

# East Hartford, Connecticut, WWII Heritage City

A series of lessons from the [World War II Heritage Cities Lesson Collection](#)



Figure 1: Engine assembly room. Pratt and Whitney propeller plant in East Hartford, Connecticut in September 1941.  
(Photographer: John Collier; Credit: Library of Congress)

## Introduction

The [East Hartford, Connecticut](#) WWII Homefront series consists of three lessons as well as a culminating fourth lesson. These lessons center the city's significance as a World War II Heritage City. Highlights include defense industries, the heightened participation and increase in opportunities for women and African Americans in work during wartime, and civilian volunteerism. The lessons highlight specific contributions but connect to larger themes and understandings of the U.S. home front during wartime. A mix of primary and secondary sources are used, along with photos and media.

## Lessons (with World War II home front topics):

The first three lessons listed can be taught individually or collectively, in any order. However, students may benefit from completing the lesson on war industries and a diverse workforce first, as it can provide background information to the other lessons. The final lesson is to support students in combining learning across the three lessons, and/or comparison to other World War II home front cities in a culminating activity.

### 1. [War Industries and a Diverse Workforce on the Home Front in East Hartford, Connecticut WWII Heritage City \(p. 5\)](#)

- Women in war industries
- Immigrant workforce
- Pratt & Whitney aircraft manufacturing
- War industry

### 2. [African American Contributions and Challenges on the Home Front in East Hartford, Connecticut WWII Heritage City \(P. 18\)](#)

- African Americans in war industries
- Civil rights movement
- Wartime housing

### 3. [Home Front Contributions in East Hartford, World War II Heritage City \(P. 30\)](#)

- War bonds
- Junior Red Cross
- Scrap and salvage drives
- Boy Scouts

- Youth contributions
- Volunteerism

#### 4. East Hartford, Connecticut: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front cities (p. 40)

### Positioning these Lessons in the Curriculum:

The standards listed beneath the lesson links are a collection of standards covered in the lesson collection. The lessons align with national standards and topics, as well as to the Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks. Objectives for each lesson, materials, and resources are listed within the lesson.

**Time period:** World War II

**Topics:** World War II, home front, women's history, African American history, workforce migration, youth volunteerism, science and technology

### United States History Standards for Grades 5-12

*This lesson relates to the following [National Standards for History](#) from the UCLA National Center for History in the Schools:*

#### Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

Standard 3: The causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs

### Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

*This lesson relates to the following [Curriculum Standards themes for Social Studies](#) from the National Council for the Social Studies:*

- Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change
- Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Theme 8: Science, Technology, and Society
- Theme 9: Global Connections

## Relevant Common Core Standards

These lessons relate to the following [Common Core English and Language Arts Standards for History and Social Studies](#) for middle and high school students:

### Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.2

### Craft and Structure

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.4

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.7
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.9

### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.10

## Connecticut Social Studies Framework

The lessons align with recommended themes and content of United States History and content of Modern World History high school courses.

*The lesson series was written by Sarah Nestor Lane, an educator and consultant with the Cultural Resources Office of Interpretation and Education, funded by the National Council on Public History's cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.*

# Lesson 1: War Industries and a Diverse Workforce on the Home Front in East Hartford, Connecticut WWII Heritage City

## About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with [East Hartford, Connecticut](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains photographs and newspaper articles to contribute to learners' understandings about home front war industries in East Hartford, particularly Pratt & Whitney's aircraft manufacturing, and the contributions of a diverse population to this work. Women and an immigrant's story are featured in the second and third readings. An extension reading shares an additional, optional lesson to extend learning about local women in the workforce.

Diverse populations worked and served in many ways in East Hartford during World War II. The lesson does not cover all roles and specifically focuses on paid war industry work and service at Pratt & Whitney as an example of larger themes.

Additional readings on African Americans in the workforce and challenges faced can be found in [Lesson 2: African American Contributions and Challenges on the Home Front in East Hartford, Connecticut WWII Heritage City](#).

## Objectives:

1. Describe the impact of Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford to wartime industries and home front contributions
2. Explain why women entered East Hartford's wartime workforce, and the importance of this to home front efforts, along with historical perspectives.
3. Describe the experiences of a diverse population working on the home front in East Hartford, with details such as workplace safety, types of jobs, challenges, and benefits.

## Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 2-5 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (three primary)
3. *Recommended:* Map of East Hartford, Connecticut to refer to throughout lessons



## Getting Started: Essential Question

How did industries in East Hartford, and the diverse population who worked there, contribute to home front war efforts?

## Photos



Figure 2: A Pratt and Whitney worker tests magneto driving gears for hardness on a Rockwell machine in June 1942.  
(Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 3: A Pratt and Whitney worker polishes screws for valve rocker arms for airplane engines in June 1942 (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 4: Pratt and Whitney workers inspect tappet rollers for airplane engines in June 1942 (Credit: Library of Congress)



## By the numbers:

- In November 1940, Pratt and Whitney began constructing additional plant space to fill a Navy Department order for 17,000 engines. -*Hartford Courant*, November 7, 1940
- In May 1941 it was announced that gage manufacturers in the United States would produce \$13,000,000 worth of thread gages in 1942, with Pratt and Whitney accounting for about \$4,000,000 of the total, doubling it from 1941. -*Hartford Courant*, May 24, 1941



## Quotations to consider:

“In every corner of the world your efforts are being felt. . . . You employees of Pratt & Whitney,’ he said, ‘are building one of the finest engines in the world, and they are going into the best airplanes in the world. . . .’” - General Roy S. Geiger

“To send America’s fighters, bombers and transports faster and farther, bigger and better engines have been developed . . . These Pratt & Whitney-powered planes are brining nearer the day of victory to the United Nations.” -General E.S. Perrin

- Quoted from speeches at the 100,000<sup>th</sup> engine ceremony, reported in *United Aircraft News*, October 1943



## Read to Connect

### Reading 1: Newspaper Expert

*Teacher Tip: The goal of the first reading is to learn about the war industry contributions of Pratt & Whitney. This then will connect to the need for women to enter the workforce, as described in the second and third readings.*

### Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Delivers 100,000<sup>th</sup> Engine; August Production Record Climaxes 1-Year Struggle

#### Rentschler Tells How Industry Met War Needs

*Wilson States Employment Is Only Real Security In Peace Or War*

*United Aircraft News*, October 1943

East Hartford, Conn. – National defense has been recognized as an obligation by Pratt & Whitney Aircraft since the first Wasp engine was built 18 years ago, and military requirements have been the basis of developments by the organization, Frederick B. Rentschler, chairman of United Aircraft Corporation, told employees at a ceremony celebrating shipment of the 100,000<sup>th</sup> Pratt & Whitney engine.

In introducing Mr. Rentschler, Eugene E. Wilson, vice chairman and president of United Aircraft Corporation, paid tribute to the founders of Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. In helping prepare the United States for the defense of freedom and democracy, the company gave employment to over 75,000 persons in the past 18 years. 'Employment,' Mr. Wilson emphasized, 'provides the only real security – social security in time of peace and national security in time of war.'

National defense and the aviation industry are closely related. 'At any time,' Mr. Rentschler said, 'our aviation industry must be ready in an emergency with types of equipment recognizing no superior, and in addition, be capable as an industry of quick expansion. In our opinion, the aviation industry has successfully met both of these objectives.' The Navy Bureau of Aeronautics and the Army Air Forces have always cooperated closely to strengthen the industry. 'Without their sympathetic support and guidance, there could not have been an aviation industry.'

### **Opportunities Still Exist Aplenty**

The record of Pratt & Whitney Aircraft demonstrates that opportunities 'still exist aplenty in our American way of life,' Mr. Rentschler stated. Eighteen years ago, 12 men arrived in Hanford proposing to develop a new type of air-cooled radial engine and to build a new business. They paved the way for a development which not only has left its imprint on this community, but has become a most important factor in national defense.

The original Wasp engine, which they developed in record time, set a new world standard for power, weight, and dependability. It was a primary factor in making possible military and commercial airplane design which raised American aviation in the late Twenties to unchallenged world supremacy.

'In my opinion,' Mr. Rentschler asserted, 'Pratt & Whitney Aircraft has never since relinquished its leadership. Night and day Pratt & Whitney-equipped bombers and transport planes are engaged all over the world in the most hazardous kind of flying operations,' he said.

### **Create New Wasp Engine**

From the beginning, Pratt & Whitney Aircraft has enjoyed continuity of management. Today the same men who designed the original Wasp have created an addition to the Wasp family

which they believe will be the most important engineering contribution of Pratt & Whitney Aircraft to the winning of the war. Mr. Rentschler did not disclose the size or power of the new engine but he did declare that it ‘will again lead the world into the realm of still higher horsepower and airplane performance.’

‘There has been continuity of purpose, determination, integrity, and character running through the entire history of the company,’ Mr. Rentschler said. ‘By aiming high, and then meeting our seemingly impossible objectives, leadership and accomplishment became a matter of expected fact,’ he explained. ‘Through all the years that followed, this type of performance became thoroughly indoctrinated into Pratt & Whitney Aircraft even though our original group of 25 has now been expanded to tens of thousands of employees. I have often referred to this as ‘Pratt & Whitney’s priceless heritage.’

### Questions for Reading 1

1. What did Pratt & Whitney manufacture?
2. How did Pratt & Whitney impact local employment? How would this impact other economic activity in the area? (Ex. migration, housing, transportation)
3. Who was Mr. Rentschler’s audience? Compare his words in the last paragraph to the Quotations to consider. What are your takeaways on “Pratt & Whitney’s priceless heritage?”

*Teacher Tip: Use [Lesson 2 on African Americans in East Hartford](#) to continue discussing Pratt & Whitney’s “heritage.” Discuss the barriers African Americans faced in employment.*

### Reading 2: Newspaper Excerpt

*Background: The National Youth Administration (N.Y.A.) was a New Deal agency sponsored by Franklin D. Roosevelt. It provided work and education for youths aged between 16 and 25. It started in 1935 and was discontinued in 1943. Work by the National Youth Administration (NYA) is also examined in Reading 3 of [Home Front Experiences and Contributions by Youth in Lewistown, Montana, World War II Heritage City](#). You may wish to compare NYA mobilization efforts between cities.*

#### Wed Women Available In Defense Jobs

*Must be Hired to Meet Labor Shortage Despite Employer’s Reluctance, Council Indicates  
[Hartford Courant](#), August 25, 1941*

Married women constitute the principal supply of labor available to meet the rapidly progressing shortage in defense industry and despite the reluctance of employers to use

women in jobs traditionally filled by men, women must be employed, members of the Council of Administration indicated in interviews Sunday. . .

### 50,000 Needed

After surveying the labor needs of Connecticut industry and finding an indicated demand for 50,000 additional workers from September 15 to the latter part of December, the council designed the present program to supply this demand with a minimum slack in production and a maximum use of Connecticut residents. State and local manufacturers' associations and governmental officials alike are concerned with the ultimate effects of the tide of out-of-state workers, and are attempting to meet the labor demand in a way which will avoid a market flooded with migrants when the period of production leveling begins. . .

The primary purpose of the defense training program, the council explained, is to guard against a failure to provide for the increasing needs of defense, and secondly, Mr. Ennia said, 'we are anxious to employ as many natives as possible. This is perhaps selfish but is important and is necessary in preventing a grievous social load of immigrants.'

### Heretofore Untapped Supply

'The only way we can accomplish either of those ends,' he continued, 'is to tap a labor supply heretofore unused because unneeded. And this means women, and means by and large married women, for single women are normally considered to be in the labor market and available for employment. Women alone will not of course meet the problem, but there is no way of meeting the problem without a great expansion in the employment of women.' Explaining the pattern of absorbing women into industrial activity, Mr. Boynton said 'throughout the field of labor we are working towards a general upgrading of skilled employees, towards increasing their skill, and towards training the unskilled. . . The present situation makes it evident that women must be depended on to keep training centers in full operation.' . . .

### Have Mechanical Ability

Judging from the experience of the vocational bureau in training women in four centers since June 15, Mr. Boynton said 'women can work drill presses with little training, can work shapers and planers with small difficulty, and can do fine work on screw machines, both hand and automatic. . . Women do have mechanical ability and manufacturers have to come to accept them for machine work. In our program we have provided the fundamental training upon which can be built the skill for operating most any machine. Indeed for some machines women are better fitted than men, despite the fact some employers absolutely refuse to hire them. Such additional evidences as the record of women as inspectors in

plants throughout the state and as crane operators in the Bullard Company of Bridgeport indicate that in the face of a labor shortage and the ability of women, manufacturers must give up their prejudice against women.' . . .

### NYA Experience

. . .'We have had about 200 girls in NYA defense shops, and 35 or 40 have already been placed in industry on jobs directly related to the mechanical training received. We have admitted girls on the same basis of boys . . . These girls are capable of mechanical work, and a shortage of labor is eventually going to break the restraining tradition; we simply are coming to women in industry and that's all there is to it.' . . .

### Questions for Reading 2

1. What were the Council of Administration's beliefs on labor from out-of-state?
2. Why do you think Boynton highlights employing married women? Why was there a need for women entering the industry?
3. What are examples of mechanical work women were found to be skilled in?
4. What may have been the benefits of training girls in the National Youth Administration?

*Extension:* Return to Reading 1 in this lesson. Discuss: Does Reading 2 impact your view of the descriptions of the employment and heritage in Reading 1? Why or why not?

### Photo



Figure 5: Hector Burr, pictured in the *Hartford Courant*, November 29, 1942

## Reading 3: Newspaper Article

*Background: Reading 2 describes the concern of the “tide of out-of-state workers” and the “ultimate migrant labor difficulty.” Although most would connect this to workers still within the United States, Reading 3 outlines a unique situation: a worker who came from out of country. Have students read the following and discuss the reflection questions.*

### Chilean Ends Long Journey To War Plant

#### But Lack of Navy Approval Prevents Hector Burr

*Hartford Courant, November 29, 1942*

When Hector Burr left home in Santiago, Chile, in April of 1941, the names ‘Hartford’ and ‘Pratt and Whitney’ meant nothing of any personal importance to him. But a curious combination of circumstances which seated him in a northern-bound station wagon 19 months ago changed all that.

Today, after traveling more than 22,000 miles through 15 countries, Hartford means ‘a surprisingly clean and pleasant city,’ and Pratt and Whitney is synonymous with ‘an opportunity to secure training which will help Chile to help the United States.’

The 28-years-old son of the former Chilean consul to France arrived in Hartford on Wednesday. On Friday he entered the Pratt and Whitney training school. But the school is a stop-gap. As soon as he receives a permit from the Navy, he will accept an already promised position with the company. ‘It will be on the assembly line, I hope very much,’ he added.

[After he had traveled to the United States, and before Hartford] . . . He applied for a scholarship permit through the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American affairs in Washington and was sent to Chanute Field as ‘Chilean Air Cadet.’

#### Liked Company

Two weeks before his graduation he had the idea to write to Pratt and Whitney for work. ‘I liked that company very much because I liked the motors they made. We used some of them out at the field.’

The Pratt and Whitney letter was prompted by his desire to further his training and gain additional experience in a field which has always interested him since his engineering studies in France several years ago.

He secured the necessary permits from the Immigration Department and a four-months time extension from the State Department, but neglected to secure the Navy permit, which is temporarily preventing his doing any actual work in the local plant. ‘As soon as that paper

gets here, Pratt and Whitney are going to put me right to work. Did I tell you I hope it will be on the assembly line?”

The United States has impressed the young visitor with its ‘association spirit,’ or the willingness of many people to join together to promote the common good. This he found in contrary to the Chilean idea of individuality.

Hartford isn’t at all what he expected. Knowing it to be a city of many manufacturing plants, he expected ‘something black and dismal like Pittsburgh or may Indianapolis. Why, this city is clean and attractive, and very pleasant.’ . . .

‘After the war Chile hopes that many Americans will come down and visit us. You will find it a friendly country. The people are kind and hospitable. The cities are attractive. And the roads are good and getting better. Right now Chile is interested in giving all the help she can to America and the other United Nations. Chile knows who her friends are. And Chile wants after the war, to know her friends more intimately than she has ever done in the past.’

‘By the way,’ he added, ‘don’t you think my name sounds very American? It really should. My grandfather came from your state of New Jersey.’

### Questions for Reading 3

1. What was Burr’s impressions of the Hartford area and Pratt & Whitney?
2. Why did Burr want to work at Pratt & Whitney? What challenges did he face in doing so?
3. Burr describes the “association spirit” of the United States during wartime. How does this connect to the work in Hartford, and/or other home front cities?

*Connect Reading 2 and Reading 3:*

4. Reading 2 describes the concern of the “tide of out-of-state workers” and the “ultimate migrant labor difficulty.” In the same article, it was shared that 50,000 workers were needed. How did women, and out-of-state (and in Reading 3, out-of-country) workers help fill needs on the home front?
5. Do you think the local concerns about out-of-state workers was valid? Why or why not?

### Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did industries in East Hartford, and the diverse population who worked there, contribute to home front war efforts?

Also consider: How did the involvement of women in traditionally male-dominated roles impact the perception of women's capabilities in the workforce?

## Extension Activity

*Teacher Tip: The following reading and reflection questions can be used to build on student understanding of [Reading 2](#) and women in the war industry in East Hartford.*

### Extension Reading: Newspaper Article

#### Plants Add Women for Defense Jobs

Increase Sharp and Expected to Be Greater; New Workers Like High Pay

*The Hartford Daily Courant*, March 24, 1942, p. 5

By A. E. Magnell

Rate of increase of women in Connecticut industry is sharp and with drafts looming larger, the ratio of women to men employed in factories is destined to increase. No exact figures on the number of women employed in the state are available but it is believed by competent manufacturing representatives that the average is between 15 and 20 percent. A ratio of 30 percent by the end of the current year is expected.

The number of women now on factory payrolls is an increase of 50 percent or more over a year ago, according to 'samples' obtained in the course of a survey. Today the applicant lines at industrial plants are conspicuous by the presence of women. High wages are the strong appeal.

Employers have adopted approximately the same scale of wages for women as men for the same kind of work.

And the experience of employers in dealing with women employees is practically identical with that of men, especially in defense work. Women workers are just as anxious for overtime work as men and like some men, some women find cause to be out in midweek, and then clamor for Sunday work with its double time incentive.

#### 20,000 Women Now Employed

Employment of women in 83 plants in Hartford County, reported by the Manufacturers Association of Hartford County, has increased about 25 percent since July with slightly more than 20,000 on payrolls numbering 112,000 employees. The number that will be added before the end of the year may approach 10,000. It will be contingent on the scope of the draft.

The general policy of employment managers is to limit employment of women to the extent of draftee replacement. This is motivated by determination that employees going into military service will have their jobs back when they return.

Experience of employers has been that women factory workers are as efficient as men in certain defense jobs. In operating automatic machines the task in most cases merely means feeding material into machines or pushing levers. Once the operation is learned, production results are satisfactory. In some operations women need the help of men in handling stock or the like and in some such cases this additional cost, not common to men, has to be made up by a slightly lower scale for women.

Generally speaking the wage scale for women doing men's jobs is same. On some Government contracts this is a set requirement and in other cases it is a matter of agreement.

### Colt's to Employ 1498

[Colt's Patent Fire Arms Manufacturing Company](#) the number of women employed is 1498, an increase of 450 since January and is more than a 200 percent increase during the past year. Women operate small lathes, milling machines and presses.

United Aircraft increased the number of its women workers in the shop from 200 to 450 in the past year and it is a matter of company policy that those employed receive the same compensation as men for similar work. . .

At Pratt & Whitney division of Niles, Bement, and Pond Company an apprentice training course in certain machine operations is conducted and results are satisfactory. 'Learning on the firing line' has proved satisfactory, the employment official said. Women applicants are numerous and jobs are almost demanded, said the personnel manager. . .

### Questions for Extension Reading

1. Why did the number of women on factory payrolls increase 50 percent (or more) from 1941-1942? How does this connect to the need described in reading 2?
2. Why was increasing the employment of women contingent on, or related to, the draft?
3. How does the author compare the types of work and pay in the field between women and men? Do you think this was accurate? Why or why not?
4. What examples of companies hiring women were shared?

## Additional Resources

- [Homefront: Connecticut Businesses in World War II | UConn Library](#)
- [The Early Years of the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Company - Connecticut History | a CTHumanities Project](#)

# Lesson 2: African American Contributions and Challenges on the Home Front in East Hartford, Connecticut WWII Heritage City

## About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with [East Hartford, Connecticut](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson includes readings aimed at helping students understand the challenges African Americans in East Hartford encountered on the home front, and how the advocacy of individuals and organizations contributed to the push for equal rights. The lesson examines challenges and advocacy work of local African Americans in employment, housing, and racial discrimination.

## Objectives:

1. Describe experiences and challenges of African Americans in East Hartford on the home front.
2. Identify contributions of African Americans in East Hartford to the war effort.
3. Explain how the partnership among, and advocacy of individuals and organizations helped challenge racism and discrimination on the home front.

## Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 6-9 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3
3. *Recommended:* Map of East Hartford, Connecticut



## Getting Started: Essential Question

How did African Americans in East Hartford contribute to the home front efforts and the civil rights movement?

## Photos



Figure 6: A change of shift at Pratt and Whitney United Aircraft, East Hartford, Connecticut, June 1941. June 1941 was the month Pratt and Whitney began hiring African American workers. See Reading 1. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 7: Johnny Taylor, a professional Negro Leagues baseball player, returned to Hartford to work at P&W United Aircraft during the war. He pitched for the New York Cubans on the weekends. Here he is pictured in 1949 with the Hartford Chiefs. (Credit: Greater Hartford Twilight Baseball League)



Figure 8: “United we win.” A poster designed by the War Manpower Commission, photo by Liberman. The poster connects to integration in the defense industries, explored more in Reading 1. (Credit: Library of Congress)



### By the numbers:

The Hartford Negro Citizens Council estimated that 51% of local, skilled jobs were still barred to African Americans by March 9, 1943.

- “Negro Work Campaign is Planned,” *The Hartford Courant*, March 9, 1943



## Quotations to consider:

“...It is only human to see the faults of others much more clearly than our own and the righteous indignation expressed against the Jim Crow South is, no doubt, very satisfying. However, the truth of the matter is that there is essentially about as much Jim Crowism in Hartford as in Memphis, the only difference being in the degree of frankness with which it is admitted. As long as such a situation exists, others are hardly likely to be impressed by our long-range criticism and advice. There is enough racial discrimination in Hartford alone to engage our best efforts for a lifetime . . .”

- “The Negro in the North,” an editorial letter by E.B.B. in the *Hartford Courant* on September 25, 1942

“...A Negro woman, who, although thoroughly instructed in a vital trade at a local trade school, was offered a job as a sweeper at a war plant and was unable to find more skilled employment.”

- “Negro Work Campaign is Planned,” *The Hartford Courant*, March 9, 1943



## Read to Connect

*Teacher Tip: The texts in this lesson use historical language and labels not used today to describe the race or abilities of individuals. Discuss this with students. It is also recommended that this reading follow or align with the [first reading in Lesson 1](#) to better understand the role of Pratt & Whitney on the home front.*

### Reading 1: Newspaper Article

*Background: [Executive Order 8802](#) was issued by President Roosevelt on June 25, 1941. It stated, "There shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries and in Government, because of race, creed, color, or national origin." The order led to more African American workers in the defense industries. It did not fully prevent discrimination in hiring or the workplace. The following text was published only four days after the Executive Order.*

#### PW Aircraft Negro Policy Is Clarified

M. F. Burke Reported Telling Congressmen Plant is Placing Some As Experiment  
*The Hartford Courant*, June 29, 1941, pp. 1-2

Appearing to 'clarify the record' on his company's policy toward hiring Negroes, Martin F. Burke, personnel director of Pratt and Whitney Division of United Aircraft Corporation, told the Congressional committee, investigating defense migration that the company is experimenting with employment of Negro labor by placing some Negroes in custodial jobs. He appeared Friday afternoon in Trenton, N. J., according to Associated Press.

If the experiment works, the Associated Press reported Mr. Burke as testifying, Negroes would be placed in other departments and ultimately would be given mechanical positions.

### 'Friction' Feared

Mr. Burke said that Negroes had not been hired previously because of the possibility of 'friction' with white workers, rather than because of any desire by the management to discriminate against Negroes, Associated Press reported.

At the committee's hearings in Hartford Tuesday and Wednesday, Thomas R. Downs, employment supervisor of Pratt and Whitney, said that the company's policy toward hiring Negroes is 'the same as the Navy,' and that no Negroes are employed in any mechanical capacity. . .

The Courant Saturday received the following telegram from John H. Tolan, California, chairman of the committee, regarding Mr. Burke's testimony:

'Martin F. Burke, personnel director United Aircraft Corporation, appeared before this committee Friday afternoon to correct testimony of another representative of that company at committee hearings in Hartford on Wednesday Mr. Burke testified that plans are being worked out with Negro organizations in Hartford area to give Negro workers a chance at certain jobs in concurrence with President Roosevelt's recent public request.'

President Roosevelt stated June 15 that he had received complaints of nationwide discrimination against Negroes and called on the Office of Production Management to deal effectively with the situation.

Questioned at the hearing Wednesday about the claim that Negroes and whites will not work together, although they go to school together, Mr. Downs replied, in part: 'I can only say that our policy is the same as the Navy. We have been through a hazardous period in the past year, and we have been very careful about the selection of workers.'

Mr. Downs also pointed out that Pratt and Whitney was proud of its production and would 'hate to do anything that would disrupt our schedule.'

## Unaware of Plans

With regard to Mr. Burke's testimony, as reported to The Courant by Chairman Tolan, that 'plans are being worked out with Negro organizations in Hartford area,' Dr. Allen F. Jackson, leader of two of Hartford's most inclusive Negro organizations, said Saturday that he had not heard from Pratt and Whitney.

At the same time, Dr. Jackson, president of both the Hartford Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and of the North End Conference, took issue with the testimony of Mr. Downs.

## Jackson Statement

Dr. Jackson's statement to The Courant follows in part:

'I read with a great deal of astonishment the testimony of Thomas R. Downs, employment supervisor of the Pratt and Whitney Aircraft Corporation before the Special House Committee on Tuesday of this week. Although the attitude of the United Aircraft Corporation toward the employment of Negroes has been known pretty generally for many months, it is unbelievable that any effort would be made to justify publicly such an unfair, unamerican practice.

'The fact that we in this country are working desperately to preserve and strengthen democracy against the enemies of liberty and justice somehow escapes Mr. Downs and the company he speaks for. The fact that the billions of dollars that are being spent for National Defense come from the pockets and from the savings of all the people, black and white alike, apparently makes no impression upon them whatever. One appeal after another of the OPM to the United Aircraft and other defense plants to discontinue their practice of discriminating against persons because of race or color or religion has fallen on deaf ears. Even the eloquent plea of the President has been of no avail.

'When Mr. Downs states that Negro men are not adaptable and that white man will not work with them, he is again misinformed. The United States Post Office where white men and black men work side by side, is recognized all over the world as a model of efficiency.

'Thousands of plants throughout the country, some in Hartford, employ skilled Negroes and their production schedule has not suffered.

'Mr. Downs seems to believe, as many others do, that nationality and color and race determine mechanical aptitude. Actually, such a theory was exploded too long ago to mention.

'I am just as certain as one day follows another that the great majority of people, whether in the factories or out, do not share the views of Mr. Downs, for if they did, God help America!'

## Questions for Reading 1

1. According to Burke, what type of position was being used as an experiment for African Americans working at the factory?
2. Why would Burke and Downs compare their employment practices to the Navy?
3. Describe the tone of Jackson's statement and its purpose. Which point(s) do you find the most persuasive?
4. How do "By the Numbers" and "Quotations to Consider" show the complex realities faced by African Americans in seeking economic advancement and equality during the war?

## Reading 2: Letter to the Editor (Newspaper)

*Background: This letter was published only two days following reading 1, as a response to the events. Dr. Allen Jackson, a contributor to this letter, is also quoted in reading 1.*

### Colored Applicants Should Be Given Chance to Prove Skills

July 1, 1941, *The Hartford Courant*, p.12

To the Editor of The Courant: --

The Joint Committee on Negro Employment, an interracial committee, has been disturbed by the report appearing in the Hartford Times of June 25 containing a statement by Employment Supervisor Thomas J. Downs of the Pratt and Whitney Aircraft factory that his company does not employ Negroes and that he does not consider them adaptable to the work required in his factory. At a meeting of the full committee on June 27, a subcommittee was appointed to draw up a statement on behalf of the committee.

We note with satisfaction that Mr. Downs reports his plant as actually considerable ahead of its schedule in the production of aircraft engines. The committee cannot, however, discover any evidence that leads us to believe that Negroes are not adaptable to machine work requiring skill and faithful application, and we are also unconvinced that the factory's work would have been in the least [slowed] ~~retarded~~ had Negroes possessing the skill and ability to do what white workers have been doing been employed.

In support of our view, may we mention the fact that the experience of other plants where Negroes have been and are now being employed seems to show that they are equal to the demands made upon them by this type of work. If Mr. Downs is interested only in a man's ability, as he is reported as saying, may we ask also if he has given Negro applicants for positions any opportunity to prove whether or not they are qualified? This committee

believes that it can submit the names of Negro workers whom we believe to be qualified to do skilled work in airplane production.

In at least three brass factories in Waterbury and New Haven, Negroes are employed and in one case a Negro has been in complete charge of his department in the factory. At the Winchester Repeating Arms Company's plant in New Haven, colored men are working on machines and colored women are employed as inspectors. At the O'Meara Automobile Company's establishment in East Hartford, one of the highly skilled mechanics is a Negro. Recently the Chance-Voight Company, a subsidiary of the United Aircraft, offered a prize at New York University to the student who was first in a competition in aircraft designing. That prize was won by a young colored man. Would he be given employment if he were to come to East Hartford?

This committee simply asks that colored applicants be given an opportunity to prove their skill and adaptability under the same conditions and requirements laid down for applicants of any other race.

Daniel Howard, Dr. Allen F. Jackson, Rev. Alfred M. Lambert, Eleanor Hope Johnson, Chairman. Hartford.

## Questions for Reading 2

1. What was the purpose of this letter from the Joint Committee on Negro Employment?
2. Why did the committee offer to submit the names of African American qualified workers?
3. What other wartime employment examples for African Americans did the letter share? Why did the writers include these?
4. What were some challenges African Americans faced on the home front and in service during World War II? How were the work opportunities at the Pratt & Whitney factory an example?

## Photo



Figure 9: "Hold it High - Together!" With Arms labeled Jews, Protestants, Negroes, Foreign Born, Catholics, and Whites holding a torch labeled Liberty. Photo from the "New England Bulletin," a local Black-owned newspaper, March 26, 1949. (Credit: Library of Congress)

## Reading 3: Newspaper Article (Excerpt)

### Civic Study Urges Action for Negroes

More Housing, Less Segregation Recommended After Survey

*The Hartford Courant*, January 16, 1945, pp. 1-2

The immediate opening of additional public housing units to Negro families in the Hartford area, condemnation of the practice of segregating and otherwise discriminating against

Negro families and local housing units, and establishment of a placement service to supply Negro labor to industrial and business enterprises which are not now giving Negroes a chance to earn a livelihood, are among the recommendations set forth in a 'Review of the Social and Economic Conditions of the Negro Population of Hartford' released Monday.

Recommendations are based on the first intensive research conducted into the general conditions among Negroes in the Hartford area.

The study, instituted last September for the Council of Social Agencies of Greater Hartford and the Hartford Negro Citizens Council by the National Urban League, also calls for intensification by churches of guidance work among young people and the development of an active campaign to encourage Negro youth to aspire to higher performance levels in both academic and vocational pursuits.

While the 15 recommendations which summarize the report are primarily concerned with providing decent and unrestricted housing opportunities for Negro families and wiping out the 'deplorable housing conditions,' alleged to exist in the North End, the development of constructive adult leisure-time activities, and education of the Negro population as to existing health facilities are also emphasized.

#### **Civic Leadership Blamed**

The absence at this time of any overall Community plan for the correction of housing, Employment and social conditions of the Negro population is not the result of deliberate neglect, according to Dr. Warren M. Banner, director of survey for the Urban League's department of research and community projects and author of the report.

'Rather, it arises from an unwillingness on the part of official and civic leadership to recognize the existence and urgency of problems facing the community. Personal, social and business relationships are involved, to say nothing of the political implications in an action program,' Dr. Banner declared.

Among factors listed by Doctor Banner as contributing to an aggravated problem in race relations, which will continue to grow worse if present conditions are allowed to continue our an abnormally high death rate recorded for Negro neighborhoods, and effectiveness of public school influence upon Negro pupils and the lessening of church influence.

'One of the gravest problems of the Negro worker has been to find a decent place to live, according to the report. Negro housing was found to be generally substandard and overcrowded. The North End is described as a virtual slum.

It is pointed out in the study that while many Negro families are still without adequate housing, more than 1000 units of war housing, from public funds, stand vacant. Where

Negro families were accepted for tenancy in war housing units, they found themselves “set off in the corner and given differential treatment.”

Dr. Banner’s survey of Negro occupations shows that Negroes are ‘excluded from occupational categories in which large numbers of whites are to be found. In the main, Hartford Negroes make their living as domestic and personal service and unskilled workers.’

‘There has been a lag in the movement of Negroes into industrial jobs even during the present emergency. Their greatest gains in private industry have been made in the largest plants holding war contracts. In these plants, their range of occupational opportunity has greatly broadened,’ according to the study. . .

### Questions for Reading 3 and Photo

1. Summarize the research in the reading. What examples of discrimination and social, economic issues were described?
2. Describe the survey’s findings on issues in wartime housing and job opportunities. How do these findings connect to the first and second reading?
3. Consider the role of African American individuals, research, and organizations (such as those in the reading) that shared and challenged inequalities of the time. What impact do you think they had to the development of the Civil Rights movement, both during and after the war?
4. Analyze the photo and caption depicting the hands holding up the liberty torch. What is the meaning of the drawing? How did it connect to the developing Civil Rights movement?

### Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did African Americans in East Hartford contribute to the home front efforts and the Civil Rights movement?

And consider: What efforts helped to challenge racism and discrimination on the home front?

## Extensions

### 1. Johnny “Schoolboy” Taylor, Hartford’s First Professional Black Athlete

Students may wish to read more about Johnny Taylor, the African American professional baseball player from Hartford. He was a famous player in the Negro Leagues, and a member of the Negro League All-Star Team in 1938.

During the war, Taylor worked at United Aircraft in East Hartford. He pitched for the New York Cubans on weekends.

This article [“Johnny Taylor: Hartford’s First Professional Black Athlete” by Greater Hartford Twilight Baseball League](#) shares more about his history as an athlete and connections to East Hartford, along with photographs.

Other articles include:

- a. [“Hartford’s Johnny ‘Schoolboy’ Taylor.”](#) From the Minor League Baseball website
- b. [“Johnny Taylor.”](#) from the Society for American Baseball Research

### 2. Double V Campaign

Much of what was described and discussed across the readings connects to the Double V Campaign.

Students may first build background knowledge on [the Double V Campaign](#), and then learn about it in context with a [lesson from Pittsburgh](#), another WWII Heritage City.

In comparing East Hartford to other cities during the war in [Lesson 4](#), this can be one area to explore.

## Additional Resources

- [“Connecticut WWII-era newspapers offer view of black life”](#) from AP News, by Susan Haigh (2019)
- [The Debate Over Who Could Occupy World War II Public Housing in West Hartford - Connecticut History](#)

# Lesson 3: Home Front Contributions in East Hartford, World War II Heritage City

## About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with [East Hartford, Connecticut](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson is organized so students may focus on one or more categories of contributions of civilians in volunteerism and giving, with short primary source readings as examples for each. The categories of the readings are youth volunteerism and involvement, material drives, and financial contributions.

## Objectives:

1. Describe the purpose and examples of youth contributions to home front efforts.
2. Explain how material drives and financial giving helped meet needs, both on the home front and abroad.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

## Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 10-14 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3
3. *Recommended:* Map of East Hartford, Connecticut



## Getting Started: Essential Question

How did home front contributions of civilians in East Hartford support the war efforts?

## Photos



Figure 10: "Save Rubber Share the Ride," a parade display encouraging carpooling by the East Hartford Chamber of Commerce. (From the 1943 Janus Yearbook, Courtesy of East Hartford Public Library)



Figure 11: This poster is pictured in the photo of the East Hartford HS students at the bulletin board. "Till We Meet Again. Buy War Bonds" (Courtesy Tempe History Museum)



Figure 12: East Hartford High School students at a “National Defense” bulletin board. The board includes a poster encouraging buying war bonds. (From the 1943 Janus Yearbook, Courtesy of East Hartford Public Library)



### By the numbers:

Consider this excerpt from the 1943 Janus Yearbook from East Hartford High School:

“Where is all the money that’s jingle jangle jingling in some students’ hands coming from? Yes, it’s returns from United States War Bond and Stamp sale. The fourth period Senior Sales Class is doing its part in National Defense. Some day soon students will be seeing a poster in the front corridor adorned with jeeps. A Willys ‘Jeep’ costs \$900. With each \$900 the class receives, the school will have bought one ‘Jeep.’ Come on Students! We need your whole-hearted cooperation to make our school enrolled 100% in Bond and Stamp Sales and have our poster literally cluttered with ‘Jeeps.’”



### Quotations to consider:

“Normal school activities have been disrupted here at East Hartford High these past few weeks. Many students have signed up for and have already started training in newly formed courses in Radio, Navigation, Aeronautics, Photography, Morse Code, and Touch Typing, the latter especially for boys not in the commercial course.”

“The Defense setup in East Hartford needs more airplane spotters. Spotters are very important, for if there were not any at all, and planes came over an important defense city like East Hartford without being reported, loads of damage could be done. Spotting is a good sport for the students that like to stand and stare at airplanes. There is nothing hard

about this job. A few hours a day a couple days a week reporting planes that come over near the post...”

- Excerpts from the 1943 Janus Yearbook from East Hartford High School

## Read to Connect

*Teacher Tip: For the readings, you may wish to save time and increase student ownership by dividing students into three small groups, or as individuals across the three categories of readings (youth volunteerism and involvement, material drives, and financial giving). Each category has short primary source readings as examples of that type of contribution. Students can then report back key findings and summarize information on their category of home front contributions to share and learn from peers.*

### Reading 1: Youth Volunteerism and Involvement (Newspaper Articles)

#### Reading A

##### High School Students to Aid Defense

Social Studies Department to Recruit Group for Training in Air Spotting, First Aid  
*Hartford Courant*, September 22, 1942

The social studies department of East Hartford High School has formulated a plan whereby the department will cooperate in recruiting and organizing students to help in the work of civilian defense. Students will be trained to do their bit as messengers, airplane spotters, air raid wardens, telephone operators and first aiders.

Specific tasks are being undertaken by students enrolled in various classes of the social studies department. A library bulletin board, suggesting reading material on world affairs, will be kept up to date by the students in Miss Doris Gower’s world history classes. The development of world-mindedness will be increased by a display of maps and other visual aids, under the supervision of Miss Alice Brooks’ classes in geography.

The economics class, under Miss Dorothy Howlett, is planning a project on the methods by which consumers may help in the campaign against waste. The civics classes, taught by Miss Rhena Tapley, Edward Hickey and Jon McGill, will cooperate with the economics classes by holding a forum entitled ‘Conservation – A Vital Part of Our War Effort.’ Miss Helen McClellan’s classes in problems of democracy are studying the civilian defense organizations and are planning to act as a clearing house for the dissemination of information regarding all civilian defense needs.

## Reading B

*Teacher Tip: Describe [war bonds](#) and their purpose to students as a type of loan given to support the government in paying for the war. Bond purchasers were promised to get their money back with a small return on their investment after a certain number of years.*

### Scouts Sell \$18,950 in War Bonds

*Hartford Courant, February 29, 1944*

East District Boy Scouts sold a total of \$18,950 in War Bonds during their part in the Fourth War Loan Drive in East Hartford, it was announced Friday by District Commissioner R.F. Alford. In addition, some of the Scouts delivered the bonds direct to buyers, and these are not included in the total, Mr. Alford added.

Patrol Leader Allen Scott of Troop 61 sold the highest dollar volume in bonds, turning in a total of \$2850, and Scout Raymond Manniere of Troop 1 sold the highest number of individual bonds with a total of 30 bonds sold. Both these Scouts were awarded a \$25 War Bond Friday evening in a special ceremony in the Bulkeley High School in Hartford. The bonds were awarded by the Hartford Connecticut Trust Company . . .

## Reading C

*Note: The American Library Association, the American Red Cross, and the United Service Organizations (USO) formed the Victory Book Campaign in November 1941 to collect book donations for those serving in the armed forces.*

### Victory Book Campaign

*Hartford Courant, February 1, 1943*

A plan that has been used in other communities to notify collectors that residents have books for the Victory Book Campaign will be used in East Hartford from February 5 to 15. During that period, those wishing to attract the attention of collectors for the drive will hang a handkerchief of their door knob.

Miss Catherine Larrabee, head of the East Hartford Junior Red Cross, has arranged to have members of that organization, which includes hundreds of school children, pick up the books and bring them to the schools. From there, they will be taken to the East Hartford Public Library. If any homes are missed, a phone call to the library will bring a collector to pick up the books.

Good technical books, published after 1935, adventure and mystery stories and best sellers are wanted.

## Questions for Reading 1, By the Numbers, and Quotations to Consider

1. Reading A: Identify one of the Social Studies department's student projects. How does this project contribute to civilian defense efforts?
2. Reading B: Explain the significance of the Scouts' involvement in the War Loan Drive. Why do you think Scouts may have been motivated to sell bonds?
3. Reading C: What is one way the East Hartford Junior Red Cross volunteered? What was the purpose of the project?
4. Quotations to Consider and By the Numbers: How did high school students motivate and persuade one another to contribute to the home front war efforts? What examples are identified from the yearbook?
5. Overall: How do the different activities support the overall war effort? What common themes can you identify across the readings on community and youth involvement in the war effort?

## Reading 2: Material Drives (Newspaper Articles)

### Reading A

*Background for students: You may support students in their understanding of [material drives with background reading](#) prior to reading these examples. Reading 1C also can be used to show the variety of materials collected, and for many purposes.*

### Collecting Laundry Equipment

*Hartford Courant, September 22, 1942*

Mrs. Marion K. Cox, chairman of the Women's Defense Council, announced Monday that the special women's committee, headed by Mrs. George Eddy, engaged in obtaining donations of laundry equipment for the Army Air Force men stationed here, had already received several gifts. Announcement of the drive to collect the equipment was made in The Courant Sunday.

Up to Monday afternoon the following donations had been made: Five electric flat irons, four wash tubs, three scrubbing boards, six scrubbing brushes, one ironing board, one hand wringer, one large 20-sheets electric washing machine with built-in wringer, and two additional electric washing machines.

The drive will continue, Mrs. Cox said, until enough equipment of all types is secured. . .

## Reading B

### Drive Nets Nearly Ton of Aluminum

Collections So Far Believed Only Half of Total Amount to Be Realized Eventually

*Hartford Courant*, July 24, 1941

The collection of scrap aluminum for national defense netted nearly a ton of the metal Wednesday, when trucks furnished by the Merchants Division of the Chamber of Commerce and accompanied by Boy Scouts and committee members made the rounds of the town. The collection is believed to be less than half the total amount that will be collected in East Hartford. Further collections will be made today, Friday and Saturday. . .

The metal was all deposited in front of the Center School where it made a pile several feet high on the walk extending from the front steps of the building to the sidewalk.

Merchants whose trucks were used in Wednesday's collections are asked to keep the official aluminum collectors' signs on their trucks. The drivers of these trucks will continue to pick up aluminum articles left on front steps as they drive through all parts of the town in the course of their regular deliveries for the balance of this week. . .

### Questions for Reading 2

1. Who helped collect the equipment (Reading A) and aluminum (Reading B)?
2. How are the purposes of the drives similar and different?
3. How did material drives contribute to the war effort?

## Photos

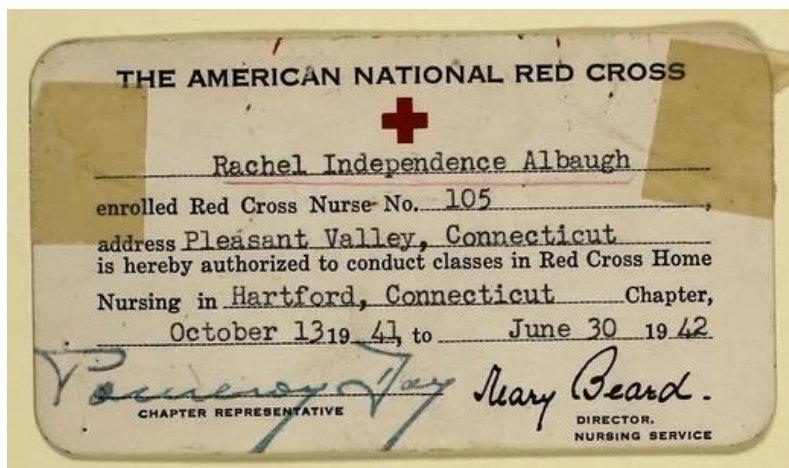


Figure 13: Rachel Independence Albaugh's Red Cross card certifying her to teach Home Nursing in Hartford, Connecticut, from 1941 to 1942. (Credit: National Archives)



Figure 14: "Take a Red Cross Home Nursing Course" - Learn to Guard the Home Front. (Credit: National Archives)

### Reading 3: Financial Contributions

*Teacher Tip: Question 1 after the reading is designed to help understand the difference between giving without any returns and buying war bonds. To consider how financial gifts to the Red Cross were used, have students examine the Red Cross photos with captions.*

#### Pratt & Whitney Workers Urged to Aid Red Cross

T.R. Molloy Asks Unity Lodge Members Double Last Year's Gifts

*Hartford Courant*, December 24, 1941

'Every member of Unity Lodge will give this year, I am sure, at least double last year's contribution to the Red Cross,' said Thomas R. Molloy, president of Unity Lodge, Local 251 and president of the CIO state industrial council, in a letter to the Pratt and Whitney machine tool workers as the Red Cross drive opened at the at the Pratt and Whitney plant.

‘Funds are badly needed,’ wrote Mr. Molloy. ‘Much as they were needed last year, they are needed much more for the coming year.’

‘The Red Cross, as an organization, is actively involved wherever there is suffering or the threat of suffering, in relieving or making plans for relieving that suffering. The wounded and suffering this year include many of our own.’

‘Every member of Unity Lodge will give this year, I am sure, at least double last year’s contribution to the Red Cross. At five dollars per employee, at least \$20,000 would be raised. Such a sum would aid the Red Cross greatly in accomplishing the task that lies before it.’



### Quotation to consider:

“During the second War Bond drive Hamilton Standard Propellers workers dug into their pay envelopes so far that they now have one of the highest bond purchase records in the country. Figured at the cost price of the bonds, Hamilton Standard workers upped their monthly purchases from 9.4% to 13.6% of total pay, figured at maturity value this means 18% of total pay.”

- “Drive Ups Bond Buying 45%,” *United Aircraft News*, June 2, 1943

### Questions for Reading 3 and Quotation to Consider

1. What is the difference between giving and war bonds?
2. In these examples, who is contributing to the causes, either by donation or war bond purchases?
3. What may have motivated home front businesses to hold company-wide efforts to raise money or sell war bonds?
4. Examine the photos. How do these show an example of how financial donations to the Red Cross may have been used?

## Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did home front contributions of civilians in East Hartford support the war efforts?

Also consider: How did the overlapping efforts of East Hartford volunteer activities and contributions work together toward shared goals?

## Additional Resources

[Video – Home Front: Connecticut During World War II – Civil Defense - Connecticut History](#)  
[| a CTHumanities Project](#)

# Lesson 4: East Hartford, Connecticut: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities

## About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with [East Hartford, Connecticut](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains photographs, readings, an optional review text and media activity, and a culminating project. The first reading shares a review of some of the important contributions to aviation for of the US and the Allies with a connection to [Paterson, New Jersey](#), and the second reading connects the region to the designation of a Heritage City. The culminating project contributes to learners' understandings of the city as a WWII Heritage City, with the opportunity to combine lesson themes from the three other lessons in the East Hartford, Connecticut lesson collection. This is to summarize the city's contributions and encourage connections to the overall U.S. home front efforts.

## Objectives:

In a culminating product:

- a. Identify important World War II home front industries and organizations in East Hartford and describe their historical significance
- b. Summarize the contributions of diverse East Hartford civilians, including women, African Americans, and children to home front wartime efforts
- c. Describe local volunteerism and financial contributions
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of East Hartford and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

## Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 15-17 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, and media activity link
3. Maps, project materials (as needed)
4. Student graphic organizers (See Figure 18 at end of lesson, for reference)

- Create Comparison Matrices for your students to use. To compare two cities, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows. Label the left column Theme/Topic and the other columns City 1 and City 2. For a Comparison Matrix for three cities simply add an additional column.
- Create two Single-Point Rubrics to assist students' self-assessment. One is for assessing proficiency in meeting teacher-selected standards. One is for assessing proficiency in meeting objectives.
- For the rubric on standards, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows of content. Label the first column "Areas for Improvement," the second column, "Proficient (Meeting Standard)," and the third column, "Areas of Exceeding Standard." Leave the first and third columns blank. In each row of the second column identify a Standard and indicate a space for noting the evidence for meeting the standard. Include a space at the bottom of the page for assigning points for each column.
- For the rubric on objectives, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows of content. Label the first column "Areas for Improving toward Objective," the second column, "Proficient (Meeting Objective)," and the third column, "Areas of Exceeding Objective." Leave the first and third columns blank. In the four rows of the second column identify these four objectives:
  - a. Identify important World War II home front industries and organizations in East Hartford and describe their historical significance
  - b. Summarize the contributions of diverse East Hartford civilians, including women, African Americans, and children to home front wartime efforts
  - c. Describe local volunteerism and financial contributions
  - d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of East Hartford and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Include a space at the bottom of the page for assigning points for each column. See the last photo of this lesson for reference.



## Getting Started: Essential Question

Why was East Hartford chosen as an American World War II Heritage City, and what are its similarities and differences to other home front cities?

## Photos



Figure 15: Workers inside Pratt and Whitney Aircraft Corporation, September 1941 (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 16: Single-row intake pipes are installed on a new Pratt and Whitney airplane engine, June 1942 (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 17: “Mrs. Frank Robbins and her children, who live in trailer near (Pratt & Whitney) United Aircraft where her husband works nights.” (Credit: Library of Congress)



### Quotation to consider:

“Aircraft engines and propellers made in East Hartford were known for their reliability. P&W powered planes flew over Europe, defended the skies in dogfights over Britain and France, launched fighter planes from aircraft carriers and bases around the Pacific, and were counted on to bring the fight to the enemy – or, when called upon, go rescue those in dire straits.

East Hartford is the only Connecticut location that will be designated by the NPS as an American World War II Heritage City . . .”

- Bill Doak, "East Hartford's role in World War II recognized by National Park Service," *The Gazette*, December 12, 2022

## Reading 1: Newspaper Article

*Teacher Tip: Have students consider the date; the article was written before the United States' formal entry into the war. You can use this article as a comparison and connection point to the [Paterson, New Jersey Lesson Series](#).*

### No Bottleneck Danger Seen for Engines

P&W, Wright Expansion Shows Production Can Keep Pace in Defense, Leaders Say

*The Hartford Daily Courant*, June 11, 1940 (Released by NANA, Inc.), p.14

By Joseph S Edgerton

East Hartford, June 10—Aircraft engine production will not constitute a bottleneck in American national defense plans, but can be made to keep pace with virtually any war place construction program the nation wants to undertake, according to surveys now being completed in the light of the current emergency here and abroad.

Asserting that there is more real danger of bottlenecks developing in the emergency production of such items as tanks, anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank guns and similar equipment than in the aircraft engine supply, leaders of the nation's two great military aviation engine plants pointed out that their production has been tremendously stepped up during recent months and is expected to expand just about as rapidly as aircraft can be produced and pilots and mechanics trained.

The great Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Division of United Aircraft Corporation here has increased its actual production of engines of military airplane sizes five times in less than a year; will increase its production seven and one-half times within the next three months and will have increased the number of engines actually turned out by 1000 per cent, within another nine months.

The Wright Aeronautical Corporation, Paterson, N.J., is almost paralleling the Pratt & Whitney development. During the past year Wright has more than doubled its productive capacity and has increased its payroll from 800 to 18,000 employees. Modernization of production methods is in process where possible. This involves the establishment of improved or more complete machining methods, the addition of new types of machine tools where economically justified by present orders, and the improvement of production methods. . . .The limiting factor in future large-scale aircraft engine plant expansion will be

the inability to obtain new machine tools quickly, in the opinion of Guy W. Vaughn, president of Wright Aeronautical Corporation. . . . Mr. Vaughn said that in order to speed up production, Wright will concentrate on four types of engines.

### **P&W Limits Types to 4**

It also was disclosed for the first time that Pratt & Whitney also is limiting its production to four types, at least during the period of the present emergency. The world-famous Pratt & Whitney series of Hornet engines has been discontinued and the big East Hartford plant has dropped all models except the Wasp Junior, the Wasp, the Twin Wasp and the Double Wasp. These engines are adequate for the powering, respectively, of primary training airplanes, advanced trainers, pursuit and other smaller combat types, and the heavy bombardment airplanes. . . .

### **Doubt About Big Program**

Expressing frank doubts that the United States Government will actually attempt to undertake a 50,000-airplane program, leading engine builders pointed out that there is an element of danger in building up public hopes of such a production. It was pointed out that great hopes were built up during the World War, when there was talk of fleets of American fighting planes which would darken the skies. Although the American aviation effort then was regarded as good, even in the light of present knowledge, production was not attained until just before the end of the war, 18 months after the United States entered the lists against Germany. The Liberty aircraft engine was in mass production before the end of the war, which is regarded today as a very good record. Nevertheless, Americans were tremendously disappointed over the results of our aviation achievements in the World War, largely because of over-optimism. There is danger that the same thing may happen again, in the opinion of leaders in the aircraft engine industry.

‘It is only fair to say that the aircraft engine industry is so much further along than other phases of national defense as to amount to a paradox, in the light of past experience,’ one of the leaders of the industry declared. ‘It is a fundamental fact that the actual capacity of the American aircraft industry is about half what is required to meet the proposed 50,000-plane program. But if we set a visionary goal and become overoptimistic there is certain to be disappointment.’

### **Questions for Reading 1 and Photos**

1. Describe the similarities between the aviation industries in the World War II Heritage Cities of East Hartford and Paterson.
2. Why did the engine factories focus on production of only four engines?

3. In the last section of the article, there is skepticism on if the United States could meet a goal of 50,000 aircraft.
  - a. How did production results during World War I result in this skepticism?
  - b. The U.S. produced over 300,000 aircraft over the course of the war, well surpassing the 50,000 goal. How did East Hartford contribute to this goal?
4. What impact do you think East Hartford's involvement in wartime production had on the local community and economy during World War II? Consider topics such as wages and housing.

## Reading 2: Heritage City Designation

**Excerpt from:** "[House Report 115-998](#), "To Direct the Secretary of the Interior to Annually Designate at Least One City in The United States as An 'American World War II Heritage City,' and for other purposes" (October 30, 2018)

“ . . .PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 6118 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an "American World War II Heritage City".

### BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

On December 7, 1941, military forces of the Empire of Japan attacked the U.S. Naval Fleet and ground bases at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. On December 8, 1941, one day after what President Roosevelt referred to as, "a date which will live in infamy," the United States declared war against the Empire of Japan. Three days later, on December 11, 1941, Japan's ally, Germany, declared war on the United States. Sixteen million Americans, mostly young working-age men, served in the military during World War II, out of an overall United States population of 113 million.

While an unprecedented number of Americans served in World War II, the country drastically increased its war production on the home front, serving not only the needs of the armed forces of the United States but her allies as well--in what President Franklin Roosevelt called "The Arsenal of Democracy." The combination of millions serving in the military, during a period of necessary and drastic increases in production, led to significant social changes on the American home front.

The World War II period resulted in the largest number of people migrating within the United States in the history of the country. Individuals and families relocated to industrial centers for good paying jobs out of a sense of patriotic duty. Many industrial centers became

“boomtowns,” growing at phenomenal rates. One example, the City of Richmond, California, grew from a population of under 24,000 to over 100,000 during the war. . .”

## Questions for Reading 2

1. What was the purpose of the bill (H.R. 6118) according to the report?
2. Why do you think East Hartford was designated as a World War II Heritage City? Connect details from the bill and the first reading.
3. Are there other cities you think of when considering home front contributions during wartime? Which, and why?

## Optional Media Activity

### Documentary: [“Home Front: Connecticut - During World War II”](#)

Segments of the documentary could be used with students to review home front topics from East Hartford, and to connect to efforts across Connecticut. Examples specific to East Hartford in the video are discussion of segregated housing and limited employment opportunities for African Americans (9:25-11:16), and brief footage of Pratt & Whitney (52:28). The documentary also offers an opportunity to reflect on the community and impact on the state in the postwar era (1:23:46-1:25:09). Other topics can be explored from the video, such as [rationing](#) and service members’ experiences.

## Culminating Activity/Mastery Product

To demonstrate student understanding, support students in creating a final product that meets the following objectives:

- a. Identify important World War II home front industries and organizations in East Hartford and describe their historical significance
- b. Summarize the contributions of diverse East Hartford civilians, including women, African Americans, and children to home front wartime efforts
- c. Describe local volunteerism and financial contributions
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of East Hartford and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

### Mastery products should be:

. . . **student-led;** Students work as individuals or in collaborative groups.

. . . **student-directed:** Students are offered a variety of choices for product type.

. . . **student-organized**; Teacher facilitates by providing students with the comparison matrices and/or resource links from throughout the series of lessons.

. . . **student-assessed**; Teacher supports student self-assessment and reflection by providing students single-point rubrics to assess for meeting standards and/or lesson objectives.

Note: Depending on time and scope, the comparison of East Hartford, Connecticut to another WWII Heritage or home front city(s) within the mastery product (objectives) may be omitted. However, comparing cities is recommended, as it connects students to a deeper understanding of the WWII home front.

Examples of mastery product choices include, but are not limited to:

- **Written**: Letter (opinion or informative), essay, poem, narratives, biography, articles, class book or children's book, speech or debate (then presented orally), blog / website, plaque or historical displays, pamphlets or rack cards
- **Graphic Organizers**: timeline, flowcharts, mind or concept content maps, Venn diagrams, comparison matrices, posters
- **Artistic Expression**: song, dance, theater (ex. skits), 3-D models, dioramas, photo journal, stamp and coin designs, visual art, architecture/building or monument, museum design
- **Media design and creation**: podcast, historical markers, social media content, interactive virtual maps or tours, infographics, video, comic strips or graphics, game design, slideshows, digital scrapbook

Please view the [NPS Heritage cities lesson collection](#) for information and resources on other cities.

## Single-Point Rubric

Areas for Improvement	Proficient (Meeting Standard)	Areas of Exceeding Standard
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
<b>Points</b>		

Figure 18: Single-Point Rubric (Standards; Blank) [Teacher selects priority standards for assessment.] Courtesy of Sarah Nestor Lane

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