

Home Front U.S.A.: America During World War II by Allan M. Winkler
Review by Walter S. Zapotoczny Jr.

Allan M. Winkler's book adds to the historiography and expands our understanding of the involvement of the United States in World War II. Mobilization of industry and the transformation of American society was critical to the Allied success in war. These changes effected the nature of life in America that continued after the war. Winkler provides insight into the requirement and pressures involved with mobilizing for war, how the war effected minorities, women and ethnic citizens, war politics and propaganda and how preparing for and conducting the war changed government. Winkler believes that "Americans' vision of the future included no brave and bold new world, but a revived and refurbished version of the one they had known before." This work is important in conducting research on the home front during World War II, while also offering further secondary reading and primary source material locations.

Winkler addresses the debate about whether World War II was a 'good war.' He references Kenneth D. Rose's 2008 challenge of the notion of the Greatest Generation and the concept of a Good War in *Myth and the Greatest Generation: A Social History of Americans in World War II*. Rose argued that the idea that Americans eagerly united for the war effort was sometime not very attractive and certainly more complicated than often depicted. Edward T. Leventhal and Tom Engelhardt's book *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* paints a darker picture of whether the United States was truly the innocent and righteous nation as commonly portrayed and as veterans remember it. In his 2010 book *The Good War in American Memory*, John Bodnar observed that there is no easy answer to the questions of America's involvement in World War II. Winkler quotes these and numerous other studies throughout his work noting, "The process of reevaluation continues."

Allan M. Winkler's *Home Front U.S.A.: America During World War II* continues the process of reevaluation, using new research to add to our understanding of America's involvement in World War II. The book examines more closely the achievements of civilians on the home front and the soldiers who fought the war directly. The book presents a detailed examination of the process of mobilization including the involvement of the business community, the workforce, finances, and the involvement of President Roosevelt.

Winkler examines the mood and morale of citizens, the use of promotional campaigns and shortages and government imposed controls over commodities. The reader is treated to a thorough understanding of the politics of the war effort and the affect the war effort had on women, African Americans, Latinos, American Indians, Italian Americans, Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and American Jews.

Winkler begins the Epilogue with the following, "Without question, World War II changed the United States. Yet the crucial question remains: Just how different had the nation become?" The book offers new understanding of the changes that occurred by examining them and the reasons for them. The principle changes examined in the book included a new prosperity, the growth and expansion of business, permanent migrations of workers and a new demographic, a sense that the federal government could and should solve problems, a more powerful presidency, a boost to conservatives coalitions, and social reform.