



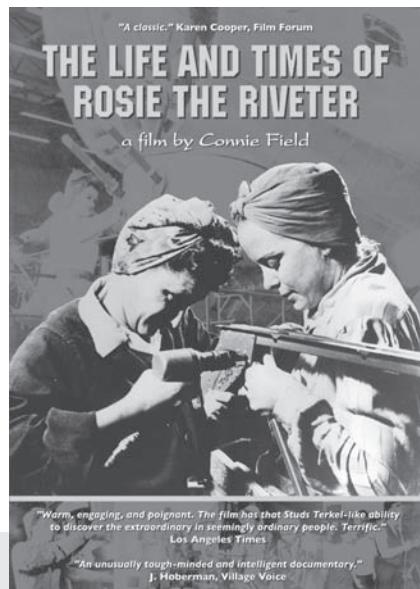
PROJECT MUSE®

Rob Byrne is an independent film preservationist and president of the San Francisco Silent Film Festival. He holds an MA in preservation and presentation of the moving image from the University of Amsterdam and was the 2011 recipient of the Hagefilm Foundation Fellowship. Specializing in silent-era film restoration, Byrne has worked in conjunction with EYE Film Institute Netherlands and the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum to restore *Shoes* (1916), *The Spanish Dancer* (1923), and *Twin Peaks Tunnel* (1917). Rob is author of the website "Starts Thursday! The Art and History of Motion Picture Coming Attraction Slides" (<http://www.starts-thursday.com/>) and has published articles in the *Journal of Film Preservation* and *Nisimazine* as well as program notes for the San Francisco Silent Film Festival.

NOTES

I would like to thank Jon Wengström, curator of Archival Film Collections at Swedish Film Institute, for providing background information on the original 1975 restoration as well as insight into its subsequent print history.

1. *Filmnyheter*, No. 27 (1921) and No. 14 (1922), as quoted by Bengt Forslund, *Victor Sjöström: His Life and His Work*, trans. Peter Cowie (New York: New York Zoetrope, 1988), 90; "The Screen: The Stroke of Midnight," *New York Times*, June 5, 1922.
2. Bengt Idestam-Almquist, *Den Svenska Filmens Drama: Sjöström och Stiller* (Stockholm, 1938), as quoted by Forslund, *Victor Sjöström*, 88.
3. *The Phantom Carriage: A Film by Victor Sjöström*, booklet packaged with *The Phantom Carriage* (New York: Criterion Collection, 2011), Blu-ray.
4. *Victor Sjöström's The Phantom Carriage: KTL Edition* (UK: Tartan Video, 2007), DVD.
5. Casper Tybjerg, spoken commentary on *The Phantom Carriage* (New York: Criterion Collection, 2011), Blu-ray.



The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter

DVD DISTRIBUTED BY CLARITY EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTIONS, 2007

Melissa Dollman

Borrow or rent a 16mm projector.... Check that it works properly and its take-up reel is big enough to accommodate the film. *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* requires a 1200-foot take-up reel. Have a spare projector bulb handy, too. To locate equipment, look under "film equipment rentals" in the yellow pages.—*Educator's edition of The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter: The Story of Three Million Working Women during World War II* (1982)

Whether for an appreciation of the veiled aspects of our nation's history, an interest in women's studies, or a general lust for World War II-era archival films and ephemera, if you have never seen filmmaker Connie Field's *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*, you should. Through interviews with a sample of five women defense workers employed in foundries, welding shops, and shipyards, in New York, Detroit, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, we

gain insight into the lives of the much larger group of women collectively known as Rosie the Riveters. Members of this “hidden army,” which grew to over three million over the course of the war, formulate a three-dimensional view that fleshes out the famous red kerchief-sporting, muscle-flexing poster girl for Westinghouse who informed them they could do it! The irony is that all five of the women featured in the film—Wanita Allen, Gladys Belcher, Lyn Childs, Lola Weixel, and Margaret Wright—had already been working outside the home at such backbreaking jobs as farming, factory work, and domestic service. They were not unique. In fact, two-thirds of female defense workers had been wage earners prior to the war.¹ The Rosies that Connie Field assembles—a group of three black and two white former Rosies—discuss their decisions to join the war effort; the training they were encouraged to receive; the discrimination they faced based on gender, race, or both; camaraderie; workplace safety; day care; and ultimately, the mixed messages given by the US government’s propaganda arm regarding women’s roles during both war and peacetime. Through filmed oral histories, contemporaneous newsreels, music, voice-over audio, and advertising stills, the filmmaker offers a fuller picture of the wartime workforce and cultural attitudes delivered to the public by the mass media.

As a way to chronicle this film’s rich history, I start with the book that has accompanied the film since 1982. Originally distributed to groups who rented or purchased the film in 16mm format, a 130-plus-page hardcover educator’s edition provided fundamental advice to the organizer of a screening (see epigraph). Cowriters Miriam Frank, Marilyn Ziebarth, and Connie Field supplied suggestions for leading discussions, sample posters to photocopy and distribute, publicity ideas, and specific instructions on how to safely return the film print to the distributor. Those days are gone, but the 112-page reader’s edition is available in an updated, downloadable PDF file on the DVD (note that I am reviewing the 2007 release by Clarity Educational Productions).² The text continues to supplement and examine the social, political, and historical background by employing archival materials such as photographs,

sheet music, and more advertisements, which expand the narrative beyond the film’s sixty-five minutes.³

Through funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Field has maintained primary distributorship of the film. Although the film was initially intended for screenings in schools and to labor, women’s, and community groups as an educational feature, as Field noted in a 1980 interview, “it turned out [to] be funnier than anyone thought.”⁴ Reviewers agreed. The film was screened in 1980 at, among other places, the New York Film Festival and the San Francisco International Film Festival; it was later distributed for theatrical release by First Run Pictures; and eventually, it was broadcast on domestic and foreign television. On its release, the film was favorably reviewed in *Village Voice*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *London Times*, *Film Forum*, *Ms. Magazine*, and the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist Newsletter*. A database search of academic journals reveals a remarkable number of scholarly works across a variety of academic disciplines—including film, feminist and women’s studies, and labor history—that mention the film. Moreover, over five hundred libraries worldwide hold copies of the film in one format or another. Of the various awards the film has received or been nominated for, perhaps the most prestigious was the 1996 induction into the Library of Congress’s National Film Registry, an annual list of films significant “to American movie and cultural history, and to history in general.”⁵

Interviews conducted with Connie Field reveal the great lengths to which she went to learn about women working in the defense industry and how little of its history she could locate. There were scattered newspaper articles, documents from the Women’s Bureau at the Department of Labor, old newsreels, and government-sponsored films, some of which made it into the film. Field found few primary materials to which to refer and not many books on the subject.⁶ She and a large group of volunteer researchers initially contacted over seven hundred women at organized Rosie reunions via advertisements in newspapers, word of mouth, and follow-up phone calls. They recorded interviews on audiotape with

175 women (and a handful of men, too, mainly former supervisors or husbands), among whom around 40 were interviewed on videotape in their homes or on the street.⁷ Field's research, the audiotapes and videotapes, and the interview cards and transcripts now form some of the most significant source materials on the subject.

As an audiovisual archivist at the Schlesinger Library where Field, via her company Clarity Films, deposited what is now called "*The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter Project Records*" and "*The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter Video Collection*," I became familiar with the collections.⁸ In 2010, I processed the audiotape collection, available transcripts, notes on Rosie reunions, and interview cards containing indexed names of the women who were contacted and pertinent notes. In *Rosie*, as in other documentaries, employing singular voices becomes emblematic of the many. I feel fortunate to have had the chance to hear the multitude of dialects and demeanors, listen to their stories, and take in the sheer scope those singular voices represent. In 1996, Katherine Herrlich processed the twenty-three black-and-white half-inch videotapes, shot between 1977 and 1979. This collection represents a narrowed pool of interviewees, including most of the five who made it into the final work.

On the DVD menu, which uses the aforementioned iconic Westinghouse poster as its background, one finds special features unavailable on previous releases, including archival footage from the time of the film's release and two ten-minute television interviews with Connie Field and two Rosies circa 1981. Tom Brokaw interviews Field and Lola Weixel in New York on *Today*, while across the country on KPIX's *Evening Magazine* in San Francisco, Field is interviewed in an interior living room-style space, and Lyn Childs is in what looks like shipyards in Oakland, California. There is also a sixty-minute question-and-answer session with Field and Weixel from an event titled "Meet the Filmmaker" following a screening in Port Washington, New York, from the early 1980s.⁹ Finally, there are instructions on how to access the PDF version of the educator's edition mentioned earlier.

As for the main feature, the interviewees are delightful, their messages are educational,

the editing is top-notch, and the use of archival footage punctuates the storytelling in a prescient way.¹⁰ Field's muted late-1970s palette is visually pleasing to watch, and the archival clips look great too.

The image quality on the DVD is a significant improvement over the VHS version. Field explains that this DVD edition was prepared "years ago" from an original intermediate positive master, and I wish the original video transfer had been better.¹¹ However, the content is so engaging that the picture quality does not distract until one tries scouring the end credits for names of archives. Drop shadows surrounding red text were used in the opening credits and throughout the film, for clarity, perhaps, and unfortunately, the same text on a black background during the end credits renders them extremely difficult to read. Some of the names are easily recognizable—the National Archives, the Library of Congress, Hearst Metrotone News, Fox Movietone News, the Oakland Public Library, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and so on—but this creates an unnecessary burden for students, scholars, or average audiences attempting to use this edition as a research tool.

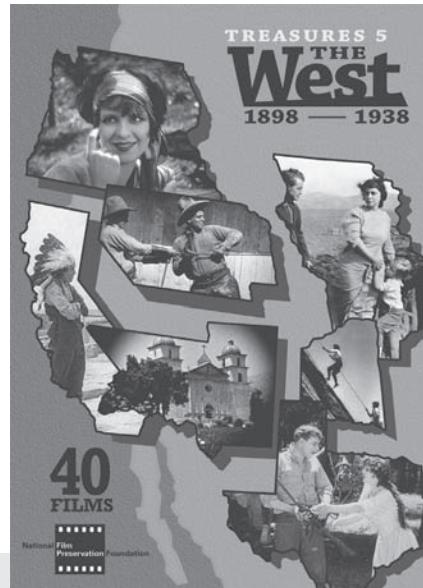
Fortunately, thanks to the preservation efforts of the Academy Film Archive, Field is preparing a new DVD edition of *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* in 2012. Archivist Joe Lindner stated that many of the older film elements have posed problems during the telecine process, and printing from the original negative proved too complicated for various reasons in previous editions.¹² As of the date of this writing, Linder and Field are preparing new transfers from a new single-strand IP master made from the original negative, extending many more years into the documentary's full history.

Melissa Dollman is an audiovisual archivist and cataloger at the Schlesinger Library, which is part of the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University, where she has processed the video and/or audio collections of Betty Friedan, Julia Child, Andrea Dworkin, June Jordan, and many more. She received her MA in moving image archive studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a BA in American studies and art from the University of California, Berkeley.

She is thrilled that those years of watching television as a child, and being an all-around dilettante, have turned into a career.

NOTES

1. Miriam Frank, Marilyn Ziebarth, and Connie Field, *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter: The Story of Three Million Working Women during World War II*, Educator's ed. (Emeryville, Calif.: Clarity Educational Productions, 1982), xxi.
2. <http://www.clarityfilms.org/>. Field's company Clarity Films remains the sole distributor of the film, although there have been previous VHS editions distributed by Educator's Edition, etc.
3. The film was originally envisioned as a ninety-minute film, but "people begged me to make it shorter. It would have been too difficult for them to use at meetings and have discussions afterwards. So, I made it shorter." Monique Tammer, "Connie Field," *Cinema Papers* 34 (1981): 93.
4. Ruthe Stein, "Now Rosie the Riveter Is a Movie Star," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 9, 1980, 39.
5. For a list of awards, see <http://www.clarityfilms.org/awards.php>. News from the Library of Congress, "Librarian of Congress Adds Home Movie, Silent Films and Hollywood Classics to Film Preservation List," December 27, 2006, <http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2006/06-234.html>.
6. Connie Field, "Q&A with Director and Lola Weixel," *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*, directed by Connie Field (Franklin Lakes, N.J.: Clarity Educational Productions, 2007), DVD.
7. The Schlesinger Library received materials for 175 interviews. However, in contemporary interviews with Field, and in recent conversation with the author, she has confirmed that she and her team conducted interviews numbering more in the 250 range.
8. "Records of 'The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter Project, 1974–1980,'" <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:RAD.SCHL:scho1294>. "The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter Videotapes, 1977–1979," <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:RAD.SCHL:scho0704>. Field mentioned that the Library of Congress has the original 16mm filmed interviews. Connie Field, e-mail correspondence with the author, February 7, 2012.
9. Field, e-mail correspondence with the author, February 7, 2012.
10. Coeditor Lucy Massie Phenix also edited *Word Is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives* (1977; Milestone Films).
11. Joe Lindner, e-mail correspondence with the author, February 10, 2012.
12. Ibid. Specifically, the original negative was "A/B/C/D/E rolled."



Treasures 5: The West, 1898–1938

DVD DISTRIBUTED BY THE NATIONAL FILM PRESERVATION FOUNDATION/IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT, 2011

Laura Horak

When frontier outlaw Al Jennings made a film in 1914 glamorizing his life story, US marshal Bill Tilghman decided to make his own film condemning frontier banditry and restaging his most famous arrests. The film was called *The Passing of the Oklahoma Outlaw* (1915). When outlaws held up a bank near the site where Tilghman was filming in late March 1915, he halted production to pursue them and then returned to filming. "Seldom have the frontier West and the film Western been more inseparable," Scott