

The War Effort, 1942 - 1945

Doug Fraser retired President, United Auto Workers, Oral History Interview:

The war effort was a marvel to behold. One day [at DeSoto] we were making automobiles, and the next day we were making Bofors, 35mm guns, airplane wings and tank turrets at the old DeSoto plant. Most of the men were leaving for service, huge numbers of people, including myself. And women came to the workplace. Nearly all of them were high-school graduates. They started with the simpler machines and then worked toward the more complicated ones. And even then, I thought to myself, we've wasted a lot of talent in America. If these women had had the opportunity to make a contribution to our society, or to our whole economy. . . . Of course, over time, that's what happened.