

Rosie and Mrs. America



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出版者:Lerner Pub Group

出版时间:2007-9

装帧:LIB

isbn:9780822568049

Who was Rosie and who was Mrs. America? They weren't specific individuals; rather, they were symbols that defined perceptions of women during the 1930s and 1940s. The jubilation of the previous decade—the Roaring Twenties—was silenced by the stock

market crash of 1929. Now the Great Depression challenged women in their homes, as Mrs. America had to learn how to ?make do? with less. And as men left for battle fronts, World War II propelled women to take their place in factories, becoming Rosie the Riveter. As girls and women of the 1930s and 1940s searched for their own identities, the media of the times tried to influence their paths. Magazine advertisements and mail-order catalogs showed women how to be both fashionable and frugal. Screwball comedies on the movie screen and the romantic soap operas on the radio portrayed women who took life lightly. But many women ignored these stereotypes and forged paths that women had never pursued before, in careers as pilots, foreign correspondents, musicians, and social activists. Learn more about the images and issues that framed perceptions about women in these difficult decades.

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