1989; Milkman 1987; Skold 1980). In reality, concepts of men's work and women's work did not disappear, but were altered to meet the production and employment emergencies of World War II (Pierson 1986; Nash 1989; Milkman 1980, 1982, 1987; Skold 1980; Gluck 1987; Miller 1980). Successful execution of the war relied upon the mobilization of female reserves of labour into as many occupational areas as possible (Trey 1972; Pierson 1986; Allen 1983; Noll-Clark 1977). Women suddenly found that occupations that had traditionally been closed to them due to an ideology of appropriate sex and gender roles for women and men now required their services (Pierson 1986; Skold 1980; Noll-Clark 1977; Miller 1980; Milkman 1982, 1987). Yet as women moved into new occupational areas, occupational differences continued as new categories of women's work and men's work were defined and re-defined, regardless of whether both sexes worked

under the same job title (Skold 1980; Pierson 1986; Nash 1989; Milkman 1982, 1987).

While studies such as those of Milkman (1987), Pierson (1986), Nash (1989), Kiefer (1984), Skold (1980, 1981), Hartmann (1982), and Miller (1980) attempt to document a lack of change for women in the workplace, only recently have scholars begun to focus on understanding the role of sex and gender ideology upon female workplace experiences during the war. Relying upon narrow studies of segregation in the workplace during World War II to chart social change is problematic because segregation does not exist independent of the larger social context. This social context rests upon an ideological foundation that reflects enculturative practices that promote and maintain well defined gender roles and behaviours. To understand what was influencing the workplace during the war, researchers must examine not only what the experiences of women were, but also how women participated and shaped their own roles and the impact of roles played by other institutions. But few studies examining occupational segregation grapple with the issue of enforcement of pre-war ideologies during and in the post-war era and how it was reinforced so strongly. That is, scholars have neglected to explore the question of whether women were active participants in such an ideology - did they accept it, live by it, were willing to adhere to it and fundamentally agree with it? To what extent did they reject it? Some scholars such as Milkman (1987) and Kesselman (1987) focus upon small pockets of resistance. Such instances are important, not only because they provide clues of

rejection of the dominant sex and gender ideology by women, but moreso for what it implies about the strength of sex and gender ideologies. The works of Skold (1980, 1981), Nash (1989), Hakim (1979) simply document occupational segregation in the workplace.

The link between occupational segregation and social organization through a sex and gender ideology are rarely pursued by researchers as they have focused quite sharply upon what happened, a description and documentation of experiences and jobs. The underlying ideology that drove both female and male activities and behaviour gets lost in the documentation of institutionalized resistance to women in certain industries/jobs. The result is that the issue of acceptance and belief in prescriptions of appropriate sex and gender roles and how this was evidenced in the workplace becomes submerged. Was it only men who accepted social definitions of proper male and female roles and reproduced these roles in the workplace? Or did women themselves accept different and unequal status and treatment in the workplace? Few scholars acknowledge such a possibility, nor pursue it.

Previous scholarship has attempted to isolate various elements in the workplace that reflect the alteration of an accepted ideology that set out appropriate behaviour and activities for women and men. Within the challenges of wartime necessity the preservation of such an ideology appears illogical and counterproductive. The concepts of the temporary nature of non-traditional employment for women, unequal remuneration, hierarchy and types of work,



status of jobs filled by women and the training provided to women provide the basis of information for this study. While work experiences are a central feature of this study, attitudes and perceptions around work experiences and the impact and acceptance of a traditional sex and gender ideology will also be explored. Oral histories provide a rare opportunity to explore the linkages between the workplace and social ideology as it affected women during World War II. In addition to documenting female wage labour participation, discussions with individuals can attempt to fill in the gaps in our understanding of the motivations, hopes, goal and perspectives of participants in the workplace and about whom we constantly generalize.

To develop these themes, this study is based on data collected from ten former employees of MacDonald Brothers Aircraft Ltd. who shared their employment experiences of World War II. Among the female employees at MacDonald Aircraft were eight women who provided much of the information for this study. Of the eight, six women were interviewed. They were Grace Fogg, Jo Linscott, Kay Powelko, Mrs. Doreen Whitehill, Annette Pelland, and Mrs. Irene McConnell. The remaining two female informants, Ms. Dorothy Edwards and Mrs. Bernice Pulfor, provided written comments only. Two male informants, Paul Latocki and David Whitehill, were also interviewed. With respect to naming, the respondents determined how they wished to be identified. All of the female respondents appear under the names they were known by during World War II. Wherever possible, the respondent's own description of events and activities has

been presented.

Chapter two is a brief corporate history of MacDonald Brothers Aircraft Ltd. and the impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan upon the operations of the corporation. It includes discussions of the pre-war occupational opportunities and wages of the respondents and compares them with general statistical information on female war employment in Canada and in Manitoba and ends with hiring for war production at MacDonald Bros. Aircraft Ltd.

Chapter three deals with the occupations women held at the plant, along with their wages, and an examination of the temporary nature of their employment, training and status of their jobs as found at MacDonald Bros. Aircraft. Chapter four documents attitudes of the female and male respondents, male co-workers, and management of MacDonald Bros. Aircraft. Chapter five turns to the post war experiences of the respondents and a larger discussion of the maintenance of an accepted ideology in the workplace during World War II.

## CHAPTER 2

### DEVELOPING A WORKPLACE AND WORKFORCE FOR WAR

(The Company cannot)" ... state a definite time when we will be increasing our staff or girls."<sup>3</sup>

In the 1920s MacDonald Sheet Metal and Roofing was a small family-owned Winnipeg firm whose primary business was the manufacture of sheet metal products. In 1930 it began manufacturing and repairing floats for aircraft along with selling aircraft parts under the name of MacDonald Brothers Aircraft Ltd. By 1934, the company was performing repairs to aircraft (Bristol Aerospace 1983:np). In 1939 MacDonald Aircraft employed approximately 100 people. As the company's operations expanded during World War II, many individuals from this small group of employees became the backbone of the supervisory staff (Bristol Aerospace 1980:np).

Although the number of women employed at MacDonald Aircraft at the peak of the war effort has been estimated by respondents to have been extremely high (Latocki, Interview 13 March 1991; Fogg, Interview, 1991; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991), getting hired for a job in the aircraft plant was not easy. With employment possibilities in Winnipeg being "next to nothing" (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991) at the end of the 1930s, many women could

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<sup>3</sup>Provincial Archives of Manitoba, RG14 A1 Box 9 [hereafter referred to as PAM]).

only find work in certain occupational areas. Available work was in typical women's jobs such as sales, clerical, service, light industrial<sup>4</sup> and the ever unpopular domestic work<sup>5</sup>. Professional women were nurses or teachers (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991).

While jobs in these occupational areas were open to women, finding and keeping a permanent job in Winnipeg during the late 1930s was another matter. Much of the work available to the female respondents was part-time, and very competitive. The T. Eaton Company was a classic example: "we'd go down to Eaton's every morning, and you would get taken on for the day. If you got two days a week, you were lucky. There would be sometimes 30 girls there and you just happened to be the lucky one" (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). Some of the respondents could not find work prior to the outbreak of war (McConnell, Questionnaire, 4 February 1990; Interview, 19 April 1991). Only two respondents enjoyed consistent employment prior to the war; Kay Powelko, worked as a maid

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<sup>4</sup>The categories of employment for women in Winnipeg were extracted from applications for war work through the Employment Service of Canada, Women's Division, approximately June 1940-February 1941. The applications indicate the kinds of jobs women had worked at, the skills they had to market, as well as age and marital status. From these applications, I have classified service as including: usherette, elevator operator, waitress, hairdresser, hostess and jail matron. I have recorded light industrial to include: wrapping, gluing, bindery, glove cutter, carpet weaver, envelope maker, bakery, poultry plucker, fabric worker, laundry, cafeteria, dye press man (!) and sewing machine operator. PAM RG14 A1 Box 9, Manitoba Department of Labour, Employment Service of Canada, Women's Division, employment cards.

<sup>5</sup>A woman filing an employment application card with the Employment Service of Canada, Women's Division, answered the question, "Any other position you would accept?" with, "Anything but domestic." PAM RG14 A1 Box 10, Manitoba Department of Labour, Employment Service of Canada, Women's Division, Applications file. For more information regarding resistance to domestic work see Pierson (1986), They're Still Women After All.

for five years (Interview, 13 March 1991), and Grace Fogg, was employed at Holt Renfrew in men's tailoring for seven years (Fogg, Review, 5 May 1994).

After being unemployed for two years, Jo Linscott eventually found a six month job as nursemaid (Interview, 14 May 1990; Interview, 15 January 1991). Mrs. Whitehill stayed home on the farm, where the only pay for work she received was for playing the drums at local dances (Interview, 13 March 1991). Annette Pelland performed piece work on ladies blouses for a local sewing factory (Pelland, Review 28 February 1994). Dorothy Edwards worked as a sales clerk for three and a half years, while Bernice Pulfor was a taxi dispatcher and also filled out dry cleaning reports on the side (Edwards, Questionnaire, 18 January 1990; PAM RG14 A1 Box 10; Lawlor, Questionnaire, 24 January 1990). None of these jobs were permanent, Grace Fogg being the exception.

Wages reflected the scarcity of jobs and the surplus of potential workers. Earnings also reflected the status of most women's jobs. Mrs. Whitehill was paid \$3 a night to play at those dances and indicated that she was really lucky if she had two engagements a week (Interview, 13 March 1991). Kay Powelko started as a maid at \$5/month and eventually worked up to a \$25/month salary (Interview, 13 March 1991). Annette Pelland recalls her piece work wages as being \$7/week (Pelland, Review 28 February 1994). Jo Linscott cannot recall her wages at Eaton's except that it was a minimum amount and that "they gave you a dollar for every birthday" (Interview, 15 January 1991). In comparison, Paul Latocki started working at MacDonald Aircraft in 1935 for the wage of .25/hour on aircraft

overhaul for bush operators and the manufacture of aircraft floats. After two and a half years, his hourly rate was increased to .35/hour (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994). None of the other respondents could recall their wages during their employment prior to working at MacDonald Aircraft. Rather, the common recollection was that wages at those jobs were lower than what they eventually earned at the aircraft plant (Fogg, Interview, 17 April 1991; Linscott, Interview 15 January 1991; Whitehill, Interview, 13 March 1991; Powelko, Interview 13 March 1991).

Almost all women seeking employment who submitted applications to the National Employment Service, Women's Division in the early 1940s sought work at the "aircraft plant" or in a war industry (PAM RG14 A1 Box 9). Apparently aircraft jobs were desirable, as the Women's Division received approximately 120 applications between 1940-1941, long before MacDonald Aircraft began hiring large numbers of women. Not only would this suggest that a significant number of women were looking for work, but it also highlights the competitive nature of job hunting as none of the respondents interviewed for this study were hired through the National Employment Service, Women's Division. Rather all respondents knew of employment opportunities through people already employed at MacDonald Aircraft or received references from people whose recommendations were reputable and carried weight in Winnipeg during the war.

Mrs. Whitehill had a female cousin who was an inspector at MacDonald Aircraft (Interview, 13 March 1991), Grace Fogg was referred by a well known

airforce officer who was a friend of the family (Interview, 17 April 1991), and Mrs. McConnell's first job at Westeel was landed with the aid of the Mayor of St. Boniface (Interview, 19 April 1991). Annette Pelland's sister was a foreman at Westeel and her sister was to start work on a Monday but was ill. Annette went in her place and was hired. Mrs. McConnell and she were among the first seven women to be hired at that plant (Pelland, Review 28 February 1994). Commented Mrs. McConnell, "You had to have pull to get in" (Interview, 19 April 1991).

What was the motivation to take jobs in the aircraft industry? For some respondents the opportunity to have a job was motivation enough. Others were attracted by the opportunity to do something new or different, or the prospect of higher wages, and most of the respondents indicated a certain amount of patriotism motivated them to take jobs at MacDonald Aircraft. Jo Linscott claimed that women took work at MacDonald Aircraft mainly because "it was work - everybody was looking for work due to the leftover effects of the '30s - there just weren't any jobs available, but also everybody wanted into the war effort (Interview, 15 January 1991; Review 16 May 1994)." Mrs. McConnell and her mother were on "city relief", and she needed the work (Interview, 19 April 1991) to help support herself and her mother.

For Kay Powelko and Mrs. Whitehill, a job at MacDonald Aircraft was a way to "help the war effort - it wasn't just the job, it was that you wanted to help the war (Interview, 13 March 1991)." Grace Fogg explained that she felt strongly

about individually supporting the war effort as three of her brothers were in the war, two in the Navy and the other in London, England as driver to the Air Vice Marshall (Fogg, Review, 5 May 1994). Patriotic duty "was everybody's answer", claimed Paul Latocki, who worked as a Supervisor at the plant. He felt that it was a way for women to fulfil their patriotic urges, while at the same time do jobs that they probably had not done before (Interview, 13 March 1991). In addition, on their application forms, a large number of women indicated they wanted to help the war effort as many had husbands and boyfriends that had enlisted (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994).

The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP), was established December 17, 1939, to provide for the training of Canadian aircraft personnel and advanced training for British, Australian and New Zealand airforce recruits. A scheme concocted by the Canadian and Australian high commissioners in London, it had been accepted by the British government. The BCATP agreement between Canada and Britain allowed for elementary and service flying schools, along with air observer (navigation), bombing, gunnery and wireless schools to be operated by the Royal Canadian Air Force in the safety of wide open Canadian spaces. It was an ambitious undertaking which saw 131,553 trainees from across the Commonwealth (of whom 72,835 were Canadians) become pilots, navigators, wireless operators, air gunners, and bombardiers. At a cost of \$1.6 billion to Canada (J.L. Granatstein, et. al. 1990:376), Prime Minister Mackenzie King



regarded the BCATP to be the single most important war contribution Canada could make (F.J. Hatch 1983:15).

As it was adaptable to a wide range of training purposes, the Avro Anson was selected as the standard trainer aircraft. Under the terms of the agreement, Britain was contractually obligated to supply all the Anson aircraft, replacement engines and spare parts; but the aircraft would be assembled and maintained in Canada. The initial number of aircraft contemplated by the agreement totalled 1,368 (Hatch 1983:18).

The fall of France in June 1940 and the British retreat from Dunkirk dramatically altered the implementation of the agreement. Britain could not produce or ship the Anson aircraft "kits" and engines because of intensified warfare and increased activity by German U-boats. The Canadian government therefore assumed responsibility for redesigning the Anson to use American built engines, and for manufacturing the aircraft in Canada (Hatch 1983:49). Federal Aircraft Ltd., a Crown Corporation, was established to assume administration and development of the now greatly expanded Anson program. The total number of Anson aircraft orders placed with Federal Aircraft Ltd. was 4,632 (NAC RG28 v. 8 Blue Book:47).

Federal Aircraft did little of the actual manufacturing of the Ansons, concentrating upon the re-design and re-engineering of the aircraft. The manufacturing of the Avro Anson was sub-contracted out to various Canadian

aircraft manufacturers. MacDonald Bros. Aircraft Ltd. was one of five aircraft firms contracted to manufacture and assemble the Ansons (Hatch 1983:49).

In August 1940, MacDonald Aircraft was awarded a contract by the Department of Munitions and Supply (DMS) to provide maintenance and repair facilities for the overhaul of the Avro Anson. The company was also awarded a contract by DMS for the manufacture of Avro Anson wings and assembly of the wings to the Anson fuselages (NAC RG28 v.351). The Avro Anson was the major aircraft handled by MacDonald Bros. Aircraft, although as the war progressed the company was also involved with Fairey Battles, Tiger Moths, Harvards, Norsemen, Lysanders, Airspeed Oxfords, Curtiss dive-bombers and PBY Catalina Bombers (Bristol Aerospace 1980:np; PAM GR1650 Box 1 file 402).

At the MacDonald Aircraft plant, Ansons were completely stripped down, parts checked, repaired if required, and stored. From the various stored parts, the aircraft was then re-assembled. At the peak of the war, the overhaul of damaged Ansons expanded to a three shift operation with an aircraft being completed every 24 hours (Bristol Aerospace 1980:np; Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991). As war continued, MacDonald Aircraft became an important assembly plant for the Avro Anson.

In order to fulfil the Anson contracts, MacDonald Aircraft required capital assistance to build a larger plant and purchase the tools and machinery necessary for aircraft manufacture and maintenance. To this end, the Canadian government committed \$1,844,000 in capital assistance to MacDonald Bros. Aircraft Ltd. by

the end of 1942 (NAC, RG28 v. 188). By this time, MacDonald Aircraft was operating three plants, two at Stevenson Field (Winnipeg) and one at their location on Robinson Street, Winnipeg (Bristol Aerospace 1980:np).

The demand for large scale manufacture of aircraft was initially hampered by the relative underdevelopment of the Canadian aircraft industry prior to the war. The development of entire industrial base was accelerated: plants, machinery, and most importantly, an experienced aircraft workforce, were urgently required to meet war demands. Most people absorbed into war industries were not skilled craftspersons but came from an array of employment backgrounds. The dearth of skilled workers for aircraft production was particularly acute as the aircraft industry developed later than other Canadian war industries which meant that many skilled workers had already been absorbed into other war plants. The large numbers of workers required were trained on the job, or through in-plant training schools. Many of these new workers were women.

As the BCATP expanded, MacDonald Bros. Aircraft Ltd. became an important overhaul and assembly shop, employing at least 3,765 employees at the height of war production<sup>6</sup>. Many were women.

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<sup>6</sup>This figure could very well have been higher. Bristol Aerospace put the number of employees at 4,500 in their official company history, 50 Years of Technology. The statistics compiled by DMS, Economics and Statistics Branch, in the 15 January 1944 edition of the War Employment in Canada - Geographical Report (p. 31), reported the actual figures of employment as of July 31, 1943 to be 3,765 at MacDonald Brothers Aircraft (NAC RG28A v. 182). In Canada's War in the Air, Book Two: the Industrial Miracle, Leslie Roberts (1943) put this figure at 3,600 (p. 65).

By 1942 unemployed Canadians had been absorbed through military recruitment and wartime employment. The mobilization of large numbers of men from the labour force into the armed forces had created a shortage in the number of available workers. In early 1942 the National Selective Service (NSS) was established to oversee the mobilization of Canadians into war production employment. Women were identified as a source of reserve labour and the "recruitment of women for employment was 'the most important single feature of the program'" (Pierson 1986:23). To aid in directing women into wartime employment the Women's Division of the National Selective Service was created.

One of the first activities undertaken by the NSS, Women's Division was to carry out a comprehensive registration of all Canadian females between the ages of 20-24 (excluding women in religious orders, hospital patients, prison inmates and those in insurable employment) in order to determine the potential employment reserve of single young women. Significantly, the registration was expected to not only aid in dispersing single young women throughout war industries, but also reflected a philosophy that married women with children should not enter the waged workforce (Pierson 1986:24). Yet by 1943, it was necessary for the NSS, Women's Division to launch a campaign to recruit married women with children for part-time employment (Pierson 1986:27).

The recruitment process itself reflected the Canadian philosophy concerning women and waged employment outside the home. While women were regarded as a reserve pool of labour to be tapped as necessary, there were

categories of women and limitations to large scale mobilization of those women. The recruitment of Canadian women to perform their patriotic duty was grounded in the sex and gender ideology of the day. The strategy adopted by the NSS reflects the perspective and public expression by the Canadian government that mobilization for war work among married women should not take priority over their family responsibilities (Pierson 1986). Canadian wartime employment would tap the reserve labour pool that women represented, as women were obligated to help in the "prosecution of the war (Leg. Library 71-0-51, p.1)."

Implicit in this policy is the notion that non-traditional occupations for women were for the duration only as they were either holding a man's job for him or filling in for him in order that he might be freed for other duties. It appears the twin realities of large scale male enlistment and the need to tap female labour during a national emergency forced public acceptance of the participation of women in what were perceived as men's jobs without any apparent contradiction with the definition of femininity.

First the NSS directed the placement of young, mobile, single women into areas of war production where their services were needed. Once that available source of women had been depleted, recruitment efforts would turn to women with domestic responsibilities, and finally to women with children (Manitoba Legislative Library 71-0-51:1-2). It was pointed out the concentration of women with children in urban areas was an asset as services such as childcare, laundries and community kitchens could be easily provided in urban centres (Manitoba

Legislative Library 71-0-51:2) and could be used to convince mothers to take up war employment.

By August 1940, the Winnipeg branch of the National Employment Service, Women's Division was registering women who were seeking employment at MacDonald Aircraft. The Women's Division offered to assist the company in its hiring of female workers by screening and selecting prospective employees to be interviewed (PAM RG14 A1 Box 10). Between 1940 and 1941, the Women's Division collected approximately 120 applications from women seeking employment at MacDonald Aircraft (PAM RG14 A1 Box 10). This was prior to hiring women for aircraft production work.

The applicants were predominantly single women in the age group 18-24 years. Some applications were from older single women and widowed women with children who needed employment to support themselves. A number of the older or married applicants have letters attached to their applications which reveal a need for employment and that although they have "domestic responsibilities" these women were also solely responsible for their family's survival. The City of Winnipeg welfare office forwarded letters to the National Employment Service, Women's Division outlining tales of older women who were alone and needed work to support themselves. In some instances the city relief department introduced women receiving "assistance" whose husbands had deserted them leaving them with small children to support (PAM RG 14 A! Box 10). It is unknown how many of these applicants eventually found work at MacDonald

Aircraft. None of the respondents interviewed were hired through the National Employment Service, Women's Division, although Dorothy Edwards was registered with them in August of 1940 (PAM RG14 A1 Box 10).

MacDonald Aircraft did not begin hiring women employees in the aircraft plant at Stevenson Field until roughly December 1940 (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). The qualifications required for employment at MacDonald Aircraft appear to have been minimal, because employees underwent on-the-job training or were taken from other industries.<sup>7</sup> The company sought employees who had at least a grade nine education whom they felt would possess "the basic knowledge they needed to tackle some of the jobs that we had" (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991). Paul Latocki explained that the company

hired both men and women...nobody said you have to hire a man or you have to hire a woman. If a person came to the door, and with the little test they gave them, if they passed the test you could see that you could do something with that person, they were hired. And the kind of work that we had, we could see that women could fit into it (Latocki, Interview, 15 March 1991).

The test that was administered to potential hirees certainly did not require great skill nor was it difficult. Kay Powelko remembers the test she was given when she applied for work, "There was a square wooden board (a device similar to a jig saw puzzle) and all these little things were cut out...and I just whipped

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<sup>7</sup>Most of the skilled men in the plant came from other industries, such as machinist shops. Many mechanics were from automotive garages and service stations as the automotive industry was directed into manufacture of trucks and tanks for the armed forces. P. Latocki. Tape recorded interview. Winnipeg, Manitoba, March 13, 1991; Review, 28 February 1994.

them in like anything. "Can you start tomorrow morning at eight o'clock?" That was it - I was hired" (Interview, 13 March 1991). Jo Linscott explained, "nobody had any qualifications...they just said 'Well are you willing to learn?', and they put you into a job and let the guys train you" (Interview, 15 January 1991). Grace Fogg couldn't recall taking a test, but stated that her sewing experience at Holt Renfrew secured a job for her. She also recalled that all the sewers in the Fabric room were well experienced, coming from dressmaking backgrounds in ladies wear shops. After all, she pointed out, they could make more money at MacDonald Aircraft than they could performing alterations to ladies clothing (Fogg, Review, 5 May 1994).

By July 1, 1941, the DMS recorded the number of Canadians employed in "total war industries" as 480,328, of which 44,383 (9.24%) were women.<sup>8</sup> These figures rose by August 1942 to employment of 952,000 persons in total war industries, with female participation equalling 160,000 (16.9%) persons. The report for July 1, 1943 reported the figures for those employed in total war industries as 1,108,000 of whom 230,000 (20.8%) were female (NAC RG28A v.182:x). The largest war production employment figures were generated by industrialized centres of Ontario and Quebec. Rural areas and the prairie provinces had experienced less war industry development.

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<sup>8</sup>These figures include calculation allowances for non-reporting plants and people involved in "on-site construction" and "estimates for ancillary industries." Hereafter all national statistics will include the above categories (NAC RG28 v. 182:11).



PROVINCIAL SUMMARY

PROVINCIAL TOTALS OF WAR EMPLOYMENT COVERING  
MANUFACTURING PLANTS REPORTING

<u>Province</u>	<u>July 31, 1941 - Actual War Employment</u>		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Prince Edward Island	810	770	40
Nova Scotia	36,900	35,700	1,200
New Brunswick	9,500	9,000	500
Quebec	149,200	132,800	16,400
Ontario	228,700	205,200	23,500
Manitoba	11,100	10,300	800
Saskatchewan	3,800	3,600	200
Alberta	8,300	7,800	500
British Columbia	32,000	30,800	1,200
CANADA	480,000	436,000	44,000

Source: NAC, RG28 vol.182, Department of Munitions and Supply, Economics and Statistics Branch, Geographical Distribution of Labour Requirements For War Production, 27 January 1942, Provincial Summary, p.2.

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PROVINCIAL SUMMARY

PROVINCIAL TOTALS OF WAR EMPLOYMENT COVERING  
MANUFACTURING PLANTS REPORTING

<u>Province</u>	<u>August 1, 1942 - Actual War Employment</u>		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Prince Edward Island	620	590	30
Nova Scotia	52,400	48,800	3,600
New Brunswick	21,600	19,700	1,900
Quebec	281,700	228,500	53,200
Ontario	410,600	324,000	86,600
Manitoba	36,500	32,400	4,100
Saskatchewan	13,300	12,300	1,000
Alberta	23,300	21,400	1,900
British Columbia	112,200	104,100	8,100
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CANADA	952,000	792,000	160,000

SOURCE: NAC, RG28A, vol.182, Department of Munitions and Supply, Economics and Statistics Branch, War Employment in Canada - Geographical Report (Fifth Edition) 15 January 1944. Provincial Summary, p.ix.

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PROVINCIAL SUMMARY

PROVINCIAL TOTALS OF WAR EMPLOYMENT COVERING  
MANUFACTURING PLANTS REPORTING

<u>Province</u>	<u>July 1, 1943 - Actual War Employment</u>		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Prince Edward Island	680	620	60
Nova Scotia	57,400	51,400	6,000
New Brunswick	26,300	23,500	2,800
Quebec	341,700	265,700	7,600
Ontario	466,400	348,000	118,400
Manitoba	36,500	30,000	6,500
Saskatchewan	14,800	12,700	2,100
Alberta	26,800	23,600	3,200
British Columbia	137,200	122,100	15,100
<hr/>			
CANADA	1,108,000	878,000	230,000

SOURCE: NAC, RG28A, vol.182, Department of Munitions and Supply, Economics and Statistics Branch, War Employment in Canada - Geographical Report (Fifth Edition) 15 January 1944. Provincial Summary, p.ix.

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Yet in Manitoba, the number of women in war industries was slowly creeping upward. At the end of July 1941, the province was reported as having 11,100 persons in "actual war employment", of whom only 800 (7.2%) were women (NAC RG28 v.182:2). By August 1942, the numbers of persons employed in war industries had climbed to 36,500, with women comprising 4,100 (11.2%) of that total. In July 1943 the total persons employed in war industries remained the same as the previous year, except women now held 6,500 (17.8%) of those jobs (NAC RG28A v.182:ix).

The largest number of women employed in war industries in Manitoba were, by far, located in Winnipeg. Out of a total Winnipeg war industry workforce of 20,368 in July 1943, the number of women engaged in war employment totalled 5,197 (25.5%) (NAC RG 28A v. 182:xxvi), whereas at the end of July 1941 that figure had totalled only 92 women (4.4%) out of a total of 2,100 war workers in Winnipeg. While the percentage of female workers in war industries was not overly dramatic, the increase in their numbers, 5,105 women in two years, represented a decided shift in the makeup of the industrial workforce involved in war production. The majority of these women war workers were concentrated in the aircraft industry and within one company, MacDonald Bros. Aircraft Ltd. of St. James.

The actual numbers of people working in the Winnipeg aircraft industry directly connected to war production needs can be approximated using the Geographical Reports produced by the DMS. In July 1941, those persons

MANITOBA URBAN TOTALS FOR PLANTS REPORTING

Urban Centre, 31 July, 1941

	<u>Total: War &amp; Civilian</u>	<u>War Employment Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Flin Flon	1205	1205	1191	14
Selkirk	115	40	40	-
Sherridon	486	364	364	-
Winnipeg	5379	2100	2008	92
MANITOBA: Totals, Reporting Manuf. Plants	7185	3709	3603	106
Allowance, Non-Reporting Manuf. Plants		1848	1273	575
Estimate for On-Site construction		3082	3051	31
Estimate for Ancillary Industries		2500	2407	93
TOTAL FOR ALL WAR INDUSTRY		11139	10334	805

1 February, 1942

Brandon				
Flin Flon	105	61	59	2
Fort Whyte	222	222	218	4
Portage la Prairie	81	7	7	-
Selkirk	65	30	4	26
Sherridon	681	593	587	6
Winnipeg	38	38	37	1
MANITOBA: Totals, Reporting Manuf. Plants	15816	9749	8430	1319
Allowance, Non-Reporting Manuf. Plants	17008	10700	9342	1358
Estimate for On-Site Construction		1300	1170	130
Estimate for Ancillary Industries		2000	1980	20
TOTAL FOR ALL WAR INDUSTRY		7700	7500	200
		21700	19992	1708

MANITOBA URBAN TOTALS FOR PLANTS REPORTING (cont.)

1 August, 1942

	<u>Total: War &amp; Civilian</u>	<u>War Employment Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Brandon	333	202	134	68
Dauphin	2	2	1	1
Flin Flon	771	732	695	37
Fort whyte	75	38	38	-
Pine Falls	314	7	7	-
Portage la Prairie	88	47	4	43
Selkirk	781	662	655	7
Sherridon	39	39	38	1
The Pas	248	248	246	2
Winnipeg	30007	19681	16365	3316
MANITOBA:				
Totals, Reporting Manuf. Plants	35289	23236	19761	3475
Deduction for estimated overstatement		1200	1000	200
Revised Total		22036	18761	3275
Allowance, Non-Reporting Manuf. Plants		1450	1265	185
Estimate for On-Site Construction		3000	2960	40
Estimate for Ancillary Industries		8400	7800	600
TOTAL FOR ALL WAR INDUSTRY		34886	30786	4100

MANITOBA URBAN TOTALS FOR PLANTS REPORTING (cont.)

1 July, 1943

	<u>Total: War &amp; Civilian</u>	<u>War Employment Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Brandon	523	267	149	118
Dauphin	28	15	6	9
Flin Flon	746	685	591	94
Neepawa	20	12	6	6
Pine Falls	305	18	18	-
Portage la Prairie	81	58	8	50
Selkirk	866	612	604	8
Sherridon	35	34	24	10
Winnipeg	33167	20368	15171	5197
MANITOBA:				
Totals, Reporting Manuf. Plants	36867	22716	17224	5492
Adjustment for Estimated Overstatement		560	410	150
Revised Total	36867	22156	16814	5342
Allowance, Non-Reporting Plants	5747	746	544	202
Estimate for On-Site Construction	7000	2500	2430	70
Estimate for Ancillary Industries	44514	11057	10210	847
TOTAL FOR ALL WAR INDUSTRY	97023	36459	29998	6461

Source: NAC, RG28, vol.182, Department of Munitions and Supply, Economics and Statistics Branch, Geographical Distribution of Labour Requirements for War Production, 27 January 1942, Provincial Summary, p.9; 30 May 1942 (3rd Edition), Provincial Summary, p.11; 26 January 1943 (4th Edition), Provincial Summary, p.'A'; RG28, vol.184, 15 January 1944 (5th Edition), Provincial Summary, p.xxvi.

employed in wartime aircraft manufacture in Winnipeg numbered only 768; 691 men and 76 women. Of this figure, 64 women and 482 men were employed by MacDonald Aircraft (NAC RG28 v. 182:np). By February 1942 there had been a significant increase in the numbers of persons employed in aircraft manufacture in Winnipeg. The total employed in all aircraft manufacturing was 2,063, 1,755 men and 308 women. MacDonald Aircraft employees comprised 89 women and 666 men (NAC RG28 v. 182:76-78). These figures are prior to the opening of the second plant, the flight service hangar, at Stevenson Field in 1942 (Bristol Aerospace 1980:np; Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994).

By August 1942, there were roughly 4,592 persons employed in aircraft manufacture in Winnipeg and the total number of MacDonald Aircraft employees increased dramatically. Women accounted for 390 employees at MacDonald Aircraft and men totalled 1,737 employees (NAC RG28A v. 182:104-107). By July 1943, the number of women employed at MacDonald Aircraft in aircraft production skyrocketed to 1,232, while men totalled 2,524 employees, for a total war production workforce of 3,756. Those persons employed in aircraft manufacture for Winnipeg as a whole amounted to 6,367, of whom only 787 women were found in companies other than MacDonald Bros. Aircraft (NAC RG28A v. 182:129-133).

From July 1941 to July 1943, the increase in staff at MacDonald Aircraft amounted to a 700 per cent increase over two years. The ratio of male to female workers was now 2:1.



## CHAPTER 3

### JOBS AT MACDONALD AIRCRAFT

I wouldn't want to do that for the rest of my life, even if I were a man  
(Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991).

According to the terms of the contract with the DMS, MacDonald Aircraft was to build Anson wings as replacements for aircraft damaged at training schools. Later, fuselages for Anson II aircraft from Federal Aircraft in Montreal, engine assemblies from Cockshutt Plow in Brantford and tail assemblies from Vancouver – components less the wings – were shipped to MacDonald Aircraft for assembly, test flight and then delivery to various training schools in western Canada. "Shortly after pilot, navigation and bombing schools began operating, damaged (crashed) aircraft began arriving on railway flat cars for complete overhaul and final reassembly like new aircraft. At the peak of overhaul operations, we were completing one overhauled aircraft each day" (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994; NAC RG28 vol. 351, file 4-2-136).

When the company began gearing up for war production, most of the employees were men. Out of a total workforce of approximately 100, only the office staff were women (Bristol Aerospace 1980:np). Paul Latocki, who had been employed with MacDonald Aircraft prior to the war, stated that during the first months of the war the company did not hire any women for plant production.

Mr. Whitehill recalled that when he started at MacDonald Aircraft there were no female employees in the woodworking department in which he worked (Latocki/Whitehill, Interview, 13 March 1991).

Women first began to be hired to work in the rib room and the fabric department (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991). By July 31, 1940 the company reported having 64 female employees out of a total of 546, approximately 12% of the total MacDonald Aircraft workforce (NAC RG28A vol.182). A year and a half later, by February 1, 1942, female employees accounted for 89 of 755 total employees, still only about 12% of the total workforce (NAC RG28A vol. 182).

As men began to leave the plant for the armed forces, more women were hired and moved into jobs that had previously been performed by men (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991). The respondents, female and male, all shared the perspective that the enlistment of men was the main reason why women were hired in the first place (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Fogg, Interview, 17 April 1991; Latocki/Whitehill, Interview, 13 March 1991; Edwards, Questionnaire, 1990; Lawlor, Questionnaire, 1990). Many respondents commented upon the public perception that women were needed to fill gaps in the workplace in order to win the war, and viewed their employment in the aircraft industry as a temporary opportunity for work.

The employment figures reported for August 1, 1942 reflect a steady increase in the number of female employees at MacDonald Aircraft. Of a total of 1,988 employees, 386 were female, a climb to approximately 19% of the plant

workforce (NAC RG28A vol. 182). By July 1, 1943 the number of women employed had increased dramatically to 1,228 employees out of a total of 3,665 or about 34% of the total workforce at MacDonal Bros Aircraft Ltd. (NAC RG28A vol. 187). Yet the mushrooming numbers of women working at the aircraft plant were only part of the story. When the respondents spoke about their jobs and experiences at MacDonal Aircraft, a scenario of women and men concentrated in different departments and/or jobs began to emerge.

Jo Linscott believed that women were put into specific jobs rather than simply being substituted for men as they left. She insisted this was due to the perception that women were better suited to "light" work (Interview, 15 January 1991). Paul Latocki claimed the occupations into which women were hired were dependent upon the type of job it was and "the way it was broken down in such detail it was decided that a woman could do a job just as good as a man, and in many cases better (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991; Review, 28 February 1994). Women were not simply hired into positions as vacancies occurred, but were targeted for what were informally labelled light jobs as opposed to those understood to be heavy jobs or requiring considerable training.

While many Canadian women received training through pre-industrial training programs administered by the federal Department of Labour and the NSS in areas of instruction that had previously been limited to men (Pierson 1986:71), all of the MacDonal Aircraft respondents trained in the plant. The need for maximum capacity production led to detailed job breakdown which facilitated on

the job training. Paul Latocki explained that most of the work performed by women was of a repetitive nature and did not require much training or supervision. All the manufactured wing assemblies were carried out with the aid of jigs and fixtures (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994). The female respondents were shown how to perform a task by their charge hand or lead hand and were expected to quickly master the task.

Consequently, the training itself was not necessarily complicated nor lengthy. Indeed, Kay Powelko and Mrs. Whitehill laughed that some training lasted "eight or nine minutes", and "you knew what to do then" (Interview, 13 March 1991). Jo Linscott remarked, "The women were actually smart enough to know that they didn't have to be taught half a dozen times" (Interview, 15 January 1991).

Hirshfield's (1989) study of women shipyard workers during World War II offers support to the respondents' claims. She found that women were hired in emergency shipyards because the shift to mass production through reorganization of work from skilled to semi-skilled crafts made it easier to employ women as they could be easily trained for specific tasks. Increased production was a bonus realized with the shift from rivetting to welding that required less employees (1 welder equalled 4 riveters), it was also relatively easy to train employees, meaning unskilled workers could be trained quickly for specialized jobs (Hirshfield 1989:478).

Job breakdown was also an important feature of the organization of

production at MacDonald Aircraft due of the shortages of men in skilled trades such as carpentry and machining. This was also the perspective of Canadian government officials responsible for the administration of training programs. In an effort to minimize the demand for skilled labour, scientific job breakdown was the preferred method to meet the high production demands of the war. The breakdown of jobs into smaller sub-parts enabled skilled craftspeople to concentrate upon the most skilled aspect of a job, while allowing the more routine parts of a job to be performed by individuals who could be trained in a matter of days or weeks (Pierson 1986:72). Many of the jobs requiring minimal training could be filled by women who did not have previous industrial training or experience.

While in-plant training was the manner in which MacDonald Aircraft developed the workforce it required, job breakdown was utilized as the preferred manner in which to organize production. It was relatively easy to train women for specific unskilled tasks such as doping, fabric work, cable splicing, expediting and occupations in Stores. Notably, job breakdown affected male employees of MacDonald Aircraft much in the same way it affected female employees. It provided a valuable opportunity for basic training and experience for men who also had no specific job or trades training. It also provided the opportunity to receive training while being paid, and to further skills with an eye to the post-war era. Except for a handful of employees including skilled tradesmen from the automotive industry, the MacDonald Aircraft workforce was entirely new to the

aircraft industry.

Pierson (1986) found that much of the training given to women under the War Emergency Training Program was oriented toward training for specific jobs created by the war. Women were not provided training to enable them to move into more skilled employment, such as trades, and Pierson (1986:73) goes as far as to claim this was in order that women would not be able to compete with men for employment in the post-war period.

The limitations upon training received by women also reinforced and helped ensure that the jobs they performed were ones considered appropriate for women. The common practice was to identify what were believed to be inherent qualities possessed by women and apply those qualities to jobs. It was often said, and accepted, that women were more dexterous, patient and capable of repetitive, detailed and dull routine tasks (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). It was not surprising that employment patterns observed such gender rooted arguments. Women were usually found in jobs that were believed to be suitable to their innate skills, reflecting the acceptance of an ideology of sex and gender roles and abilities. As these routine occupations were now considered appropriate for women, they became labelled as women's jobs. The experiences of some the MacDonald Aircraft respondents follow a similar pattern.

Certain jobs at MacDonald Aircraft required traditional female skills, such as cutting fabric and sewing. Other jobs were simply sub-parts of a larger trade,

with no previous sex/ gender identification. These jobs had been de-skilled in order to facilitate on-the-job training and high productivity. This in turn enabled the hiring of large numbers of relatively unskilled female (and male) employees into certain aircraft production and/ or overhaul occupations. In some instances jobs that women initially held were performed only by women, such as fabric work and doping (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Fogg, Interview 17 April 1991). In other occupations such as rib assembly or cable splicing, women eventually moved into and assumed those jobs where they were previously performed by men (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991).

The comments from respondents regarding the placement of women into certain occupations in which only other women were employed, and the transformation of lower skilled occupations into those wholly filled by women indicates a broad pattern of segregation. At MacDonald Aircraft, women were initially found only in particular occupations such as fabric work and doping. As the war progressed and men left the plant for the armed forces and the company was awarded more contracts, women began to move into other occupations. The broad segregation however, did not vanish, but remained alongside what appears to be an emerging pattern of less visible segregation among and within occupational areas.

The ensuing discussion is a sampling of occupations held by women and has been organized along the lines of known areas of employment of women, and the experiences of the respondents, both female and male.

In the fabric department material used to cover the wings and fuselages was cut and sewn, then moved to the Overhaul section to be fitted and fastened onto the aircraft ready for doping and sanding. All of the employees in the fabric room were women, including the Forelady charge hand (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991; Review, 28 February 1994). This was one of the first areas of the plant into which women were hired, and one of the few areas in which a woman could be found in a supervisory position. Jo Linscott remembers there being only 3 or 4 women in this department when she began working there (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). When asked whether any of her co-workers in the fabric room had been men, Jo Linscott laughingly replied, "There were no men in there, no they avoided the sewing room completely!" (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). She went on to chuckle at the thought of men working in the fabric department as co-workers "with all those women" (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991).

Jo Linscott was one of the first female employees hired by MacDonald Aircraft. She began her employment in the fabric room, sewing wing and fuselage covers as well as tacking the fuselage covers to the fuselages (Interview, 15 January 1991). Grace Fogg also began her employment in the fabric room and remembers the hand sewing she had to perform on the covers once they were tacked to the aircraft. Once the cover was on she had to apply "a special type of lock stitch" every two inches (Interview, 17 April 1991; Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994). Any training these two women received was on the job. The



respondents working in the fabric room indicated they did not have to acquire any more skills than those they already possessed in order to perform their jobs. Grace Fogg was an experienced sewer, she had earned her living by sewing for the previous seven years. Jo Linscott knew how to sew, being taught at home (Fogg, Review, 5 May 1994; Linscott, Review 16 May 1994). They did not need to be trained in any new skills, simply to be shown what to do. From the very beginning, jobs in the fabric room were left for women to fill.

In a study of aircraft workers in San Diego during World War II, Marilyn Noll-Clark (1977) discovered that women were used to fill jobs that utilized the traditional skills they were presumed to possess, such as sewing and other occupations related to fabric work. She also noted that these occupations were the first into which women were hired, their eventual move into more varied occupations was connected to the expansion of production and military recruitment (Noll-Clark 1977:94).

Once the fabric was on the aircraft, it underwent a process known as doping, a liquid celluloid substance "which stretches the fabric so it is taut like a drum" (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991). Dope was described as being like a glue and was applied by brushing it onto the fabric cover (Fogg, Interview, 17 April 1991; Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991; Review, 28 February, 1994; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). Once the dope had dried, the surface was sanded. This process was repeated seven times to each fabric surface (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994). All of the dopers and sanders at MacDonald Aircraft

were women: "They did it pretty well 100%" (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). While considered a "lighter" job than others, doping was probably one of the worst jobs at the plant. Dope had to be applied at 72 degrees Fahrenheit which meant the dopers usually worked inside. Comfort was dependent upon proper ventilation. Paul Latocki recalled that both dope shops were equipped with down draft exhaust, but ventilation was poor when employees would forget to turn on the exhaust fans (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994). Jo Linscott and Grace Fogg insisted that other staff sometimes created problems for dopers by opening doors to the outside, making the workplace too cold for the proper application of the dope (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1994; Fogg, Review, 5 May 1994). The fumes from the dope were remembered as being particularly unpleasant, causing one respondent to describe health problems she believes were a result of doping aircraft with little ventilation to remove the fumes (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; McConnell and Pelland, Interview, 19 April 1991). Paul Latocki indicated that some employees remained in the fabric shop as they could not stomach the smell of the dope (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994). Two of the respondents were prompted by the side effects of the dope to ask to be transferred to other departments (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Fogg, Interview, 17 April 1991).

The ribs for the wings and fuselages of the Anson were produced in the Items department. Kay Powelko and Mrs. Whitehill assembled ribs for the wings of the aircraft indicating "we were just in one little area during the war, we just

glued and assembled the wing ribs onto jigs" (Interview, 13 March 1991; Powelko, Review, 28 February 1994). All the pieces of wood were cut in the mill shop and shaped by men, then the pieces were assembled by women. The men "did all the heavy work. They had to steam and set the wood strips in jigs for forming. Women "were given a jig and you had to fit the pieces just like a jig-saw puzzle. The women had nothing to cut; everything was already pre-cut, pre-formed, and all they had to do was glue, nail and clamp them in the rib assembly jig" (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991; Review, 28 February 1994). Once the ribs dried, they were sanded to remove the rough edges and sent to Stores and on to the Assembly shop as needed (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991). At the peak of war production women comprised an estimated 95% of the rib room employees, with men doing all the "dirty work, the rough work, the cutting, the cleaning" (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991).

Grace Fogg and Jo Linscott eventually moved out of the fabric room into Overhaul. In this shop, women worked with men, but as to working at the same jobs, that depended upon whether the job was considered "heavy work" (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). The Overhaul staff included a female lead hand who supervised both women and men in Overhaul assembly. Ninety-five per cent of the employees involved in the strip down of the aircraft were women, estimates Paul Latocki (Interview, 13 March 1991). Grace Fogg worked on the Anson brakes, which included the plumbing (Interview, 17 April 1991). She replaced a male employee who she believed moved to the motors department. Jo Linscott

recalled working on the assembly of the windscreen and the emergency exit for the aircraft (Interview, 15 January 1991; Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991). Grace Fogg also performed this task as required (Interview, 17 April 1991). The windscreen assembly had previously been performed by a male employee (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Fogg, Interview, 17 April 1991).

The mechanical department was another area of the plant in which both women and men employees could be found. Women worked on engine nacelles attaching "all the little accessories and all the plumbing controls and bracketry. Then the men's job came when the men picked up this whole assembly and mounted it on the aircraft" (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991; Review, 28 January 1994). Women performed jobs which required dexterity and attention to detail, while men performed the more skilled jobs and jobs requiring greater physical strength.

There were a few women in flight service who cleaned the aircraft, making sure the windows and the inside of the cabins were clean. Many of the cable splicers were also women. Although Paul Latocki trained both men and women as cable splicers, eventually it was only women who were doing this job. He likened this job to a woman braiding her hair (Interview, 13 March 1991). "There was no one who knew how to splice a cable and I think I trained about 40 people to splice cable. It's just like a woman braiding her hair. But I could never do as much as some of the girls did on the bench. They did 40 splices a day for me, and it's all steel cable...you do it by hand" (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991).

Women already possessed the skills they required to perform this job, and the completion of 5 cable splices an hour was considered a very good days output. Not all employees were able to achieve this output level, not even the individual who taught them could produce so many splices (Latocki, Review, 28 February). As well, women could be found working in the Stores as kit assemblers and expeditors, and in the Electrical Department, electrical assembly, wiring the aircraft control panels and brakes.<sup>9</sup>

As for final assembly of the aircraft, that was performed by men. Stated Paul Latocki, "Towards the end, where you're doing assembly work, it's not that some women couldn't do it but you could say it's a man's job" due to it entailing such things as "assembly of engines and landing gear to aircraft (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991; Review, 28 February 1994). As well flight service work, the preparation of aircraft for test flying, was performed by men (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991).

Since very little of the Anson was metal, the sheet metal and welding shops responsibilities were limited mainly to repairs to the engine cowlings and metal fuselage frame (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994). But in 1944, MacDonald Aircraft assumed a contract from DeHavilland Aircraft in Malton, Ontario for the production of radiator parts for the Mosquito. Several of the respondents remember only a few women working in the sheet metal shop. As Paul Latocki

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<sup>9</sup>"Merry Macs Tatler", March, volume 2, Issue 9, no date. Merry Macs Tatler", May, volume 2, Issue 11, no date.

explained, sheet metal "had not opened itself up to women" (Latocki/Whitehill, Interview, 13 March 1991). The sheet metal and welding shops may have had few female employees because welding required a training period of several weeks, but it also appears to have been considered men's work.

The two female respondents who worked in the sheet metal shop had been trained before being hired at MacDonald Aircraft. Mrs. Irene McConnell and Annette Pelland had come to MacDonald Aircraft as welders from Westeel and Trans Canada Airlines (TCA) in 1943 and 1944 respectively. At MacDonald Aircraft their work entailed repairs to the fuselage frames, patches to gas tanks, and work on the nose of the aircraft. They recall only about 6-8 welders in total, with only one other woman being employed as a welder. This woman left MacDonald Aircraft soon after Annette Pelland and Mrs. McConnell were hired (Pelland and McConnell, Interview 19 April 1991). They also recalled riveting, as did Jo Linscott, Mrs. Whitehill and Kay Powelko.<sup>10</sup>

For Annette Pelland and Mrs. Irene McConnell, their war work experience started at Westeel where they began by filing the burrs off raw edges of steel. They quickly moved into welding as men were leaving to join the armed forces and the company was receiving more contracts. Neither Annette Pelland nor Mrs. Irene McConnell had any prior training or experience welding. They learned the basics of welding on the job, and pointed out that it took them "a couple of

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<sup>10</sup>Rivetting appears to have occurred later, sometime in 1943 or 1944 when the company was doing repairs to aircraft other than Ansons. A. Pelland and I. McConnell, Interview, 19 April 1991; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Latocki and Whitehill, Interview, 13 March 1991.

weeks" to learn how to weld properly (Pelland/McConnell, Interview, 19 April 1991). Mrs. McConnell commented that "once you got it down, it didn't take long. With practice we got better at it" (Pelland/McConnell, Interview, 19 April 1991).

After welding sheet metal for a year, both moved into aluminum welding because the company "wanted somebody with more control, and women have a little finer hand than men. Aluminum is very hard to weld because it will blow holes if heat is too concentrated. They found the women a lot better at aluminum welding than steel welding. It was more delicate" (McConnell, Interview, 19 April 1991; Latocki, Review 28 February 1994). Angry over wages and job mobility, Mrs. McConnell moved to MacDonald Bros. Aircraft in 1943 and after a brief stint at TCA, Annette Pelland followed her friend, starting to work at MacDonald Aircraft in the spring of 1944 (Pelland and McConnell, Interview, April 1991).

Prevailing definitions of the *worth* of men's work compared to women's work are discernible in the contracts negotiated between the Department of Munitions and Supply and MacDonald Bros. Aircraft. In the original contract of 1940, wage rates and hours of work are set out as part of the contractual obligations. MacDonald Aircraft were bound to pay the minimum specified, but could pay more if set out by provincial legislation or otherwise agreed.

The Manitoba Minimum Wage Act R.S.M. 1940, vol. II, chapter 138 authorized the creation of The Minimum Wage Labour Board which had the power to establish regulations and orders to, among other things, set the wage

rates for employees of different sexes. Regulations that may have been developed at this time no longer exist, yet the Manitoba Minimum Wage Board did note in their 1943 Annual Report that "with regard to federal government minimum wage schedules for war contracts, .25/hr for females and .35/hr for males, there has been no difficulty in administering this particular piece of legislation, but again both employers and employees consider the minimum entirely too low" (Manitoba Legislative Library, Annual Report (1943) Department of Labour, Manitoba:21). However, regulations were passed in 1945.

The 1945 Orders and Regulations, Division I, Section 3(1) under The Minimum Wage Act set the wages for experienced women employees involved in manufacturing not requiring skill or training at .30/hour, or \$14.40/week. Inexperienced female employees involved in manufacturing which required skills or training were to be paid on a sliding scale, with increments over time until they reached the maximum set wage. The scale began at .20/hr (\$9.60/week) for the first 2 months, .24/hr (\$11.52/week) for the next 2 months, .27/hr (\$12.96/week) for the 2 months thereafter, finally reaching the .30/hr (\$14.40/week) wage after 6 months.

The wage rates for men were consistently higher in all categories. Division V, 4(1) of the regulations specified that inexperienced male employees, eighteen years of age or over requiring skill or training, were to also be paid on a sliding scale. However, the wages to be paid to male trainees in the third month were higher than those experienced women were to receive, and the consideration of a



training period was shorter, only lasting three months. Males in this category were to be paid a starting wage of .25/hour for the first month, .28/hr for the second month, .32/hr for the third month and .35/hr thereafter. Males over the age of eighteen not requiring skill or training were to receive a minimum wage of .35/hr.

It is interesting to note that there were no age specifications attached to the minimum wages set for women. In the third month of employment, while still in the training period, inexperienced male employees received a higher wage for their work than women who may have been employed much longer. In addition, a wage scale was specified for inexperienced males under the age of eighteen. Males in this category were to receive .20/hr for the first 2 months, .24/hr for the next 2 months, .27/hr for the following 2 months, and .30/hr thereafter. Even inexperienced males under the age of eighteen were entitled to receive the same amount of pay as experienced women who had been employed much longer and inexperienced female employees, regardless of age (Manitoba Legislative Library, Orders and Regulations under The Minimum Wage Act C.A 1924 c.128 s.1).

The wages for inexperienced females are surprising, as the Minimum Wage Act specified that no Manitoba employer could pay people eighteen years of age or over less than .25/hr unless the Board so ordered or the regulations permitted. It is unknown why, in 1945, the minimum wage was set below that contemplated by the legislation. The gap in wages between female and male workers in Manitoba did not exist by accident, it was legislated and endorsed by the

provincial government.

While the wages specified in the contracts between MacDonald Aircraft Ltd. and the DMS were more generous for certain occupations, differences according to the sex of the employee were also a striking feature of these contracts. The schedule of wages in the 1940 contract contains a breakdown of jobs into different classes: Journeymen, classes A, B, C, and D Production Workers, Labourers and Apprentices. Class A Production Workers were defined as "comprising workpeople engaged, under supervision in repetitive machine, assembly or bench work, requiring less training, experience and skill than that necessary to qualify as a Journeyman; also riveters [sic], upholsterers, sand blasters, fabric workers (male), and heat treat operators on automatic furnaces (original emphasis)." The wage was .60/ hour.

Class B was comprised of "workpeople ... engaged in repetitive machine, assembly or bench work requiring less training, experience and skill than that necessary for Class "A" Production Workers; also helpers assigned to assist journeymen; dopers; and female fabric workers (original emphasis)." The wage rate was .50/ hour (NAC RG28 vol. 351 file 4-2-136).

It is known that all dopers and fabric workers were women, and that in the rib room only males were engaged in "steaming and forming" the wood into the proper shape for assembly (Latocki and Whitehill, Interview, 13 March 1991). The latter occupation lends itself well to the job description "heat treat operators on automatic furnaces." Jo Linscott recalled that male workers always earned

more money than female workers, and that "there were very few men on the same job as the women" (Interview, 15 January 1991).

Class C was defined as workers inexperienced in aircraft manufacture who were training for Class A or B production work. The first month was probationary, after which the training period was not to exceed three months. After completion of their training and probationary period, these workers were to be moved into "one of the higher classifications." The wage was .40/hour (NAC RG28 vol. 351 file 4-2-136).

Jo Linscott remembers her starting wage as .30/hour (Interview, 15 January 1991). But according to the terms of the DMS contract with MacDonald Aircraft, her starting rate of pay should have been .40/hour as a trainee. Other respondents could not remember their exact starting wage, but were quick to note the wages they received at MacDonald Aircraft were higher than those they had previously received at other occupations (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Whitehill, Interview, 13 March 1991; Pelland/McConnell, Interview, 19 April 1991).

Other discrepancies exist between what wages should have been and what were actually paid. Some records of actual wage rates have survived in the form of Personnel Records at Bristol Aerospace (who purchased MacDonald Aircraft in the 1950s). From these records, several women are marked as starting work at various times during 1941 as Fabric Department, *Class "D"* workers. One woman was recorded as being in Sewing, *Class "D"*. The beginning wage rate of these

women was .35/hour.

Both the classification and the wage rate are of significance. Both conflict with the schedule of wages attached to the August 1940 contract signed between DMS and MacDonal Aircraft. Class D Production Workers were to be "boys under 18 years of age engaged in training for Class "A", Class "B", or Class "C" Production Workers" (NAC RG28 vol. 351 file 4-2-136). The training period was to last a minimum of 3 months to a maximum of 9 months. Accordingly, the wage rate was increased on a sliding scale whereby Class D workers would receive .25/hour for the first 3 months, .30/hour for the second 3 months and .35/hour for the remaining 3 months of training. Additionally, if Class D Production Workers were to reach the age of 18 while still in this category, they were to be moved up into one of the higher classifications (NAC RG28 vol. 351 file 4-2-136).

Needless to say, the Class D female Production Workers whose records remain were not boys under the age of 18. Aside from their sex, these women ranged from 20 to 33 years of age (Bristol Aerospace Personnel Records). Curiously, the initial wage rate these women received was .35/hour, which is the maximum rate to be paid to Class D Production Worker trainees. In fact, all the remaining records of female employees who were hired during the period 1941 to 1943 were hired at the rate of .35/hour. This is below the contract rates stipulated for Class C Production Workers, which was set at .40/hr.

Furthermore, subsequent wage increments do not seem to follow any consistent pattern, except the female employees hired in 1941 received a wage

increase to .50/hour on October 1, 1942 (consistent with Class B rates) and a subsequent increment to .60/hour on August 12, 1943 (consistent with Class A rates). Some of these employees received wage increments as early as 3 months after initial hire, some did not receive an increase in wages for as long as 13 months after their date of hire (Personnel Records, Bristol Aerospace).

While some of the female MacDonald Aircraft respondents recall their final wage as .65/hour, Personnel records revealed that some women received wages as high as .70/hour in February 1944 (Bristol Aerospace Personnel Records). Yet by autumn 1944, the earlier female hirees were laid off or had their earnings reduced. One woman who had been earning .70/hour as of February 16, 1944 saw her wage fall in February 1945 to .59/hour (Bristol Aerospace Personnel Records).

Jo Linscott recalled receiving a substantial amount of backpay after she had been at MacDonald Aircraft for about six months. She commented that she believed the backpay could be credited to the union, which had won higher wages for the employees (Interview, 15 January 1991). Although there was a dispute over wages and job classifications in early 1941 between MacDonald Aircraft and the International Association of Machinists (IAM), which was the bargaining unit representing some employees, Jo Linscott's claim cannot be readily substantiated. A subsequent agreement negotiated between the IAM and MacDonald Aircraft did set out higher wages, but the classifications of work remained consistent with those set out in the 1940 contract between MacDonald Aircraft and DMS. It is

unknown whether the agreement was accepted by DMS and the National War Labour Board (NAC RG27 vol. 638 file 213).

Although the union wanted higher remuneration for its members, it did not advocate equality of rates; the agreement set out wages of .70/hour for Class A production workers and .65/hour for Class B production workers, the latter of whom appear to have been primarily women. While not conclusive, the evidence suggests that this agreement was accepted and the wage rates adjusted accordingly. Furthermore, several of the female respondents recalled their final wage to be .65/hour (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Whitehill, Interview, 13 March 1991; McConnell and Pelland, Interview, 19 April 1991). In contrast, a male respondent recalled earning .85/hour until the company realized that with all the overtime hours he worked he "made more money than my boss, and I was put on salary" which was set at \$300/month (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991; Review, 28 February 1994; NAC RG28 B2 vol. 737 file 204-M-70). He was quite surprised to hear the female respondents recount a wage rate of .65/hour and thought it surprising.

While many respondents remember receiving .65/hour, a second contract signed between DMS and MacDonald Aircraft in 1943 once again set out differences in rates to be paid to female and male employees, and contained *lower* wages than those specified in the contract of August 31, 1940. These new minimum wage rates had been passed by Order-in-Council, 30 May 1941. Gone were the classes of workers and any reference to journeymen. However, wage

rates based on sex clearly remained in the new contract.

The minimum wage for male employees over the age of eighteen and employees who had training certificates from a recognized pre-employment school under the War Emergency Training Program was set at .35/hour. Female employees over the age of eighteen were entitled to .25/hour. Male beginners without experience were to receive wages on a sliding scale from .20/hour in the first month to .30/hour in the third month and .35/hour thereafter. The minimum wage for female beginners without experience was set at .20/hour for the first month, increasing to .25/hour at the end of the 30 day period. Only female or male employees under the age of eighteen received the same wage: .20/hour (NAC RG28 vol 351 file 4-2-136).

The various schedules of wage rates evident in the DMS contracts, the provincial minimum wage regulations and the IAM-MacDonald wage dispute embodied a widely held societal perspective about the value of female work. Most importantly, those commonly held beliefs were institutionalized through public policy developed and implemented by two levels of government in Canada. While the wage rates specified in the contract between MacDonald Aircraft and the DMS allowed for a higher minimum wage rate, provincial and federal governments publicly set different wage rates based upon the sex of workers. The government of Canada endorsed wage discrimination by setting different wage rates between female and male workers in a legally enforceable contract. The Manitoba government developed a legislative basis for treating workers according

to sex. Governments set the example for acceptance of a Canadian ideological framework that placed a lesser value upon the work of women, and formalized such an ideology through a legislative forum. Such differences in wages are a feature of occupational segregation. By legislating and contracting wages by sex, the state took an active role in maintaining a structure of occupational segregation in the Canadian workplace.

It should be noted that the terms of the two contracts signed between DMS and MacDonald Aircraft dated August 31, 1940 and October 15, 1943 each contained a clause which provided that the Government of Canada would pay to MacDonald Aircraft "progress payments" to cover "the cost of direct labour...expended in the work." In the contract of August 31, 1940, there are no applicable terms and conditions, whereas the contract of October 15, 1943 limits 100% direct labour cost progress payments up to the time of the first audit under the new contract. Thereafter, the percentage of the cost of direct labour would be set by the Chief Cost Accountant of DMS after consultation with MacDonald Aircraft (NAC RG28 vol 351 file 4-2-136).

This meant that MacDonald Aircraft received direct funding from the Government of Canada for its payroll. Consequently, if MacDonald Aircraft had wanted to pay higher wages, the rates had to be approved by the War Labour Board. Paul Latocki remembers that if employees asked for a higher wage the response was always the same, "sorry we can't, we're controlled by Ottawa" (Interview, 13 March 1991). Yet Mrs. McConnell and Annette Pelland indicated



that if you were persistent and "if you were bold enough to go and fight with them they would pay you more" (Interview, 19 April 1991). Other respondents insisted this was not the case (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994). In essence, the respondents worked for the Government of Canada, under discriminatory wage rates determined by the Government of Canada.

The difference in wage scales for women and men at MacDonald Aircraft contrasts to the experiences of the San Diego aircraft workers studied by Noll-Clark (1977). At Consolidated Aircraft of San Diego it was corporate policy that wages paid would be standardized according to the job performed, there was no distinction in the wage scales for female and male employees (Noll-Clark 1977:101).

In the MacDonald Aircraft experience, the rationale behind the differing wage rates appears suspiciously as concurrence with the institutionalized belief of the lower worth of women's skills and productivity. The probability of men having more experience is almost totally ruled out with respect to many jobs at MacDonald Aircraft as there were very few employees who had *any* previous aircraft production experience, be they new employees or those who had worked for the company before the war.

Until a shortage in available male labour began to be felt in Winnipeg, women were not hired at MacDonald Aircraft at all. Only a handful of employees had worked upon aircraft prior to the war, and their experience had been limited to manufacture of floats and some aircraft parts, certainly not the

type of work they were later called upon to perform. Any men with skills were assigned to jobs where they were most needed and capable of either performing the job or receiving additional training to enhance skills and/or training they already possessed (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991).

As previously mentioned, the first women hired worked in an all female department, performing fabric work and doping, and their immediate superior was female. No men worked in these two areas, except further along the corporate hierarchy as supervisors. Furthermore, doping and fabric jobs were considered women's work (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Latocki, Interview 13 March 1991), a visible indication of broad occupational segregation based on sex and/or gender, and an ideology that not only viewed female and male dimensions as different, but also as non-equivalents.

Women comprised a large number of the employees in the rib room, but did not perform the same tasks as men, at least not until men had either moved into more skilled occupations or left the plant. Gradually, with the continuation of the war, women moved into some of the occupations men had left, and if in turn any women left those occupations, they were replaced by other female workers. Women were rarely promoted into supervisory positions unless they would be directly supervising the work of other women (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991).

In some instances, the types of jobs respondents performed were driven by production deadlines. This meant that within departments some female

respondents were able to perform a certain range of tasks in a pinch.

Consequently, there appears to have been some flexibility in job tasks, but only within the definitions of women's and men's work (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Fogg, Interview, 17 April 1991).

Rationalizations of the distinctiveness of men's work and women's work usually purport that a characteristic of women's work is its "lightness" in comparison to men's work (Milkman 1987:15; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991). There is however, little connection between women's work and light work, nor is this distinction ever made in relation to unpaid labour performed by women in the home. A significant number of jobs considered women's work, e.g. laundry and canning, were certainly not light.

The MacDonald Aircraft respondents all cited the supposed heavy or light nature of jobs as a distinguishing feature of the types of occupations women and men held. While undoubtedly some of the work at the aircraft plant was of a heavy nature, it appears that due to craft breakdown many jobs were not heavy in the sense that they required excessive physical strength. When asked, none of the respondents could provide a definition of light or heavy jobs. Instead, they resorted to providing examples of light or heavy work and some features of such work. The "bull gang" was cited as an example of heavy work performed by men. The bull gang was responsible for unloading raw materials from freight cars and moving aircraft around the shop (Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991; Linscott,

Interview, 15 January 1991). Men also performed the initial cutting work for the ribs in the carpentry shop and men moved and mounted the engines on the finished aircraft (Latocki, Interview, 15 January 1991). Annette Pelland confirmed that welding was considered light work because they had a foreman who would change the acetylene and oxygen tanks for them "as women were not allowed to do heavy lifting, there was always male help available to do this" (Pelland, Review, 16 March 1994). Bull gang aside, a common characteristic of these tasks is that they required some level of strength to perform adequately and are jobs in which employees would become physically dirty. Yet while light jobs appear to require more attention and concentration, they also required some stamina, and were not necessarily clean jobs. Some "light jobs" included fabric work, doping, sanding, assembling ribs and attaching various parts to the engines. Doping and sanding were not necessarily easy jobs and attachment of the windscreen and some wiring required squeezing into small spaces in uncomfortable positions (Fogg, Review, 5 May 1994; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994). Grace Fogg commented that although the jobs she performed were considered light, that many jobs were carried out in awkward positions, such as on dollies or scaffolding and left a workers physically stiff and exhausted (Fogg, Review, 5 May 1994). As well, some jobs performed by women were also messy, such as doping and rib work (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994).

The distinctions are, at best, artificial. Yet the respondents believed work

was organized along those lines. This belief contributed to the popular societal justification for paying women less than men. Women's work was worth less than that of men because they simply could not perform certain jobs. Yet even if jobs were broken down into basic subparts women still received less remuneration than a man for performing those same tasks. The reality that many men at MacDonald Aircraft had not worked in the aircraft industry prior to the war and were as new to aircraft production as the women employees was overlooked. Yet as the DMS/MacDonald Aircraft contracts indicate, men could count on earning a higher wage, especially if they happened to perform the same work as women.

Given the lower wages paid to women, one is led to contemplate this as an added incentive for employers to hire women. But in the case of MacDonald Aircraft, as with other war industries, women were not hired until there was no longer an available pool of male labour (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Latocki, Interview, 13 March 1991; Pelland/McConnell, Interview 19 April 1991). If women as employees were attractive because of the lower wages they received, while their productivity rates equalled those of men, it would be reasonable to expect that women would have been hired immediately and permanently. It would logically follow that female labour would continue to be substituted for male labour as a profit maximizing strategy. This did not happen at MacDonald Aircraft nor did Milkman (1987), Nash (1989), Skold (1980) or Pierson (1986) document any such activity. The "sex labelling" of jobs was accepted as natural (Milkman 1987:15), and once jobs became known as women's work it was difficult

to change the labelling from women's to men's work and attract men to such occupations.

Another tenet of the explanation of the maintenance of occupational segregation argues that as unions were concerned with preserving male wages, they did not readily promote the idea of women as workers of equal value. Rather unions sought to maintain occupational segregation in order that women would not have the opportunity to prove they were equal to men in the workplace, and would therefore not threaten male wage rates or secure a place for themselves in the post-war workplace. The resolution to the dispute between the IAM and MacDonald Aircraft provides some evidence in support of the view that wage differences based upon sex and gender were acceptable. The major complaint in this dispute centred around the belief that workers at Canada Car and Foundry in Fort William were receiving higher wages than were paid at MacDonald Aircraft. The IAM was not concerned with equalizing wages between men and women, but in securing a higher wage for its male union members as the philosophy of different wages for women and men were maintained in the proposed contract (NAC RG27 vol. 638 file 213).

Literature of the day also offered many contradictions. Employers stressed that women were being trained and hired into jobs that were considered men's jobs, but were also being hired into jobs for which their special attributes – delicacy of touch, attention to detail, acceptance of monotony – were perfect. Analogies with women's domestic work were sometimes used to convince women

that war work was not dissimilar to work they performed in the home. On the other hand, Rosie was exalted as the epitome of true womanhood - loyal, patriotic, rising to the challenges of the times.

The reality of women in men's jobs was reconciled through continued belief in the idealized feminine images and attributes that went hand in hand with being a woman. Continued glamour, stylishness in personal appearance and dress, and interest in men represent an attempt to reconcile conflicting reality and ideological perceptions. An important pillar of the ideology of sex and gender roles as it related to women was the encouragement to consider themselves women first, workers second. Figuring largely in this was the assumption that once victory was achieved, the women would hand back the men's jobs they had been filling.

CHAPTER 4  
BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

"Comrades rather than opportunities"  
(A.B. Baxter, Maclean's 1942:39)

The respondents had varying things to say about the behaviour of men toward themselves and other women in the plant. Jo Linscott held the perspective that generally men enjoyed having women working in the plant as they "welcomed the change of having women in among themselves" (Interview, 15 January 1991). Kay Powelko and Mrs. Whitehill recalled that women were always treated "as ladies" (Interview, 13 March 1991). Most of the respondents commented that they noticed little resentment from male co-workers, as the war was a temporary event and the pre-war status quo would resurrect itself once the war was over. Grace Fogg noted that she and a female friend worked in Overhaul with a crew of 5 or 6 men and "were very lucky as the men we worked with were a good bunch and we had no trouble" (Fogg, Review, 5 May 1994). Jo Linscott summed up the attitudes of male employees as reflecting the reality that "we were all there for a war effort and the men knew it wasn't going to last, and they figured the more people we have in it, the sooner this is going to be finished and the women will go back to their regular lives" (Interview, 15 January 1991). Mrs. McConnell also stated that generally most men were not antagonistic toward



women employees because she was "not going to be in there taking their job forever" (Interview, 19 April 1991).

While there may have been little resentment toward having women in workplaces where they had never been before, there was a certain amount of vigilance over irresponsible and unacceptable interactions between the sexes, both within and without the plant. Two respondents speculated that certain female employees had been fired for in-plant liaisons. Other respondents recounted an incident that occurred on Portage Avenue when a man had whistled at women and two policemen had warned him, "You tie a string on that whistle mister, or you'll be in trouble." According to the respondents, men were expected to exhibit respectful behaviour toward women (Powelko and Whitehill, Interview, 13 March 1991; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Fogg, Interview, 17 April 1991).

Yet in some instances behaviour and attitude diverged dramatically. Several female respondents did recall having the feeling that a number of men "just felt as if you were sort of there for their convenience" (McConnell, Interview 19 April 1991). Jo Linscott remembered the typical male shop floor behaviour as trying to pick up easy dates (Interview 15 January 1991). Mrs. Whitehill echoed these comments and added that men "were all trying to make time" and would take their breaks in an area along the route to the women's washroom in order to flirt and watch women on their way to the washroom (Interview, 13 March 1991). On a certain level, this type of behaviour appears to have been expected and accepted. Issues of the Merry Macs Tatler, a monthly MacDonald Bros. employee

publication, contained numerous references to the "Wolf of the Month" (Merry Macs Tatler 2:issues 9-12, nd) and gossip about who was seen with whom. Many cartoons and jokes in the Tatler also reflect stereotypes of the sexes and at times prescribe the type of behaviour that women were expected to exhibit. One issue commented that "Women without principle draw considerable interest" (Merry Macs Tatler 2:10:8, nd).

A significant reflection of attitudes and stereotyping of female employees is found in the MacDonald Bros. Aircraft "Shop Rules" handbook for new employees (MacDonald Bros. Aircraft Ltd. 1943). The handbook contains "Shop Rules for Women", a section specifically directed at female employees. As the section was not a part of the original bound booklet, but was instead glued to the back cover, it appears that while the codification of rules for women was an afterthought, its inclusion was a priority for the company. Presumably women needed specific rules to govern their behaviour in the work environment.

The rules for women are a revealing insight of the manner in which the company perceived its female employees. Many of the rules were not only sexist but also demeaning. Women needed to have many basic things specifically spelled out to them: to be obedient, not to wear shoes with high heels in the plant, not to talk too much, not to gossip or bicker or to loiter in the washroom.

## ***Shop Rules for Women Employees***

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1. Be at your bench and ready to start when the whistle blows.
2. Do not run or loiter on Company premises.
3. Strict obedience is necessary to your Foreman, Lead Hand, Charge Hand, and the Supervisor in the Plant. Your Lead Hands, Charge Hands and Foreman are responsible for the quality and quantity of work produced. They have specific instructions to carry out and you in turn must take your instructions from the Lead Hand, Charge Hand or Foreman.
4. Standard blue coveralls and a plain navy blue net turban must be worn at all times in the factory by all women workers. Hair must be kept tucked under the specified head covering. High heels and wedgie type shoes are dangerous and must not be worn.
5. Finger rings must not be worn by those engaged in mechanical work. The use of nail polish is not considered good form, nor is too liberal use of cosmetics.
6. All workers must be prepared to rotate on every shift.
7. Unnecessary conversation with other employees during working hours is not appreciated by the Company or the foreman.
8. When absent contact your supervisor's office. Continued absence will retard your progress. All absentees, away for any reason whatsoever, must report to the office of the supervisor on their return.
9. Personal disagreements between employees which interfere with their work will be sufficient cause for dismissal.
10. One of the duties of the washroom matron is to check loitering during working hours. Any discourtesy to the matron will be considered as a disciplinary offence.
11. Any person spreading false rumors is subject to penalties under the Official Secrets Act.
12. The Supervisor of Women is appointed to maintain these regulations, but is also on the job to help and assist you in any way. Report to the Supervisor any grievances or personal troubles that you do not wish to discuss with your foreman.

(Shop Rules Handbook, MacDonald Brothers Aircraft Ltd., 1943)

The company even felt it had to prescribe personal traits such as not wearing too much nailpolish or "too liberal usage of cosmetics" (MacDonald Bros. Aircraft Ltd., 1943). Women, it seemed, may not be able to discern between the

workplace and social settings. In any case, when they came to the industrial workplace, they were expected to minimize their overt femininity.

The experiences of Annette Pelland and Mrs. McConnell reflected the more serious aspects of being young and working in an industry that customarily employed only men. They recounted a wariness of male co-workers, and their method of dealing with sexual harassment on the job was decisive enough to get the message across to men who overstepped the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. "You got attention, I'll tell you. Everytime we'd get up to go to have a drink of water or something the guys would stare at you and all of a sudden the Cokes would start coming - three or four Cokes in front of you .... But you didn't dare go out with any of them. There's a lot of guys. Once they pass the word then you were treated like a —. You never knew what they were going to do, these men. Here you are working with them sometimes till two or three o'clock in the morning. But you had your torch, and if a guy got fresh you just sssst" (Pelland and McConnell, Interview, 19 April 1991).

They recalled one such incident at Westeel involving a male sheet metal worker who was working nearby: "The light went out and all I had was my torch. The only light was our torches. This is in pitch darkness. And all of a sudden he grabbed me by the breasts" (McConnell, Interview, 19 April 1991). "So she turned her torch on his hand and burned a hole right in his hand" (Pelland, Interview, 19 April 1991). They commented that many times they were scared to go alone to the washroom and women usually went together as a group, "when you went to

the can the whole assembly line [female] got up and went also. Being with all these men all the time, you never knew what crazy ideas they were having in their head...you never knew where they were (Pelland and McConnell, Interview, 19 April 1991). Mrs. McConnell commented that "we were always with all men...there were very few women [in their work area un]like the women that were working in just a group of women. They [women in departments where there were larger numbers of women] didn't have problems like her and I" (Interview, 19 April 1991).

The differences of experiences between Annette Pelland and Mrs. McConnell and the experiences of other respondents is striking. For many of the others, the behaviour of male co-workers was predictable - young, single female co-workers were potential dates, or at least fun to flirt with and tease. And vice versa. In fact, several of the respondents met their future husbands while working at MacDonald Aircraft and the plant promoted an array of social events.

One possible explanation for the unacceptable behaviour of some males may be that Annette Pelland and Mrs. McConnell were employed as welders where they were a highly visible minority. As well, the story recounted by Annette Pelland and Mrs. McConnell occurred during their employment at Westeel where a well established male workforce had been the norm for some time, whereas at MacDonald Aircraft there had been a rapid wartime expansion that had included both female and male employees in various work areas. When employed at MacDonald Aircraft neither encountered such behaviour (Pelland,

Review 16 March 1994).

While on the surface there appeared little antagonism between female and male workers at MacDonald Bros., some of the female respondents recalled feeling they had to prove their worth to male co-workers. "I remember when I first went to Overhaul. I had a feeling they [male co-workers] figured here's another of these stupid women that doesn't know anything" (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). In particular, female respondents who worked in mixed sex departments or those departments which were dominated by male employees commented upon their desire to display to male co-workers and management their ability to do their jobs well. "Women were trying to prove themselves ... because they wanted to prove to the men that we weren't just a bunch of stupid broads" (Linscott, Interview 15 January 1991). When Annette Pelland moved from Westeel to TCA, she began as a riveter. She eventually got a job welding when a male co-worker went on vacation and she was given the opportunity to fill in until his return. But she had to prove her ability to perform. She was told by the foreman "if you're any good we'll put you on [welding]" (Interview, 19 April 1991). She was given part of a gasmask to weld, "and I did millions of those things [at Westeel] and I thought this is a cinch ... he [the foreman] looked at it and he looked at it; he took a magnifying glass to see if it was undercut" (Interview, 19 April 1991).

The foreman's behaviour reflected the widespread public attitude given voice through material published by the media and government propaganda.

Although the media across Canada was making a fuss about the fair sex donning bandannas and coveralls and making off to factories with new found skills and attributes which would help to win the war,<sup>11</sup> implicit in articles was the belief that women could not be responsible for the really important jobs, and while they could fill some male jobs on an interim basis, they would step back into their women's world once men returned to claim their place in society. Assuming a similar tone, the Canadian government was bombarding the population with propaganda aimed to smooth conversion of peacetime industries into high production war industries. A critical aspect of achieving war production goals was the large scale absorption of women into the workplace which meant fostering public acceptance of women assuming unaccustomed roles. Publicity and/or recruitment campaigns launched by the government focused on presenting visual images of women at their war occupations along with stories of the achievements of individual women (Pierson 1986:26), all the while promoting what were strategically considered the proper images of women at war. There were countless magazine articles about women in war industries and the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) produced a number of "shorts" documenting Canada's war industries and female participation in those industries. Magazine articles highlighting "womanpower" were numerous. Even product advertising emphasized the new responsibilities of women while attempting to ensure the old modes of

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<sup>11</sup> Various articles: "Women in Aviation" Canadian Aviation, February 1940; "MacDonald Bros. Create Big Industry For Manitoba" Canadian Aviation, December 1942; "Women working for Victory" Canadian Aviation, August 1942; "Women Workers—A Problem" Canadian Aviation, November 13, 1943.

behaviour weren't quickly forgotten or cast by the wayside for the duration.

Various media were employed to promote the proper images of women at war. The examples discussed below are representative of the images and messages to which to the MacDonald Bros. respondents were exposed. Bland (1983:77) found that advertising directed toward women war workers made up 4.8%, 14% and 10.6% of Maclean's magazine commercial messages for the years 1942, 1943 and 1944 respectively. Although a certain amount of recognition of the enlarged activities of women was acknowledged, such recognition was limited by the products advertised and the underlying message associated with that product. Sales messages were strong reminders of the responsibilities of being feminine. By and large, the target of many of advertisements were young, single women.

A Palmolive soap advertisement blatantly promoted the idea that although war work was dirty and demanding women could, and should, remember to spend time on their grooming as their number one duty was to be attractive to men:

Okay sugar...your time's rationed, but you look sweet to me! When Ted said that, my heart went haywire! Was I surprised and thrilled. I thought I looked a fright in my wrinkled work smock...my swell permanent tucked under my turban...and smudgy all over my face! Jeepers! When I took this job at the plant, I figured I'd given up my complexion for my country. No time now for hours with beauty preparations! Just quick soap-and-water cleansing two minutes twice a day...with Palmolive Soap. I'd never trusted only [in italics] Palmolive care before, so goodbye to glamour, I thought...Yet here was Ted, the handsomest man at the plant, asking for A DATE! Now more than ever I trust Palmolive to keep me lovely – for him! (Maclean's March 15, 1943 from Bland 1983:76)

Old themes held way, even in the face of work realities of many women



that were clearly outside the pre-war societal norm. Attempts were made to make some sense out of new challenges to sex and gender roles. In some instances women's jobs were likened to more familiar female activities. An Aspirin advertisement was obvious about the connection between what women were doing as war workers and their traditional activities, "No time out for Headaches, so War-time Seamstresses, Sewing Tanks with Blow Torches take Aspirin for almost Instant Relief" (Bland 1983:75). Based on her study of a decade of advertising in Maclean's magazine, Bland (1983) concluded there was never any question whether women would return to the hearth after hostilities ceased. She claimed that by 1946 advertisements suggested there was no other logical place for women. By 1950, 80% of all advertising in Maclean's magazine was directed toward homemakers (Bland 1983:84).

While most product advertisements reflect the ideology of sex and gender roles for women as presented by the makers of consumer products, other promotional materials were placed by government departments. Such publicity campaigns also reflect many of the same themes found in product advertising, leading to the conclusion that the ideology of sex and gender roles was not only internalized by individuals and actively promoted by makers of consumer products, but institutionalized and operationalized by public institutions as well.

The advertisement "Please Don't Stare at my Pants", placed by the DMS in the March 1, 1942 issue of Maclean's is an excellent example of making apologies for dressing in an unfeminine manner, but also reveals other themes

about women's war work that are consistent with the findings of other researchers. The opening lines reflect the temporary nature of women's sacrifice of their femininity and the perspective that women are holding men's jobs, not just jobs: "Would you like to know why I wear trousers like the men when I go about the streets? Because I'm doing a man's job for my country's sake." The text continues, "I work in a munitions plant. Every piece of war material I help to produce helps to keep the Nazis and Japs away from our shores." The underlying message is of women performing emergency activities out of duty to nation as those individuals who would normally be helping in the emergency at home were needed elsewhere. The government went on to lecture that the prevalence of young women in trousers on the streets was because

They demonstrate the revival of the heroic spirit of the pioneers who laid the foundation of our country. The women folk in those days stood shoulder to shoulder with their men, either at the plow or the palisade. Today, these young women are again standing behind their men in the hour of their country's peril. In the months to come, the uniform of the blue trousers will be seen more and more frequently in our country because girls and women are contributing their skill and their delicacy of touch to the production of instruments of war for our fighting men.

(Macleans's March 1, 1942 from Bland 1983:74)

Government produced propaganda maintained the myth that women were better suited to certain types of work - "the delicacy of touch" - implies that women were above all, workers with the same old feminine traits and ideals who were hard pressed to set those frivolities aside to answer the call of patriotism. It is also interesting to note that while pioneer women "stood shoulder to shoulder" with pioneer men, women in the 1940s were "standing behind their men." The

contradictions in accepted beliefs about women's capabilities and what they were now required to do for the sake of their nation was apparently not a subject which anyone wanted to inspect too closely.

The perspective that there were sex and gender limitations on women's equal participation in the workplace was also evident in a number of films produced by the National Film Board of Canada during World War II. The preface to a collection of several of these NFB films underscores the contradictions in mass mobilization of women for the war effort claiming the films "reflect the confusion of a patriarchal society trying to come to terms with women when seen independently from their traditional occupations as wives and mothers" (NFB:1986).

While films such as "Women At War" and "Wings on Her Shoulders" (1945) rely on patriotic images of women rising to the challenges of wartime, they qualify the unusual activities of women with such commentaries as "women fight for peace to bring back their men, their families and their jobs" (NFB: Women At War), which is followed by visual images of women as good housekeepers performing traditional tasks. The emphasis is always upon women in secondary roles, there are still male leaders to direct them.

The invitation for women to participate in the male work world had limitations. The main character in "Proudly She Marches" (1945) reminds viewers that women are temporarily holding military jobs, and while those jobs are essential to the war effort, they are not as significant as the work of men: "Beth

took over a job from a man full time, releasing him for a more important job" (NFB: Proudly She Marches, 1945).

The short, "Wings on Her Shoulders" (1945) follows the experiences of female recruits, documenting their activities from recruitment to completion of military training. A significant amount of time is spent showing women receiving their uniforms, being sure to point out that "every suit is altered and realtered for a perfect fit", and caring for their physical appearance. The filmmakers went to great lengths emphasizing that women in uniform received special training as to maintenance of their most outward signs of femininity, their hair and their face.

"Activity, interest and variety" were the "keywords" for women in the film "Proudly She Marches" (1945). The short contained numerous images of women in recreational activities and traditional female pursuits that women were able to perform in the armed forces, such as "that traditional activity dear to the hearts of all women, cooking" (NFB, Proudly She Marches, 1945).

While the overall impression was one of women quite able to perform the same work as men, all these films withheld a full endorsement of women being the equals of men. Although the shorts documented the significance of women's war work contributions, they quickly included images which relied on stereotyped female obsessions. Perhaps this was due to the need to attract large numbers of women into the armed services and the perception that concern over femininity was a sensitive public issue.

A public opinion survey commissioned by the Combined Services

Committee, Directorate of Army Recruiting, revealed the majority of Canadians were concerned about not only femininity, but executing the war effort within a sex and gender system which provided familiar roles for women and men. The survey was carried out in 1943 primarily for the armed forces for the purpose of developing a more effective recruitment strategy to attract women into military service. But it also provides a snapshot of the larger public opinion as to what were believed to be the most effective activities that women could be doing to serve Canada at war.

The results are startling. Despite the shortages of labour and the volumes of reassuring propaganda that women were still women after all, only 23% of the respondents believed that women could best serve Canada's war effort by "doing war work in factories" (Pierson 1986:135). The response "maintaining home life" ranked the highest at 26%. "Part-time voluntary relief work" weighed in at 13%, "conserving food, rationing" at 11%, "buying war bonds, stamps" accounted for 8% and "joining the women's forces" received approval as important female war activities from only 7% of those surveyed. While the percentage of respondents who believed that war work in factories is only a few points behind the maintenance of home life, Pierson points out that the activities of part-time voluntary relief work, conserving food, rationing and buying war bonds were essentially parallel to maintaining home life. Among the general population, there appeared to be a well entrenched attitude that in order to help the war effort, Canadian women should be staying at home and performing tasks that had

traditionally been assigned to them through a sex and gender system which should be upheld, regardless of any war emergency. Interestingly enough, when the answers of young women were separated from those of parents and young men, the ranking of "maintaining home life" and "doing war work in factories" was reversed (Pierson 1986:136). Apparently young women did not share the perspectives of their parents, husbands, boyfriends and brothers as to the value of their contributions to the war effort.

The mistrust of women that appears in various written and visual print was easily captured by magazine articles of the day. "War gave women a break in industry and the girls have made good, raising the question: Are they there to stay?" asked one writer. She continued with,

after two or three years of pants and pay envelopes, what will they demand of society? Perhaps ... they'll be tired of it all and yearn in the old womanly way for a home and a baby and a big brave man. But what if they refuse to be stripped of the pants and deprived of the pay envelopes? What if they start looking around for some nice little chap who can cook and who'll meet them lovingly at the door with their slippers in his hand? What if industry has to reorganize to give these women sabbatical years for having babies? ... These are questions that make strong men break out in a lather. (Thelma LeCocq, Maclean's 1942:10)

While somewhat humorous, the writer of this article captured the underlying anxiety that appears to have been on the minds of many men. She goes on to warn that women themselves had not thought about these possibilities

because they're too busy having the time of their lives right now. This opportunity to work in war industries is the biggest thing that ever happened them. It's taken them away from kitchens and sewing machines, from stocking counters and hairdressing parlors, from switchboards and typewriters. It has enabled them to make

more money than they ever made before. It has given them a new sense of importance...

(LeCocq, Maclean's 1942:10)

But old myths did not fade easily. Employers were warned that "many women came into the plant directly from their homes, never having been employed in any job sufficiently long to acquire good work habits." One article managed to trot out a long list of the most outrageous assumptions concerning women's usefulness as employees. If put to work on the right job, however, "women thrive on routine, continued repetition of which would drive men to distraction." Women were not known for their keen intellectual abilities, but were obedient and reliable. "Once they learn a job—so long as they are not faced with the need to use their own initiative or make a decision—they can be depended upon to do their job exactly as told." But they lacked the physical stamina of their male co-workers as they had to be given a "rest period of not less than ten minutes every two hours" and "must have access to facilities that enable them to lie down if they so desire." The article also noted women's psychological defects. For example, they "were more prone to discouragement than men." Some assertions border on the difficult to believe. A man could brace a "rivet hammer against his chest without injury", while women were "subject to development of cancer in the pectoral region if they follow[ed] such practice long" (Canadian Aviation, November 1943:78, 80).

Female MacDonald Aircraft respondents thought differently. The respondents were adamant that their productivity was a significant factor during

their employment. "The men always considered that they were the best, and we let them sort of think they were" (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). Overall, the female respondents took great pride in the quality of their work and level of productivity. Many believed their productivity was not only equal to that of male co-workers, but in many instances exceeded the productivity levels of men in the plant (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Pelland and McConnell, Interview, 19 April 1991; Lawlor, Questionnaire, 24 January 1990; Edwards, Questionnaire, 18 January 1990). Dorothy Edwards indicated that "we took our work more seriously and our productivity was higher than male employees" (Questionnaire, 18 January 1990). Mrs. McConnell remarked that in her opinion there were no jobs that women could not have performed as well as men (Interview, 19 April 1991). Bernice Pulfor reflected that, "We didn't feel it was exclusively men's jobs. It was just a job" (Lawlor, Questionnaire, 24 January 1990). Jo Linscott commented, "I must say that most of the women surprised me because they worked long hours, very uncomplaining, and some of the jobs, like in the dope room were not exactly anybody's cup of tea" (Interview, 15 January 1991). Mrs. Whitehill was direct in summarizing her work at MacDonald Aircraft, "We worked hard. We didn't fool around" (Interview, 13 March 1991).

For many of the female respondents, their war work at MacDonald Aircraft was simply a job for the duration. They viewed their war work as an important part of the Canadian war effort. Not one expected that MacDonald Aircraft would have the same amount of work once the war was over. As well,



many were not certain they wanted to continue in industrial employment after the war.

It was a great time to make some money, and to do my bit ... but I think that a woman really wouldn't care to do this kind of a job for the rest of her life. For most women it was simply a war effort, a general war effort on the part of everybody to get the war over with. It was the kind of job that had to be done; when the men needed us most, we just figured we would roll up our sleeves and get to work, and that's the way everybody felt (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991).

Kay Powelko and Mrs. Whitehill reflected that while one did not forget the results of war, for them as civilians the homefront was surrounded by an air of exhilaration as individuals had a strong sense of purpose and common goals. Kay Powelko commented, "the goal was there to accomplish...you were happy being a part of it" (Powelko, Interview 13 March 1991). It was a time when there was work to be done and a shared sense of purpose affected how employees perceived their work responsibilities. Jo Linscott reflected that people took their work seriously especially as they watched many young men leave the plant for the armed services. She felt that "everybody was working conscientiously ... I didn't stand around watching my neighbour, I had more to do than that, I always had lots of work to do" (Linscott, 15 January 1991). Mrs. Whitehill remarked, "There was never a time I thought 'oh, I don't want to go [to work]'" (Whitehill, Interview, 13 March 1991). Paul Latocki pointed out that "there was always a lot of work to be done. It was a wartime production line with targets to meet and goals to achieve for the war effort, no one ever complained (Latocki, Review 28 February 1994)."

## CHAPTER 5

### POST WAR ACTIVITIES AND ATTITUDES

"Many who two years ago were giving orders now are taking orders from their husbands and loving it"  
(Margaret Ecker Francis, Canadian Home Journal July 1947:15).

In the summer of 1945 the last war production aircraft left the plant and layoffs followed as MacDonald Aircraft's primary business of maintenance and overhaul of trainer aircraft for the BCATP was no longer required. The company however, continued its operations with a reduced workforce as by this time they had a role in the production of the Mosquito, a bomber aircraft which was still being used in the Pacific theatre (Latocki, Interview, 15 March 1991; Bristol Aerospace 1980:np). Consequently, some employees, most from pre-war years, remained after V-day layoffs were completed. A few male employees who had held important positions during the war remained (Bristol Aerospace, 1980:np).

Statistical information compiled by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics indicated that the "aircraft and land vehicles" industry in Winnipeg experienced a decrease in employees from the period 1944 to 1945. Attempts to determine the specific dropoff in numbers of women employed in the Winnipeg aircraft industry yields only approximations. On April 1, 1944 the total number of workers in aircraft and land vehicles industry had been 14,839, of which 2,352 (15.9%) were women. By October 1, 1944, of a total 12,853 workers, 1,557 (12.1%) had been

female. The figures reported for April 1, 1945 indicate a further downward slide with only 899 (7.9%) women remaining out of a total number of 11,374 employees (PAM RG20 B7 Box3 file 724).

Layoffs affected women particularly quickly and disproportionately. Women lost approximately 1,453 jobs in the one year period, and accounted for roughly 30% of the layoffs, when in April 1944 they had only comprised 15.9% of the Winnipeg workforce in the aircraft and land vehicles industrial sector. Nonetheless, the report commented that "employment fell off moderately in the last 6 months" (PAM RG20 B7 Box 3 file 724).

Following a nationwide trend, most of the female respondents left MacDonald Aircraft during the layoffs. A few were eventually called back to work but had found other, lower paying jobs, and most had married and started families. The two male informants remained at MacDonald Aircraft until their retirement, and one female respondent returned to work after the war.

For the respondents, both female and male, post-war layoffs were expected. Their attitudes were the same: the war had been a temporary event and women had gone to work in the aircraft plant to win the war (K. Powelko and D. Whitehill, Interview, 13 March 1991; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; McConnell, Interview 19 April 1991, Fogg, Review, 5 May 1994). Commented one respondent, "I think that when the men came back none of the women wanted in that sort of thing, they just went into it to assist the war effort and to get it over with" (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). Both male and female

respondents explained that they understood quite clearly that once the war had been won there would be no further need for the production and maintenance of Avro Ansons and their jobs would disappear (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; K. Powelko, P. Latocki and D. Whitehill, Interview 15 March 1991; Fogg, Interview, 16 April 1991). Paul Latocki noted that late in the summer of 1944 MacDonald Aircraft started work on the Mosquito program and most of the women from the rib room were transferred to work on the Mosquito aircraft. The rib room "girls" were transferred because Anson wing production was winding down and this department was to be closed (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994). Paul Latocki further commented that even the buildings were temporary structures, designed to be torn down, moved or sold once hostilities ceased (Interview, 15 March 1991).

Most of the respondents did find other post-war work. Mrs. Whitehill worked at Manitoba Hydro from 1945 to 1947 and commented that "the pay was not that good" (Questionnaire January 1990). In the immediate post-war years, Mrs. McConnell was employed as a jeweller, "but the pay was a lot less" (Questionnaire, January 1990). She soldered jewellery, but she did not care for this type of work and found a job at the Hudson's Bay Company as a waitress. Bernice Lawlor worked in sales at the Hudson's Bay Company selling ladies wear. She also commented that her wages were less than what she had received at MacDonald Aircraft (Questionnaire, 24 January 1990). Sometime after being laid off, Jo Linscott was offered re-employment at the plant, but decided to finish the

business course she had started. She worked for three months as a cashier at Felstead Jewellers (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). After she was married, Grace Fogg was contacted by the company to see if she was interested in working in the first aid office. She explained that she would have been working "on the graveyard shift, midnight to seven a.m., but as my husband worked the other two shifts we would very seldom have any time together, so we declined" (Fogg, Review, 5 May 1994). Dorothy Edwards was the only respondent to have remained at MacDonald Aircraft after the war. She also worked for Bristol Aerospace. She was employed from March 3, 1941 until her retirement on November 29, 1972. At the end of World War II she worked in Transitory Stores issuing kits to aircraft production lines (Questionnaire January 1990).

For many female respondents marriage marked the end of working for wages. Their comments reflected an eagerness to get on with their lives which had been interrupted by the war. Grace Fogg explained that she had received her engagement ring at the end of 1943 and since "we were being married in July 1944 I wasn't too concerned about working. Also at that time jobs weren't so plentiful and not many firms employed married women" (Fogg, Review, 5 May 1994). Jo Linscott only worked for three months after she was released from MacDonald Aircraft because in December of 1945 she married and began a family. She stated that she was getting married and that after five years had "started to think that I would like to get out of it [industrial employment] because of all the noise in general." However, she attempted to secure another job as she

"would have been crazy to wait until the war was over and all the good jobs taken" (Linscott, Interview, 24 January 1991). She recalled being a bit foolish accepting the job, as she took a "tremendous drop in pay" while she could have been collecting unemployment insurance until her marriage in December 1945. (Interview, 24 January 1991). By 1947, Mrs. Whitehill also married and began a family (Whitehill, 15 March 1991). Kay Powelko stated quite simply that she got married and did not work for wages after that time (Powelko, Interview, 15 March 1991). Grace Fogg married in July 1944 and began her family (Fogg, Review, 5 May 1994). Bernice Pulfor also married in 1947 and Mrs. McConnell in \*?. None of these women worked for wages after their marriage.

The company's layoff policies also reflected this societal norm. Grace Fogg indicated that the company knew she and another co-worker were getting married, "and they were laying off some of the girls so they said we [she and another women with similar plans] were getting married so we would be the first to go" (Interview, 16 April 1991). This was also confirmed by Jo Linscott who commented that she reported the impending layoffs of her two friends to the IAM in an effort to see if anything could be done to protect their jobs. Although the two women in question were not union members, the IAM demanded that layoffs occur according to seniority. The union intervention was successful and the two women remained until larger layoffs occurred (Linscott, Interview, 24 January 1991; Fogg, Interview, 16 April 1991). Jo Linscott remarked that perhaps the company thought "we wouldn't put up a fight, that we wouldn't have enough

initiative to go after this" (Interview, 24 January 1991).

In Jo Linscott's mind, this minor victory by the union reflected the only real protection the IAM had to offer any of its members during the immediate post-war and reconversion period (Interview, 24 January 1991). Many of the employees were laid off the day victory was announced (Latocki, Review 28 February 1994; Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). Paul Latocki commented that after the layoffs only "about 25 people (men) were left to clean up and dispose of all that remained in conjunction with war assets" (Review 28 February 1994). By September 1945 the massive layoff of wartime employees was complete (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; Personnel Records, Bristol Aerospace).

Laid off workers were called back to MacDonald Aircraft by seniority, but only one female respondent returned to work at the plant in the post-war period. But Paul Latocki asserted, "there were no laid off workers recalled, men or women. We had instructions that after the war's end there was to be rehiring preference given to returning veterans (Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994). However, along with Dorothy Edwards, a few women identified in Personnel records of Bristol Aerospace were briefly rehired in 1945 (Personnel Records, Bristol Aerospace).

For all of the respondents, living in Winnipeg and working in a war industry had a certain air of excitement about it. They were all young, single, women who felt they were working toward an important goal. Although their war work was a temporary phenomena, the confidence they gained was a lasting by-

product of their work experiences. Mrs. Whitehill explained, "up until that time, women didn't know that we could do all these things. This is why after the war, the women didn't want to stay home after working because they realized that they could do other things beside housework. Or being mothers. And that was more exciting than being in the house" (Interview, 15 March 1991).

This seeming contradiction between becoming housewives and wanting to do more than homemaking may very well be a product of interviewing people fifty years after the fact, but I suspect is merely a reflection of the confusion also evident in popular media images and government propaganda during World War II. The respondents gave mixed explanations about the society they were part of at the end of the war. All interviewees indicated there was a public atmosphere of working toward victory, and women were an important factor in the achievement of that goal. A male respondent volunteered, "when the war broke out, those people women who went to the war industry previously had no intentions of going to work. So when the war was over, they figured 'well that's it, now I'm going to stay home' " (Latocki, Interview, 15 March 1991). Kay Powelko was quick to add "married women went into MacDonalDs and a lot of them weren't working prior to that. They went because they were needed." After the war, "once we got married ... you stayed home and you were a housewife, you didn't go out and work" (Interview, 15 March 1991). Added Paul Latocki, "in those days it was the custom that a married women was not to go and seek employment, it was the man's job to bring home the bacon" (Review, 28 February 1994).



When asked if she believed women at MacDonald Aircraft were given a fair deal during the war, Jo Linscott commented, "I think they could have done a little bit better by us in terms of wages." She explained that women worked as conscientiously as men and in many instances women had to pay close attention to their work. She believed that men would not have applied themselves as diligently to what had become, by the end of the war, rather monotonous occupations. She noted that carelessness on some jobs meant ruining what you were working on and being forced to start again, thereby wasting precious materials. In her mind, the work that many women performed "required a great deal of patience...and men don't really have a great deal of patience" (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991). Jo Linscott considered women's work contributions as being of equal value to men's work, therefore women should have received wages in relation to the jobs they performed, not because they were women. (Interview, 24 January 1991).

An article dated October 14, 1944, in the Winnipeg Free Press reported the male population in Manitoba aged 18-45 years numbered 159,000. Of that figure, 70,365 men had enlisted in the armed forces (PAM RG20, B7, Box 1 file 402). Consequently, with the prospect of demobilization of the armed forces and the cancellation of war contracts, post-war planning became a worrisome issue, not only in Winnipeg, but nation wide. In an effort to smooth reconversion to peacetime economies and societies, planning bodies were established at the federal, provincial and local levels as various governments, agencies, and

interested groups sought to prepare for the end of the war. In Manitoba, the Advisory Committee on Co-ordination of Post-War Planning was formed in 1944 with a mandate to eliminate duplication and conflict in post-war planning in order that Manitoba would not only present a single comprehensive program to the federal government (PAM GR1650, Box 1&3), but also to co-ordinate all postwar reconstruction planning by the provincial government. The committee consisted of representatives from agriculture, labour, industry, public utilities, mining, railways, auto and air transport industries, along with high ranking bureaucrats from various provincial Ministries.

At a meeting on September 19, 1944, the Committee established a number of sub-committees to aid in carrying out its mandate. These sub-committees were to study and report upon various subjects. Number 2 Sub-committee was struck to deal with "Living Conditions, Health and Nutrition, Rural and Urban Housing, Education and Rural Credit", and Sub-committee number 4 was instructed to cover "Industrial Reconversion and Employment" (PAM GR1650, Boxes 1 & 3).

Although Sub-committee (4), Reconversion and Employment, was to deal with employment as part of its work, it was primarily concerned with ways in which to attract industry to Winnipeg and the development of provincial markets. While the sub-committee specifically noted that operations at MacDonald Brothers Aircraft would be seriously affected once war contracts ended, it felt that generally Manitoba would not have many reconversion difficulties as there had not been many war industries in the province (RG20, B7 Box 1 file 400). Instead,

the work of the reconversion and Employment sub-committee focused upon potential economic development. Indeed, it held that with regard to industrial employment the best approach was "the broad assumption that if Manitoba industry is given all possible assistance in its economic expansion, the question of industrial employment will look after itself" (PAM RG20, B7, Box 1 file 400). The large numbers of women who had been absorbed into industry during the war were not mentioned, nor it appears, considered by Sub-committee (4).

Meanwhile, Sub-committee (2) heard from various other groups established to consider post-war planning strategies. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation Training, Sub-committee - Women's Services provided some insight as to the official thinking about women in the post-war. Although this sub-committee's mandate was to make recommendations concerning training opportunities for women returning from military service, it felt its recommendations applied equally to other women. In their report, the Subcommittee quotes extensively from the Dominion Government Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, Sub-committee on "Postwar Planning of Women" which labelled and divided women into 4 groups: married women in the home, single women earning their own living, married women working outside the home and farm women. Presumably the categorization of women into the above groups was to facilitate proper postwar planning to meet the particular needs of women in these groups. It continued to quote from the federal subcommittee in a surprising manner:

To women in each group the right to choose what occupation she will follow must be conceded as a right to which every citizen is entitled. She must also have the right to equality of remuneration, working conditions and opportunity for development.

We believe the right to choose is not going to operate to make every woman, or even much larger groups of women want to leave their homes for the labour market. It is the right to choose which is demanded. Happier homes, and therefore, a happier democracy, will result from the recognition that women choose or do not choose marriage as their vocation. It must be remembered that for many single women marriage will be an impossibility because of the casualties of the war.

Many women in all three groups will find their situations changed in the postwar years. A large proportion of the women now working, both married and single, have been earning money for the first time, or the first time since marriage. They have gained an entirely new realization of their skills and capacities. Many will return gladly to home life. Others will feel a sense of frustration if they have not the opportunity to exercise these abilities. For some public activities will serve, others will wish to be gainfully employed (PAM RG20, B7, Box 1 file 201).

Apparently Sub-committee (2) agreed with these views. However, the remainder of the report revealed the limitations of their acceptance of such a philosophy. Ironically, the Sub-committee went on to identify specific fields where women could be employed without challenging concepts of appropriate female roles or the value of female waged work.

The Sub-committee identified "homemaking, hairdressing, salesmanship, nursing attendants, business (clerical and stenographic), needle trade, furriers, bakery and confectionery, drycleaning and laundry, restaurants and hospitals (waitresses, kitchen and war services)" as areas in which women could readily be employed in post-war Manitoba. There are several notable features about this list. All of the above occupations were identified by MacDonald Aircraft

respondents as areas in which women could find employment prior to World War II and which were characterized by low wages and their impermanency.

Occupations in these sectors of the economy were unskilled/low skilled and required minimal training, if any. In addition, these were low status jobs out of which many women immediately fled in pursuit of higher paying industrial war jobs once such opportunity was available.

As the report worked its way through each of these occupational sectors, it often noted that workers in many of these areas were reduced due to women joining the armed forces or moving to industrial occupations. This can be confirmed by reported figures of employment. As of January 1944, the numbers of women employed in the Winnipeg manufacturing sector exceeded the numbers of male employees (7,369:6,730), reflecting the depletion of males due to enlistment (PAM RG20 B7, Box3 file 724).

Sub-committee (2) recommended that training at Technical Institutes be offered. Such training would, it was hoped, increase the status of typical female jobs and therefore attract women into these occupational areas. Not only would this elevate menial jobs to a higher status, but would develop a group of female workers trained to the same standards.

The promotion of homemaking as a skilled career reflected attempts to elevate the status of women's jobs. In an effort to convince women of the importance of homemaking to a successful, stable Canada, the Sub-committee again quoted from the Postwar Problems of Women Report:

One of the greatest assets a community can have is a harmonious, well managed home. The level of home life will be raised only if women, whether employers or employees, are better trained for their jobs as household workers (RG20 B7 Box 1 file 201).

Domestic work had long been unpopular and difficult to entice women into as it was commonly viewed as being of a lower status than most other occupations. consequently Sub-committee (2) sought to characterize homemaking as skilled trade for which one could receive a certificate and would elevate the status of such occupations.

While the report recommends the establishment of Technical Institutes to provide training in certain occupational areas, it did briefly touch upon university training, but did not address specific courses of study except to recommend the establishment of "faculties to give courses in physical education, dentistry, journalism, drama, radio and others (PAM RG20 B7 Box 1 file 201). In the end, the Manitoba post-war planning exercise did little to either address the issue of female industrial employment or to promote the idea that women could be employed in other than typical female occupations.

While the final recommendations of the Manitoba post-war planning sub-committees ultimately promoted pre-war employment patterns through both the categorization of women and identification of areas of work open to women, contemporary magazines and newspapers were also filled with articles and editorials about women and employment in the post war period. Many of these articles presented opposing opinions regarding what should happen to women war workers. "When Fluffy Clothes Replace the Uniform" documented what

happened to some of Canada's "ex-girl soldiers." While a glowing account of the adaptability of ex-servicewomen to the civilian workplace and their desirability as employees because of the discipline and training they received in the armed services, the author noted a few voices of reality. One ex-servicewoman commented that "employers are very enthusiastic about hiring women veterans because they say the girls have gained a lot of self-confidence and experience during the war – but they don't want to pay them for those gains" (Francis, Canadian Home Journal July 1947:58). Another added, "ex-servicewomen returning to civvy street find that now it is a general thing – to offer a girl a man's job but to expect her to work for less" (p.58). An author writing for Maclean's wryly noted "But the war is over. The sudden gallant recognition of women's equalness of worth seems to have been shortlived and fickle" (Charlotte Whitton, Maclean's April 15 1947:38). Another criticized the emotionalism of the debate, commenting that "the many magazine articles, in which "career" and "home" women pen sprightly arguments "pro" and "con" gainful employment for themselves, are entirely irrelevant in view of the stark necessity every woman faces of getting her living, if not one way, then in another" (Hope Stoddard, Canadian Forum June 1946:58). But attempts to refocus the debate on issues rather than ideology had little effect.

Other writers were arguing for women to return to their real responsibilities. An editorial found in an issue of the "Merry Macs Tatler" reflected the strength of such beliefs:

Women have come to the aid of the country by taking the place of men in the armed forces, offices and factories. They have done a splendid job. But they have a still bigger job to do. They must come to the aid of their country by taking their place as *women* in a post-war world. In peacetime women's place is in the home ("Merry Macs Tatler" 2:9:2, nd).

The editorial pivoted upon the assumption that all women were or would be wives and mothers, with men to look after them, exhibiting what one contemporary author labelled the "women's manifest destiny to cook and breed" (Mezerik 1945:79) attitude.

The old social ideology which viewed wifhood and motherhood as a woman's priority shone through articles and commentaries of the day: "Women, asserting the feminine virtues, through the medium of the home and children, can assert more influence on the national life than men" ("Merry Macs Tatler" 2:9:2, nd). Women were counselled to be unselfish and tolerant during the transition from war to peace, and to "stop trying to be men in a man's world, and work at being women in a woman's world" ("Merry Macs Tatler" 2:9:2, nd).



## CONCLUSION

Was the public and institutional attention focused upon new found female capabilities during world war two just a public relations campaign? For the most part it appears so. The perspective that Canadian society was divided into distinct male and female worlds persisted. Not only did such a division prescribe behaviour for members of each sex that was both acceptable and desirable, but also provided a basis for the organization of the workplace.

The information gathered from the respondents points to features of occupational segregation found elsewhere in North America. Women and men were generally found in jobs that coincided with accepted notions of ability or skill based upon gender attributes (and to a lesser degree sex). The aberration of war altered easily visible segregation in that women eventually worked in some departments alongside male co-workers, but the female respondents still worked in jobs which were performed largely by women. Occupations that some of the respondents held came to be considered women's jobs or were already considered women's work. In particular, the evidence provided by Jo Linscott and Paul Latocki indicated that occupations such as fabric work, doping, sanding, rib assembly and cable splicing were considered women's jobs. Work such as flight testing, carpentry, and mounting engines on aircraft were considered men's jobs (Linscott, Interview, 15 January 1991; P. Latocki, Review 28 February 1994).

Women's jobs such as these were characterized by the respondents as light work. Examples contained several features: light jobs did not involve sustained heavy physical labour, were routine and repetitive and required little skill. Their comments indicated that light jobs were suitable women's jobs.

Although supervisors and managers were predominantly men with greater exposure to a multitude of tasks, some women moved into supervisory positions. Segregation within occupations was not readily visible except by noting that few women reached supervisory positions, and the perceptions of respondents that men were always in charge. Surprisingly some of the few women who reached supervisory positions were responsible for both female and male employees. This is contrary to most studies, as usually females supervised only females (Scold 1980; Pierson 1986; Milkman 1987).

A similarity with the pattern of workplace experiences elsewhere was the remuneration of female employees at MacDonald Aircraft. Women had to expect to earn lower wages than men. The provincial statutes and federal contracts made that quite clear – an employee could expect remuneration to be determined by sex, not by the job or at a minimum rate applicable to all workers. Evidence from archival sources and the respondents themselves suggests that wages for female respondents were consistently less than men on the same or similar jobs. Even male union members accepted such discrimination as they reproduced it in their negotiations with the company.

While the respondents felt their work performances were equal to and

sometimes outshone their male counterparts, many expressed the opinion that their work was undervalued. Jo Linscott, Annette Pelland and Mrs. McConnell cited their lower wages as evidence of this. While women were praised for their surprisingly good work performances, they were constantly reminded they were temporary substitutes for men.

While some themes of occupational segregation appeared at MacDonald Aircraft the evidence only hints at the existence of occupational segregation. Rather, one finds an organization of the workplace based upon an accepted ideology of appropriate roles for the sexes. The organization of the MacDonald Aircraft workplace appeared to exemplify society's understood sex and gender roles even though faced with the necessity of hiring women to fill non-traditional occupational roles due to the war emergency. In meeting the realities of war, the value system of the respondents and the reflection of those values by various institutions did not change. What is somewhat surprising is that the respondents themselves still held the same understanding and acceptance of their roles in society and those beliefs were driven by a larger ideology that prescribed certain behaviours and activities by sex and gender. In the respondents' world, it was natural that they would leave their war jobs, and for many, leave the workforce permanently. This was nothing more or less than acceptance of the societal norms of the time, a product of enculturative practices which prescribed gender roles for both females and males within their society. In return, they inhabited a certain place and social status knowing that they lived within what their society

considered a desirable and natural life pattern. That is, their sex and gender specific socialization in all probability led them to pursue activities which were generally viewed, by others and themselves, as appropriate for them.

Why did the respondents accept such continuity of ideologically determined female and male roles? Sex and gender ideologies are a product of enculturative practices. Enculturation exerts considerable influence upon the creation and maintenance of accepted social behaviours and the predictability of the actions of individuals within a given society. How does enculturation tie into occupational segregation? The process of enculturation and the lack of dramatic change over a short period of time appears to be a basic contributing factor to the maintenance of segregation in the workplace. Accepted gender roles appear as a product of enculturation, and constructs of gender are, in turn, a powerful force in creating and maintaining workplace organization.

Many female respondents characterized their war work as a type of adventure, they were more than willing to answer the call of patriotism, but were also eager to leave the non-traditional workplace to assume their place as women. Jo Linscott remarked that the end of the war signalled the beginning of a normal adult life for her (Linscott, Review, 16 May 1994). Evidence provided by the respondents suggests that many of them did not question the ideological status quo because for them, normality had been interrupted by the war. When hostilities ceased, many female respondents assumed roles that they had understood would be theirs, wifehood and motherhood. A number of the women

were in their early thirties before they began their families. From them one gets a sense that the war had put their womanhood on hold and they welcomed the reality of returning to a "normal" post-war life.

A fundamental feature of post-war life as they saw it was the acceptance and expectation that they would fulfil ideological prescriptions of womanhood. For them there appeared no contradiction, for while several commented upon their personal maturity and confidence gained during the war, they reported that this made them better adults to assume traditional post-war roles. As a group their testimony indicates they did not view the war as a catalyst to stimulate a change in a social ideology that defined the society in which they lived and which they accepted.

All of the respondents exhibited a great deal of pride over their work at MacDonald Aircraft. Many have kept old photographs, in-plant magazines and other war mementos as a kind of personal treasure now for fifty years. Annette Pelland had kept her Shop Rules handbook and Jo Linscott even had samples of the kind of fabric used on the Anson. As a group, they were proud of their achievements and their ability to do their patriotic part for the war effort. The respondents voiced their opinions as to their ability to do a good job and to be at least as productive as the men with whom they worked. Female respondents commented that were eager to do something as their part of the war effort. For many of the respondents, their war work provided them the opportunity to learn about themselves. Several female respondents commented that their war work

made them more mature and capable of handling different situations. Jo Linscott claimed that she "was a real handyman" by the end of the war (Linscott, Review, 16 May 1994). As a final comment Paul Latocki stated,

I knew the men and women [interviewed] very well as they were all under my supervision. They were a very conscientious group, willing to learn, listened to instructions and criticism pertaining to their respective duties, never complained, never beat the clock and were very apologetic if they were late. They were all there to help the war effort. It was a sad day to see these conscientious war workers - men and women - clocking out for the last time.

I am very proud of having worked with all these women.  
(Latocki, Review, 28 February 1994)

Whatever their achievements, V-day signalled the end of MacDonald Aircraft's need for the female respondents to be employed in the aircraft industry. And while some have argued it also signalled the return to the pre-war status quo, the evidence suggests that the status quo had remained in force throughout the war. The female respondents accepted their exit from MacDonald Aircraft, while dealing with the reality that they needed work, at least until marriage. The respondents did not view World War II as an opportunity for change. The war necessity merely made it imperative that women step forward to assume roles previously filled by men, all the while understanding that they would relinquish those roles and responsibilities once hostilities ceased. In the end, the need for Rosie was a temporary disruption in the continuing business of being socially defined men and women.

## APPENDIX A

### SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Examining occupational segregation at MacDonald Brothers Aircraft Ltd. was difficult. No longer do detailed occupational descriptions exist. It is questionable whether such specific information ever existed. There are no records indicating the sex composition of the numbers of workers in specific occupations. This made a detailed examination of the level and extent of occupational segregation problematic.

Consequently, this study relied heavily upon the memories of former MacDonald Aircraft workers. After examining personnel records that survived from the post-war sale of the company, I located Paul Latocki, an individual who had worked for both MacDonald Aircraft, and Bristol Aerospace who purchased the aircraft plant in the 1950s. Paul Latocki provided me with several names of women who had worked at the plant during World War II. From this small group of individuals, I located more women aircraft workers. Of these individuals, ten respondents provided initial biographical and work information by written questionnaire. Eight respondents agreed to be interviewed and our discussions were tape recorded and transcribed. Information gathered from the interviews was used to write a first draft of the paper. At the same time, further questions were asked of the respondents and responses incorporated into the draft. The

draft was sent to respondents for comments and verification. In some instances, additional information was also requested. Jo Linscott, Grace Fogg, Annette Pelland, Kay Powelko and Paul Latocki reviewed the paper and provided valuable comments and criticisms. Irene McConnell, Doreen Whitehill and David Whitehill were unable to review the document.

Although focusing upon the exploration of the extent of occupational segregation among women and men at MacDonald Aircraft, a much larger theme wove its way through our discussions which could not be gleaned from archival evidence. Without speaking directly with the female respondents, the larger context of the acceptance of traditional female roles by these respondents would have remained invisible. This allowed me to gain a better understanding of who these women are, and reminded me time and again, that ultimately I was writing about real people, not just subjects in a study.

In the end, the perceptions the respondents held about their work, their society and themselves proved to be the most valuable information, providing me with a window onto ideologies that influenced behaviour and choices, moving the study beyond a linear exploration of occupational segregation in the workplace.



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## **AUDIO VISUAL AND STILL PHOTOGRAPHS**

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WCPI.

AMA138941453, Workers preparing parts for aircraft at the MacDonald Bros. Aircraft plant, Stevenson Field, Winnipeg.

WCPI.

AMA138941455, Workers preparing parts for aircraft at the MacDonald Bros. Aircraft plant, Stevenson field, Winnipeg.