

Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia, WWII Heritage City

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

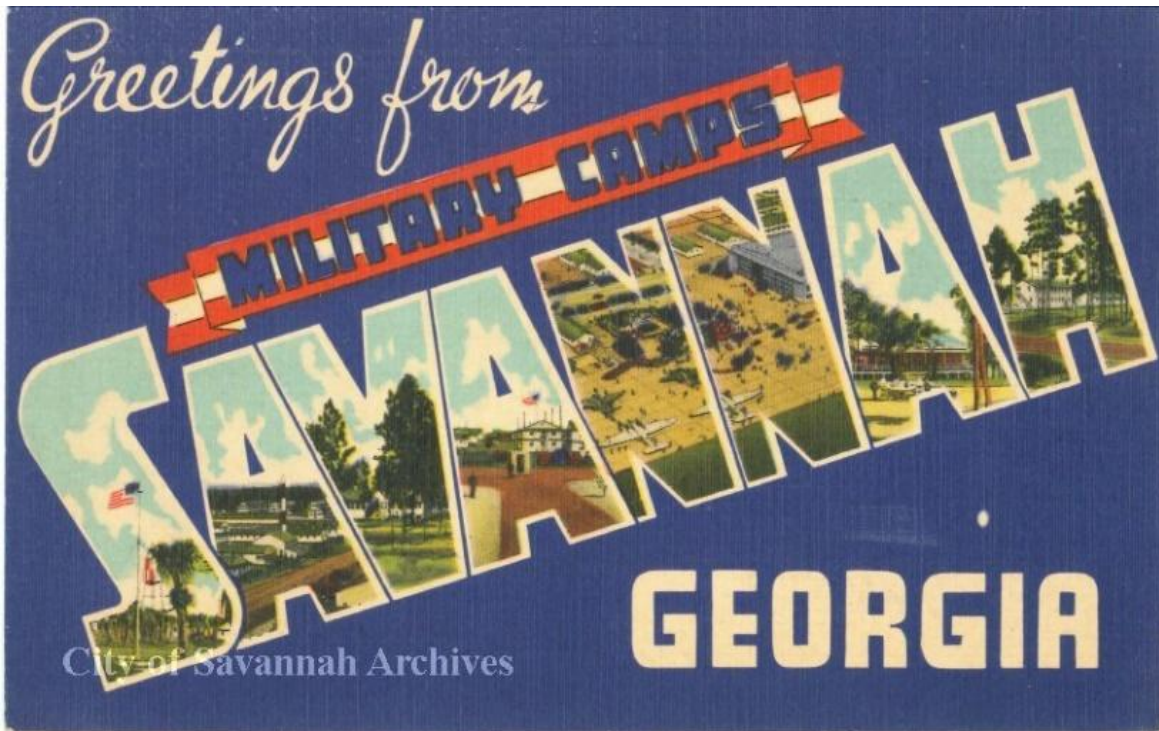


Figure 1: The postcard, postmarked May 5, 1943, depicts scenes from Savannah's military presence within the letters. (Photo courtesy of the City of Savannah Municipal Archives).

Introduction

The three lessons, and culminating fourth lesson, support the development of understanding the significance of [Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). Highlights include shipbuilding and defense industries, the Armed Forces presence at Hunter Field, and civilian home front contributions in both paid and volunteer work. 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. 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. [Shipbuilding in Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia, World War II Heritage City \(p. 5\)](#)

- Shipbuilding
- Liberty ships
- Minesweepers
- Women in war industries
- National Youth Administration

2. [Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia, WWII Heritage City \(p. 17\)](#)

- Army Air Force
- 3rd Air Force
- Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)
- Training and staging operations

3. [Home Front Civilian Contributions in Savannah and Chatham County, World War II Heritage City \(p. 29\)](#)

- Savannah Quartermaster Depot
- Army Service Forces Depot
- Women in war industries
- African Americans in war industries

- Civilian defense
- Scrap and salvage drives

[4. Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia: 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 have been aligned to national standards and topics, as well as to the Social Studies Georgia Standards of Excellence. Objectives for each lesson, materials, and resources are listed within the lesson.

Time period: World War II

Topics: World War II, women's history, African American history, workforce migration, 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

Georgia State Standards

Social Studies Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE, 2023)

The lessons align to the Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (RHSS) in both Grades 9-10 and 11 – 12.

Skills practiced include: citing textual evidence, identifying central ideas, determining the meaning of words and phrases, and comparing and contrasting treatments of the same topic in many primary and secondary sources.

The lessons also align to:

U.S. History

SSUSH19 Examine the origins, major developments, and the domestic impact of World War II, including the growth of the federal government.

d. Investigate the domestic impact of the war including war mobilization, as indicated by rationing, wartime conversion, and the role of women and African Americans or Blacks.

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: Shipbuilding in Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with [Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings and photos to contribute to learners' understandings about shipbuilding in Savannah, such as the production of Liberty ships and minesweepers. Civilian workers, including women and youth, contributed to the efforts.

Objectives:

1. Describe the purpose and contributions of the shipbuilding industries in Savannah and Chatham County.
2. Explain how labor demands were met, including the training and employment of women and youth.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 2-5 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extension)
3. *Recommended:* Map of Savannah, Georgia (one map sketch included as photo in this lesson)



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did shipbuilding in Savannah and Chatham County lead to the success of the Allies during World War II?

Photos

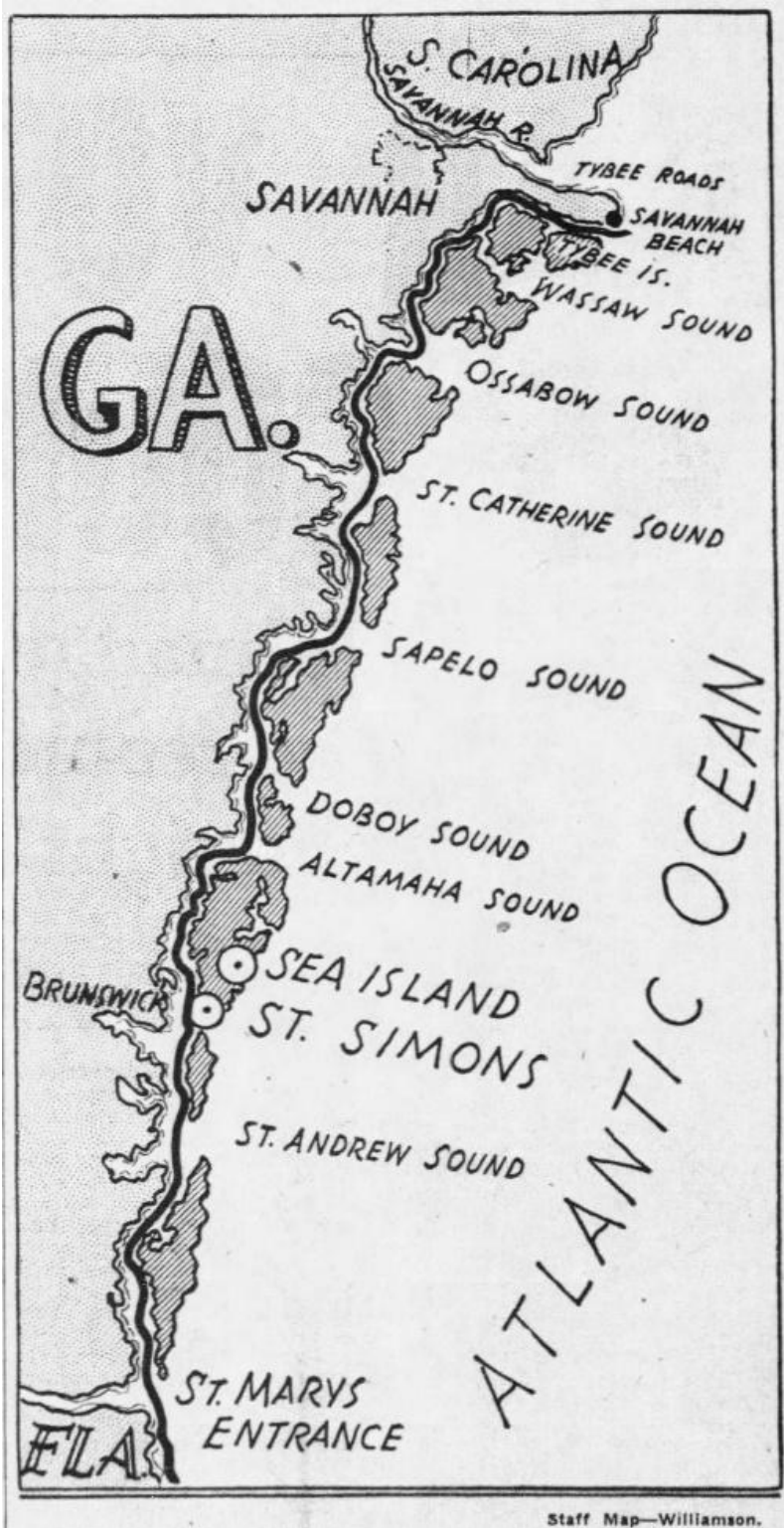


Figure 2: Map showing Savannah and the coast of Georgia. Map from "22 Military Posts in Georgia Are Designated in Closed Area," *The Atlanta Constitution*, September 10, 1942, p. 2.

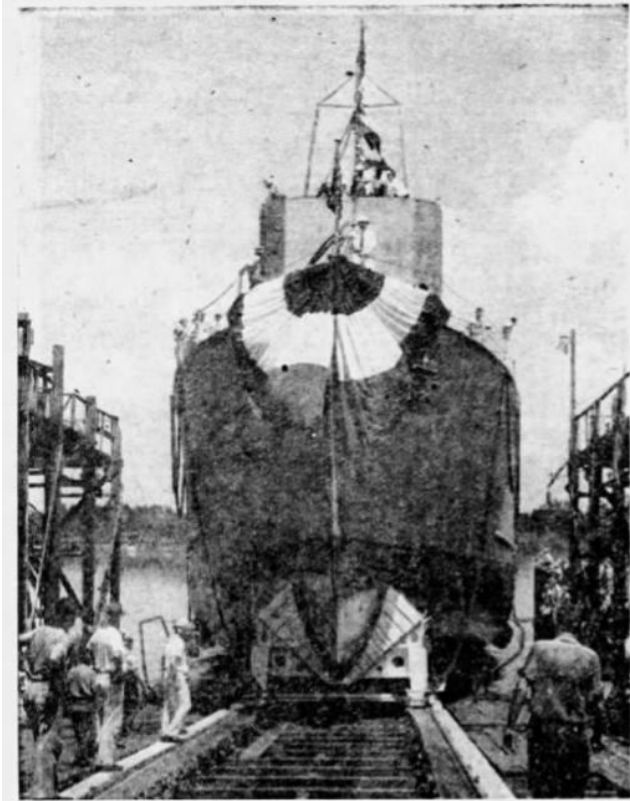


Figure 3: "The U.S.S. Implicit, minesweeper built by the Savannah Machine and Foundry Company, sliding down the ways into the Savannah River" from "Ocean Broom Factory," *The Atlanta Journal*, September 10, 1944, p. 6.



By the numbers:

- On February 6, 1942 the Maritime Commission announced a contract for the construction of 36 Liberty freighters at the Savannah Shipyards with a base fee of \$110,000 a vessel. There was the opportunity of a bonus of \$30,000 per ship, or fine of \$50,000, based on speed and efficiency. The original contract for the Savannah Shipyards was 12 freighters.
- "Savannah Yard to Build 36 Ships," *The Atlanta Journal*, February 8, 1942, p. 38



Quotation to consider:

"Out of the mud and clay along the south bank of the Savannah River about five miles east of the heart of the city, the shipbuilding plant of the Savannah Shipyards, Inc., is beginning to take form."

- "Savannah's Ways Rising Out of Mud," *The Atlanta Journal*, July 20, 1941, p. 12



Read to Connect

Reading 1: Newspaper

Note: This article is when Savannah Shipyards, Inc., led operations. The US Maritime Commission took over the Savannah Shipyards, Inc., in January 3, 1942. It then began operating under the Southeastern Shipyards Corporation. This occurred after condemnation proceedings (safety and operational failures) and failing to comply with contracts. The lesson extension includes an article connected to this background.

Teacher Tip: Pre-teach the term “[Hog Islanders](#).” This was slang for ships built in WWI at the Hog Island emergency shipyard in Philadelphia. The ships were used for cargo and troop transport.

Work Begins on \$20,000,000 Ship-Building Plant at Savannah

Huge Track Cleared on Which Navy Units Will Be Built

By Harold Martin, *The Atlanta Constitution*, Sunday, October 26, 1941, p. 20

...W.R. Crowley, president of the Savannah Shipyards, Inc., said here yesterday that the huge new plant east of town—on the site of an old World War shipyard—would lay its first keel on the first of December. The first boat will come off the ways about six months later, and after that, they will be shelling out of there like peas, one every four months probably.

They will be grand ships, too, a long step ahead of the old ‘Hog Islanders’ of World War days. In fact, Mr. Crowley grows quite lyrical when he speaks of them.

They will be all steel, 424 feet long, with a 58-foot beam, and by welding instead of riveting and doing the whole job on the ways, they can be put together in half the time it took to build their Hog Island forefathers.

Well Armed

They will be well armed, with a gun foundation aft which will take a five-inch gun and there will be four heavy machineguns for fighting off dive bombers. They aren’t fighting ships, of course, but cargo carriers which will carry a load of 10,000 tons.

They are, according to Mr. Crowley, sleek, good-looking and comfortable ships, with only four men to a room in the crew quarters instead of eight on the old vessels, and the berths are longer and wider, with softer mattresses. Crew quarters will be in one house amidships, except for the gun crew. They will be located on the poop deck, wherever that is, so they won’t have to chase the length of the deck in heavy weather.

. . .These ships aren't being built, Mr. Crowley says, to rot in the yards somewhere when the war is over. They will last forever, and when the emergency is done, the Maritime Commission sees them as the nucleus of a great American Merchant Marine.

Permanent Plant

Nor does Mr. Crowley expect to see his shipyard melt into the sand and mud along the banks of the Savannah when the war is over. The plant is being built so that it can turn out huge oil tankers after the war. He believes the country will need plenty of tankers then. And the Maritime Commission assures him they will have plenty of work for him for many years to come.

. . . So the whole plant, when through, will be about a 10-million-dollar investment, building at least 25 liberty ships at a cost of approximately \$44,000,000. It will employ about 2,500 people at first, and later around 4,000.

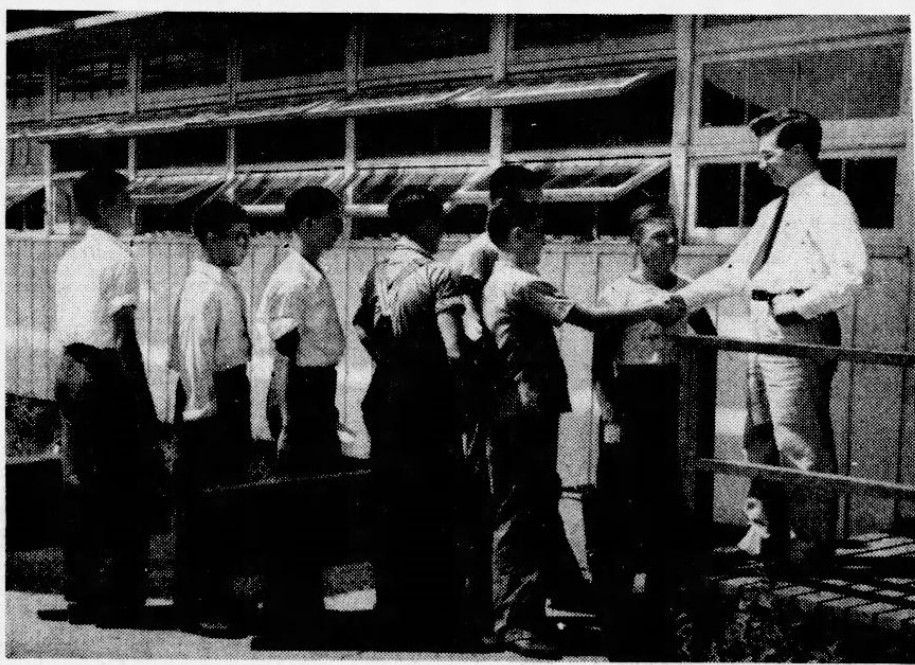
Savannah Shipyards, Inc., of course, is not the only firm building ships down here in the greatest boom of its kind in Savannah's history. Up the river, north of town, the Savannah Machine and Foundry Company, a boat repairing firm, has put up a million-dollar plant. . . Young Mingledorff, a graduate of Georgia Tech in 1936, estimates that his plant, when running full blast, will put about 1,900 people to work, and the total cost of the nine sweepers will be around 15 or 16 million dollars.

The Mingledorff establishment is also designed as a permanent place, specializing in building smaller craft for the Navy after the war is over . . .

Questions for Reading 1 and Photos

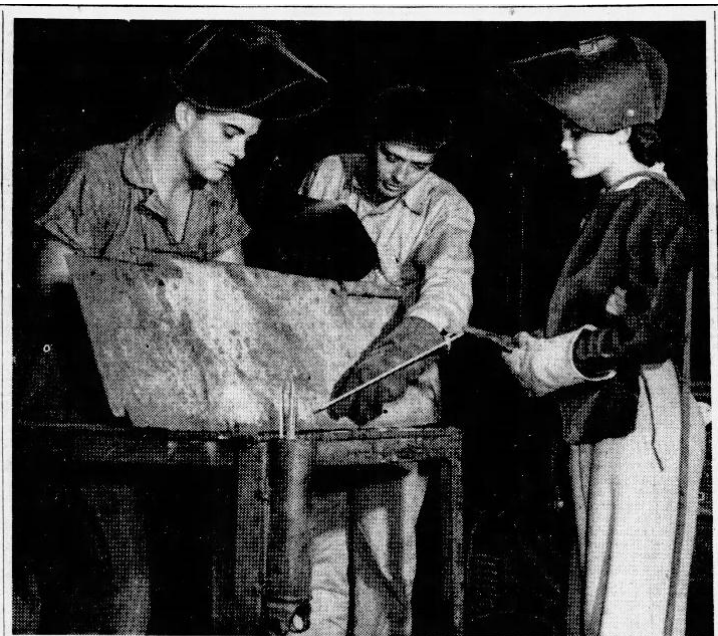
1. Looking at the map in the photo, why was Savannah a prime location for shipyards? Why would Savannah also be a key location for the military and defense efforts?
2. What were some of the key features of the new ships being built at the Savannah Shipyards, as described by Crowley?
3. What were some of the economic and employment impacts from the shipyards in Savannah?
4. Why do you think the shipyard owners and presidents described the purpose and plans for the yards after the war?

Photos



GROUP OF "RECRUITS" ARRIVES AT NATIONAL YOUTH INDUCTION CENTER
Gilbert C. McLemore Welcomes New Arrivals to Savannah NYA Project.

Figure 4: Group of 'Recruits' Arrives at National Youth Induction Center; Gilbert C. McLemore Welcomes New Arrivals to Savannah NYA Project.



SAVANNAH YOUTH CENTER TRAINS WORKERS FOR SOUTHEASTERN SHIPYARDS
Fred Cody Gives Some Final Instruction to Herman Nawhon (left) and Retha Wood.

Figure 5: Savannah Youth Center Trains Workers for Southeastern Shipyards; Fred Cody Gives Some Final Instruction to Herman Nawhon (left) and Retha Wood. (From "2 Georgia Labor Filters Supply Dixie Shipyards," *The Atlanta Journal*, September 20, 1942, p. 14.)

Reading 2: Newspaper Excerpt

2 Georgia Labor Filters Supply Dixie Shipyards

Centers at Savannah and Brunswick Opened to Meet Increasing Demands

By Eulalie McDowell, *The Atlanta Journal*, Sun, Sep 20, 1942, p. 14

Two labor induction centers – war production man power procurement agencies that parallel the Army’s method of funneling men into the armed forces—were established this week in Georgia.

Located at Savannah and Brunswick, the induction centers will meet the increasing demand for trained labor for shipyards in the two cities by making readily available youthful welders, sheet metal workers, riveters—both boys and girls—who can speed ships into service.

The only other labor induction center in the Southeast is at Mobile, Ala., where there also is great demand for shipyard workers.

Draw from Six States

Designed to function as selective service induction points, these two Georgia centers have six states in the Southeast from which to draw workers to answer the urgent calls sent out by shipyards.

Now supplying only the needs of shipbuilders in Georgia, the same sort of service will be extended in months to come when the aircraft industry begins to make its demands on labor with the operation of the Bell bomber plant in Cobb County.

These centers were established and are being operated by the National Youth Administration in co-operation with the War Man Power Commission, United States Employment Service and the shipyards.

This week Savannah shipyards sent out a call for more than 100 welders. Almost simultaneously the demand was met by the NYA, which supplied boys from Florida, Tennessee, South Carolina and Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. How can labor be supplied so quickly? The answer is simple under the induction center plan. . .

Hard Man to Fool

Howard G. Blakesley, operations officer at the Savannah project, is a hard man to fool and no youth gets his okay who can’t get on an assembly line and produce. When he says a boy is ready for the shipyards that boy is ready.

With all tests behind, NYA authorities assist the youth in filling out the job application forms, which are only a formality, since the youth is assured work—and then see him safely through the ropes at the United States Employment Service and thence to the shipyards.

The entire procedure from the time the youth arrives at the center until he goes to work in the shipyard rarely requires more than a week. In many cases the time has been reduced to three days.

‘They just about cleaned us out this week,’ Chester A. May Jr., youth personnel officer at the Savannah NYA center, asserted as he returned from delivering 20 boys to the shipyards.

Next week Mr. May expects to answer calls for workers by supplying possibly 100 girls to the yards.

May Depend on Girls

Girls, in this war, are producing like the men and, should the draft age be lowered, will be the major sources of labor.

The average age of youths who enter these induction centers is ‘about 17,’ according to Gilbert C. McLemore, project manager.

‘The shipyards now say 17 is the golden age,’ Mr. McLemore said. ‘With the draft age now 20, the shipbuilders can look forward to three fruitful years of production before the boys are sent to an Army induction center.’ . . .

Questions for Reading 2

1. What types and ages of workers were being supplied by the induction centers?
Which government agency was involved?
2. According to Gilbert C. McLemore, what was the "golden age" for youths entering the induction centers, and why?
3. What role do you think the induction centers played in addressing labor shortages and maintaining productivity in essential industries during the war?

Reading 3: Newspaper Article

Ocean Broom Factory

The Atlanta Journal, September 10, 1944, p.5

Georgia has one of the few “ocean broom” factories in the country.

Down at the Savannah Machine and Foundry shipyard, the minesweepers that clear the way for invasions and multiple-front openings-up are being put together as fast as the steel can be welded. This shipyard is just now starting on its 21st minesweeper since November 1941. Minesweepers from Savannah have seen service in all three of the invasions making the waters safe for Allied ships and troops in the African, Italian and Normandy landings.

It takes four months to build a minesweeper, and only one minute to blow it to bits. The spearhead of a minesweeper squadron is one of the most dangerous spots of any war. The waters surrounding any probably beachhead are always thoroughly mined—full of the hidden death-traps. Minesweepers may be called upon to stand off shore and protect the landing troops. One of the Savannah-built minesweepers was so close to shore in the invasion of Italy that Germans on the beach were shooting at her. . .

An unaccustomed visitor to the shipyard is likely to be made aware, for the first time, of what a tremendous job it is to build and equip our fighting ships. The great steel shells on the ways are swarming with workers, small and busy against the background of shapely metal – climbing, hammering, welding, painting. There are 3,000 men and women working here, in two 10-hour shifts. They have been awarded the Army-Navy ‘E’ three consecutive times. They cast anxious glances at the gathering clouds in the sky. They don’t want to stop working, and you can’t work in the rain because of the danger of electrocution involved in welding and wiring outdoors.

A minesweeper begins like any other ship – as a blueprint gleam in some engineer’s eye. Each minesweeper is different, you can’t cut them all to the same pattern any more than you can give them all the same name. One may be 180 feet from stem to stern, another 220 feet. But the nursery for them all is the Plate and Angle Shop, where the sheet steel is laid out and cut by the blueprint. This is a great lofty building permeated with the smell of burning metal, where girls and men called angle-smiths work in protective helmets around gas furnaces that are shooting off blue sparks from sheets of steel heated red hot before being shaped as needed. . .

It is after they are delivered to the Navy, too, that the minesweepers get their names. These show imagination . . . But when the shipyard turns them over to the Navy the minesweeper is known simply by the number. The last one to move down the Savannah River was Hull 13. And with her went the hearty hope of the builders that the 13 will bring plenty of bad luck to the Axis.

Questions for Reading 3

1. What were the purpose of minesweepers?
2. How many minesweepers had the Savannah Machine and Foundry shipyard built since November 1941? How did the actions of the workers at the shipyard contribute to the broader war effort? Where had some of these been used?
3. What insights does the text provide into the role of women in wartime industries, particularly in jobs traditionally held by men?
4. How did the actions of the workers at the shipyard contribute to the broader war effort?

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did shipbuilding in Savannah and Chatham County lead to the success of the Allies during World War II?

What were some challenges that had to be overcome in order to meet production demands?

Extensions

1) Canceled Shipyard Contracts and Corruption

Private business and corporation owners made financial gains from wartime contracts and production. In some cases, there was corruption and mismanagement. This was the case with the Savannah Shipbuilding, Inc., who built and led operations at one shipyard until a takeover by the Maritime Commission in January 1942.

The two newspaper excerpts share parts of this story.

Excerpt 1

Note: "Get Quick Rich Wallingford" was a fictional con artist who appeared in stories, a 1907 book, and films. Readers at the time would have been familiar with associating this name with being a con artist, or someone that tricks others into believing something untrue, and often financially benefiting from it.

Conditions at Savannah Yard Held 'Shocking'

Seized Ship Plant to be Tried July 6 For Condemnation

The Atlanta Journal, May 5, 1942, p. 9

. . . Littell said the Government had found that only one of seven executives of Savannah Shipyards, Inc., had had previous experience in shipbuilding, that large fees had been paid for legal counsel in cities all over the country and that outrageous expenses were charged to the Government. He said one such item was \$24,000 for hotels and traveling expenses.

The Government has only begun unraveling the corporate relationships of the Cohen subsidiaries and their maze of finances, he said: Littell described Cohen's activities as dwarfing the legendary 'Get Rich Quick Wallingford.' He said Cohen had run \$5,000 initial capital into a corporation which obtained millions in Government shipbuilding contracts.

'When the Southeastern Shipbuilding Company took over the physical structure of Savannah Shipyards, Inc., in January, shocking conditions were found,' Littell said.

Launching Held Impossible

'Competent engineers reported that no ships could ever have been launched from the shipyards as originally built,' he declared. 'Built at the mouth of the Savannah River, the construction of the ways was incompetent, floors sagged, the mold loft was poorly constructed and the piling did not have sufficient penetration.'

Littell said the yards were built on felled grounds which couldn't support their weight. Defective machinery was found to have been installed, he added, and the floors were built in such a manner that the steel plates could not be fitted on them. The company is asking \$2,187,000 for its property.

Excerpt 2

Shipyards Raps Littell Charges as 'Unfounded'

'Trying to Prejudice Public,' Savannah Plant Counsel Says

The Atlanta Journal, May 6, 1942, p. 16

Answering criticisms against operations of the Savannah Shipyards, Inc., an attorney for the shipyards described as 'unfounded and misleading' statements made by Assistant U.S. Attorney General Normal Littell.

Littell, appearing before Federal Judge A. B. Lovett at a hearing here Monday, said that engineers had reported that 'no ships could ever have been launched from the three ways constructed by the Savannah Shipyards, Inc.'

The shipyards attorney, E. J. Phillips, of Cleveland, Ohio, in a prepared statement Tuesday asserted that if Littell's criticisms were true 'then the Maritime Commission should be investigated' for awarding contracts to the company.

Condemnation proceedings were started against the shipyards after the Maritime Commission cancelled a contract for twelve 10,000 ton ships costing approximately \$1,700,000 each. The commission took physical possession of the yards and charged that the company failed to comply with contract stipulations. The contract was given to another shipbuilding concern. . .

Reflection Questions

- What unethical practices did Littell highlight in his description of Savannah Shipyards, Inc.?
- The shipyards' attorney said, based on this experience, the Maritime Commission should have been investigated for how they were awarding contracts. Do you agree or disagree, and why?

Note: Savannah Shipyards, Inc., was awarded \$1,285,000 as compensation in August 1942 for the yards being taken over by the Maritime Commission.

Lesson 2: Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia, WWII Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with [Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings and photos to contribute to learners' understandings about the presence of Armed Forces in Savannah and Chatham County, by examining the role of Hunter Airfield and the work of service members and civilians there. The lesson includes background reading, excerpt of a unit yearbook, and letters written by a service member temporarily stationed there.

Objectives:

1. Describe the purpose of Hunter Field, and how it expanded and evolved over the war.
2. Identify the role of service members and civilians at Hunter Field and their contributions to Allied Forces successes
3. Compare historical perspectives on service, particularly in primary documents such as letters, to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 6-11 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3
3. *Recommended:* Map of Georgia and/or Savannah, with Hunter Field marked (Hunter Army Airfield is still present today)
4. *Optional:* Extension materials



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did Hunter Army Airfield contribute to the success of the Allied Forces?

Photos



Figure 6: The 1941 postcard says “Army Bombers – America’s First Line of Offense, Savannah Air Base, Savannah, GA.” It shows aviation buildings at Hunter Army Airfield. (Photo courtesy of the City of Savannah Municipal Archives).



By the numbers:

- Beginning in December 1943, Hunter Field concentrated on staging aircraft and crews.
- In 1943, the average monthly output of planes was 200.
- In late spring of 1944, the average was 400 aircraft departing monthly.
- In June 1944, 551 airplanes were processed, which was a record, until January 1945, when 557 were processed.
- From February 1943 to May 1945, over 9,000 aircraft were processed and over 70,000 individual combat crew members passed through the Combat Crew Center at Hunter field.



Quotation to consider:

“Then they sent me finally to a base that was doing something besides teaching. That base was Savannah, Georgia, 3rd Air Force Station, where I had an MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) of an engine specialist . . . We had B-26, B-29, but later, B-25, B-17s, all the

bombers except the B-24. We would get new airplanes from the factory, bring them up to the latest specs, assign a combat crew to them, and they would fly it and take it overseas. So, we would see them for maybe a week at the most, any one crew, and then they were gone. They just kept coming through our base.”

- Leroy F. Burgener, Corporal in the Army Air Force at Hunter Army Airfield (Credit: [Interview from Veterans History Project](#), Library of Congress)



Read to Connect

Reading 1: Background Reading

Note: Much of the information in this reading was researched from a 1945 yearbook publication, "Third Air Force Staging Wing," by the Army and Navy Publishing Company (Baton Rouge, Louisiana). The yearbook is a part of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Collection, National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, digitized by the [Digital Library of Georgia](#).

History of Hunter Field

By Sarah Nestor Lane

Hunter Field was named after Major General Frank O'Driscoll Hunter in May 1940. Hunter was a native of Savannah Georgia, who was a flying ace in World War One and he became Commanding General of the First Air Force. In 1940 the field was worth \$750,000 and contained 4,500-foot runways and one small civilian hangar. The United States Army Air Force took over the field in September 1940 after negotiations between Savannah City officials and the War department. The city, in cooperation with the United States government, added 2,000 acres for expansion, and construction started on October 1, 1940. The project was valued at \$3,000,000 with the construction of over 182 buildings. These buildings included 55 barracks to house 3,500 men, 18 mess halls, 20 warehouses, and 2 hangars in addition to first hangar, and more essential structures. On October 9, 1940 the base began to officially function as an Air Forces installation.

Hunter Field's purpose from October 1940 – February 1943 was to be a training base for light and medium bombardment groups. Over 80 different groups trained at Hunter Field, and many of these units distinguished themselves in battles around the world. Hunter Field continued to expand during this time, and by 1942, the field could accommodate over 100 aircraft and house more than 6,000 personnel. The surrounding area witnessed more construction activity, including the building of barracks and a housing project, mess halls,

theaters, and a service club. One 250-unit housing project required draining eight square miles of swamps and marshlands and constructing a new, large sewage disposal plant.

In February 1943, Hunter Field shifted to staging. Hunter Field had an innovative Staging Maintenance System. This system revolutionized aircraft processing, drawing inspiration from assembly-line methods used in manufacturing. It ensured efficient and timely maintenance of aircraft, with a special focus on minimizing delays and maximizing effectiveness. Hunter Field also had a Combat Crew Center, established as part of this system, which streamlined the processing of crews before their missions. Here, crew members underwent medical examinations, administrative checks, briefings, and outfitting. These staging operations ensured aircraft and crew readiness for overseas missions.

On May 27, 1943, another significant development occurred with the activation of the 762nd [Women's Army Auxiliary Corps \(WAAC\)](#) Post Headquarters Company at Hunter Field. The company started with two officers and 15 enlisted women, and by July 1943, there were 154 women in the company. By 1945 there were about 300 enlisted women and three officers. These women played crucial roles in various capacities, contributing significantly to the field's operations and support services. Women worked in positions at Hunter Field as office clerks, hospital attendants and technicians, librarians, parachute riggers, and more.

African American service members also served at Hunter Field; however, they served in a segregated squadron, Squadron C. The unit supported the staging work, supplies, and maintenance. The US Armed Forces were segregated until [Executive Order 9981](#) in July 1948.

Service members could participate in team sports, and Hunter Field played in the Service-Defense Baseball League in Savannah. Intramural sports included baseball, basketball, boxing, track, volleyball, tennis, and bowling. The base had a swimming pool and a large recreation center by 1945. Watching movies at the base theaters was also a popular activity, along with dances hosted at the service club.

After [Victory in Europe "V-E" day](#), Hunter Field supported "redeployment," which was processing returning service members and aircraft from Europe and the Mediterranean to redeploy. Planes were serviced and then flown back out to combat areas. Crew members went through medical and customs inspections, and other administrative procedures, and then flown by Troop Carrier Command to troop distribution centers for processing.

Questions for Reading 1

1. How did the expansion at Hunter Field reflect the growing needs of the US military? How do you believe this growth affected the local community and economy?
2. What was the purpose of Hunter Field from October 1940 to February 1943, and how did it evolve over time (after February 1943)?
3. How did the 762nd WAAC company support operations at Hunter Airfield?

Photos: Women of Hunter Airfield

Note: These photos were taken by Sgt. Harold J. Hart, member of the 7th Photo Technical Squadron stationed at the 36th Base Headquarters at Hunter Army Airfield. Hart was stationed at the airfield from 1943 to 1945.



Figure 7: Women in defense work and in service (WAAC). Credit: Photos by Harold J. Hart, 1943-1945, the Harold J. Hart Papers, 1942-1945, presented in the Digital Library of Georgia.



Figure 8: Women in defense work and in service (WAAC). Credit: Photos by Harold J. Hart, 1943-1945, the Harold J. Hart Papers, 1942-1945, presented in the Digital Library of Georgia.



Figure 9: Women in defense work and in service (WAAC). Credit: Photos by Harold J. Hart, 1943-1945, the Harold J. Hart Papers, 1942-1945, presented in the Digital Library of Georgia.

Reading 2: Yearbook Excerpt

Note: This excerpt is from page 19 of a 1945 yearbook publication, "Third Air Force Staging Wing," by the Army and Navy Publishing Company (Baton Rouge, Louisiana). The yearbook is a part of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Collection, National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, digitized by the [Digital Library of Georgia](#).

This, briefly, is the story of Hunter Field and its development from a small municipal airport surrounded by scrub pines and marshlands into a large and tremendously energetic military installation geared to a mass production system of processing combat aircraft and crews. Whether as groups squadrons, or individually, the planes and crews which have passed through this field since its inception in the fall of 1940 have seen action in every combat theater throughout the world. Few, if any, AAF installations within the continental United States and of comparable size and age are contributing more proportionately toward the attainment of final victory. Men and women of Hunter Field, both military and civilian, can look with deep feelings of pride and satisfaction upon the records they have established and surpassed. Not only do these records stand alone as ample evidence of their accomplishments, but they are underlined by the many commendations from higher headquarters directed to the personnel of the field and their commanding general. There appears every reason to believe that Hunter Field will continue to lead the way as a staging area and whatever may be its missions in the future it will accomplish then with equal thoroughness and dispatch.

Questions for Reading 2

1. What was Hunter Field originally, and how did it change over time?
2. How did the operations at Hunter Field help the Allied Forces win the war?
3. What predictions were made about the future role of Hunter Field? (Today, Hunter Army Airfield is an active installation for aviation units headquartered at Fort Stewart.)

Reading 3: Letters

December 17, 1943

Note: The movie "Women in Bondage," was a 1943 movie by Monogram Pictures that reenacted the life of German women under the Nazi regime. Zahler describes the movie as "mostly propaganda." Propaganda was used by the media to increase support for the war.



Figure 10: Edward Zahler in uniform. (Credit: Library of Congress)

Dear Lillian,

Well, we've had our first snow-fall in 20 years here in Savannah.

I was at the church party Wed. Night when it started to snow. The girls almost went crazy at the sight of it. Most of them had never seen snow before.

Imagine my surprise this morning when I saw a picture of Silver Creek snow storm in the "Savannah Morning News." I've been there. It's a small town about 20 miles from Buffalo. You just can't keep the towns of a good state out of even a "Rebel" paper. . .

We're having a big party at "Al Ramblers," just us in the "85." It's really going to be a big event. We can stay out all night. This is the third day I hadn't done a thing. I hope I don't gain any more weight. I weigh 146 1/4 now. Or was it 1/2? No, I believe I was right in the first place, 146 1/4. Well no matter (Dear reader, you can tell that this poor writer is entirely out of news. Completely devoid of knowledge.) . . .

Did you see the comedy of two villains, hungry, and then tried to eat each other? Boy, it was good. All at once, the picture shifted to a technicolor of a beautiful sizzling steak, surrounded by French Fried potatoes. Boy, did that look good. Then these words appeared on the screen "There will be a 3 minute pause for drooling." Then, after the Walt Disney picture was completed, these words appeared on the screen - Due to the many requests that has come into the office the last 5 minutes we will again show the steak. Gosh, it was funny. Last night, I saw the movie "The Heat's on," with Mae West. The picture was lousy. "Women in Bondage" was awful good, but mostly propaganda.

Well, Donald [brother in service] hasn't written yet, but maybe he went over by boat. He's a darn good shot, so I don't worry when I think of him in the thick of it.

I shall now close with due formalities.

Before I leave, I remember that comedians on the radio now. She's really good. I don't hear them very often, as I'm usually at a movie, Service Club dance, or down in Savannah. We can go out every night now.

As Ever,

Ed

Write soon again, huh?

December 31, 1943

. . .Well, I finally saw Hunter Field from the air. It's beautiful. I wish I could say the same from a worm's eye view angle. Yeah, angle worm's. We flew over the shipyards. The first

time I ever saw a shipyard, but it was a rare treat seeing those Liberty ships from the air. The scenery all over was beautiful, with the many rivers emptying into the ocean and going back in for another load. You've probably noticed the war news films with views taken from the plane. As we flew along, the sun would glisten on the waves and lakes and follow along the streams. Just like the movies, only everything in techni-color. There was even a few marsh fires which looked as if it was just bombed. . . .

January 7, 1944

. . . I worked on the B-25 today, on the radial engines. Just the work I liked too, so the day went fast. I'm making \$66 per month, with 6.25 for bonds taken out . . . \$7 uniform, and \$25 which is taken out per month and sent home. I think this last is called the "E" allotment. I have \$27 a month to spend, and then have some to spare. . . .

January 9, 1944

. . . I heard some good news yesterday, We won't be going home until the war is over. Does that burn us guys up! It must be fun, being a big shot, sitting behind a desk and giving out orders like that. 3 years is the limit for me, you can count on that. Remember, I was once in limited service, and I can always fall back on that.

Last Sunday night, on way to church, I saw the prettiest sight. Have you ever seen a big swarm of fireflies? It was real dark, and one bush looked like a Christmas tree. There were about 200 of those fireflies, darting here and there around that bush.

No moon out last night. One night, the moon was so bright that the boys were playing cards and writing letters outside. It was about 10 o'clock that night too. . .

January 13, 1944

. . . I know now how true that old story is, 'The Boy who Cried Wolf.' They tell us we are ready to leave again, and even though we quit work on the line and turned in our loop bits and flying suits, we don't believe them. We've been told so many different times that we're shipping that it's getting monotonous. . .

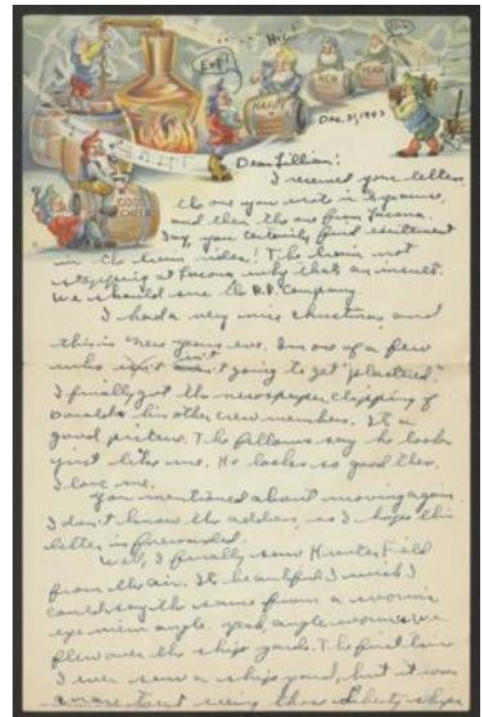


Figure 11: A picture of page 1 of Zahler's December 31, 1943 letter to sister Lillian. (Credit: Library of Congress)

January 24, 1944

. . . At last, I can say we are going to leave. By the time you receive this letter, I'll be miles away from the beautiful state of Georgia.

Thanks for the box of peanuts and candy. I was pretty hungry and so it came just in time. The fellows thought it was some of those cookies, so they flocked around. It didn't last long with them there.

I hope you'll forgive me for writing such a short letter, but I must get back to the barracks. We're leaving some time to-morrow for destination unknown. There is a choice of one out of three, New Orleans, New York, or San Francisco.

Bye for now. Even if I don't write regularly, please continue writing, as I'll be on my way.

With loads of success to a swell sister, I remain,

As Ever,

Ed Zahler

Questions for Reading 3

1. Why does Zahler mention the picture of the snowstorm in Silver Creek in the "Savannah Morning News"? (December 17, 1943)
2. How does Zahler's description of the movies reflect the wartime context? (December 17, 1943)
3. How does Zahler feel about the news of not going home until the war is over? (January 9, 1944)
4. How do details in Zahler's letters about Savannah and time at Hunter Field align to information you learned in the first two readings? How would you describe Zahler's time in Savannah based on the letters?

Lesson Closing

Using details from across the readings and photos, describe the role of Hunter Field and the work done by service members and civilians there.

Answer the essential question: How did Hunter Army Airfield contribute to the success of the Allied Forces?

Extensions

1) “City of Savannah” B-17 Restoration Video by the Mighty Eighth Museum

The Mighty Eighth Museum is in Pooler, Georgia (Chatham County). The “Mighty Eighth” is the nickname for the Eighth Air Force. In January 1942 the Eighth Air Force was formed in Savannah, Georgia, when seven men were assigned from the United States Army Air Corps.

The “City of Savannah” B-17 was the 5,000th processed at Hunter Airfield. [This video](#) shows the different components of the airplane, and its restored version in the museum today.

[More videos](#) and [educational programs](#), including virtual tours, are also offered by the museum.

2) Other Military Service in Chatham County

The City of Savannah Research Library and Municipal Archives has published a resource, [Chatham County Military Service in World War II](#), that can be used to learn more about the service contributions of Chatham County, from local units and installations, to the contributions of local individuals.

Lesson 3: Home Front Civilian Contributions in Savannah and Chatham County, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with [Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson examines three examples of local civilian contributions on the home front: paid industry work at the Savannah Quartermaster Depot, volunteerism within civilian defense, and scrap and salvage drives. The lesson contains newspaper readings and photos. The extension is a case study to consider ethical implications of wartime development.

Objectives:

1. Identify examples of how civilians contributed to the war effort with both paid and volunteer work.
2. Describe the importance of the Savannah Quartermaster Depot in wartime distribution.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on war work and volunteerism to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 12-15 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extension)
3. *Recommended:* Map of Savannah, Georgia to examine the importance of its location for industries and defense



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did civilians, both as paid workers and volunteers, contribute to supporting the war efforts from the home front?

Photos



Figure 12: Two African American women working at the Savannah Quartermaster Depot, 1943. (Credit: National Archives)



Figure 13: "Woman at Work – Women play an important part in the work at the Savannah Quartermaster Depot. They do many jobs formerly reserved for men. Here is one checking a new load of war material. It's part of the job of keeping soldiers supplied." One woman with a clipboard and two African American men moving materials are pictured. From "Savannah Depot Keeps 'Em Supplied for 'Battle to Berlin,'" *The Atlanta Constitution*, April 16, 1943, p. 10.



Figure 14: “Gasoline for the War Front—Five-gallon cans for gasoline are sent out from the Savannah Quartermaster Depot for shipment overseas. The precious fluid is shipped in square cans to save space aboard. Round cans waste space. Official U.S. Army Signal Corps Photos.” From “Savannah Depot Keeps ‘Em Supplied for ‘Battle to Berlin,’” *The Atlanta Constitution*, April 16, 1943, p. 10.



By the numbers:

- By the end of the war, the Savannah Quartermaster Depot was 400 acres and had 709 buildings.
- Approximately 16,000 railroad cars per month were processed there during the war.

[In 1948 the Depot was sold to the state of Georgia for a Georgia Ports Authority shipping terminal.]

- *Savannah Evening Press*, December 20, 1948, and *Savannah Evening Press*, April 10, 1947



Quotation to consider:

“Army Engineers, laying out a new road for a military installation here, found their course cutting through the middle of an old cemetery, apparently forgotten for many years.

Desirous of using the route planned, the engineers compromised with the 38 departed souls whose bodies were buried in the plot by providing them anew cemetery.”

- "Old Cemetery at Savannah Is Moved," August 21, 1942, *Hartwell Sun Newspaper* (Hartwell, Georgia)



Read to Connect

Reading 1: Newspaper Excerpt

Background: The Savannah Quartermaster Depot was also known as the Army Service Forces Depot. A road to the Savannah Quartermaster Depot was developed on the former cemetery of enslaved persons at a former plantation. The remains of 38 people and their markers were moved from the site to a new cemetery, "Rae's Hall Cemetery" to build the depot. When discussing slavery, it is important to [examine the terminology](#) used, such as "enslaved person" rather than slave. This text does not detail the movement of the cemetery. The extension reading can be used to examine this issue more.

Savannah Depot Supplies U.S. Troops World Over

Vast Storage Built on Historic Site of Raes-Hall Cemetery for Slaves

By John Mebane, *The Atlanta Journal*, Friday, April 16, 1943, p.22

The slaves whose bones lie today in the little Raes-Hall Cemetery on the banks of the sleepy Savannah River wouldn't recognize the old plantation now.

For the Raes-Hall plantation, five and one-half miles north of this city, today is the site of the Savannah Quartermaster Depot, where row after row of warehouses are filled to overflowing with vital supplies for the nation's ever-growing Army.

If all the cars of supplies handled by the depot's shipping and receiving section during the period of a year were coupled together they would stretch from this city to Jacksonville. A billion pounds of equipment, supplies and subsistence are handled annually in this busy depot under the command of Colonel Henry Hockwald.

Supply All Troops

Quartermaster supplies shipped from here reach United States troops wherever in the world they are stationed today. In addition to the approximately 1,600 cars which are handled here monthly, about 10,000 L.C.L. and truck shipments are handled each month.

The supplies range from tent pegs to 10-ton laundry trucks, each capable of washing the clothes of 200 soldiers a day.

Out of three depots that originated on the site, the Savannah Quartermaster Depot has emerged. The Savannah C.C.C. Quartermaster Depot and the subsection of the Atlanta Quartermaster Depot were activated June 1, 1941. Just a year later the subsection depot was made a separate depot called the Savannah Quartermaster Depot, and July 1, 1942, the Savannah C.C.C. Quartermaster Depot was inactivated and became a part of the Savannah Quartermaster Depot.

From the Medical Supply Section all types of medical supplies and even complete hospital units are shipped to Army posts, camps and stations in the Fourth Service Command and, when required, to other points as well. Shipments originated at the Quartermaster Supply Section are shipped to various points as well. Shipments originated at the Quartermaster Supply Section are shipped to various points in this country and overseas. All quartermaster supplies, however, are shipped only by direction of the quartermaster general.

[New Storing Plan](#)

Because of the constantly growing need of more space, a new plan of storing stocks in the depot's 41 warehouses is being inaugurated today. All of the stock which can be handled in this manner is being palletized—the cases are not set atop each other, bottom to top, but on wooden pallets so that they may be piled up to the tops of the high warehouse ceilings by the use of fork-lift trucks, thus conserving thousands of valuable feet of storage space.

The depot is growing. More buildings are being erected rapidly. Just completed is a section of the new houses for officers here. Recently several new warehouses owned by the Government have been taken over.

[Takes No Chances](#)

The depot is taking no chances against possible sabotage. The newest addition to the personnel are eight vicious but trained dogs which are now being used to supplement the regular guards. The dogs obtained from [Dogs for Defense, Inc.](#), are housed in especially constructed kennels and to each has been assigned a special trained handler.

A first-rate training program is maintained at the depot for newly commissioned officers in the Quartermaster Corps who are graduated from the Quartermaster School at Camp Lee. In addition to the training, these officers also receive actual experience in the depot's various sections.

Incidentally, the depot has found its recently established newspaper, The Colonel's Journal, a real morale builder. The paper, published each month, concerns itself chiefly with depot activities of interest to the civilian employees.

Questions for Reading 1 and Photos

1. Consider the background and quotation to consider. What are some reasons people might support or oppose the decision to move the cemetery to build the new road? Consider practical concerns, ethics, and moral principles.
2. Examine the photos. How do they show the employment of African American men and women at the Quartermaster Depot, and women taking on roles traditionally done by men?
3. What was the purpose of the Savannah Quartermaster Depot? How did the work there contribute to the war efforts?

Reading 2: Newspaper Article

Background: The excerpt of a message below was sent to all Civilian Defense workers and was shared to all citizens of Georgia in publications. There were increased concerns about [enemies on the home front](#). It was written from Colonel Charles H. Patterson, director of the Georgia Citizens' Defense Committee.

Georgia Seen as Likely Spot for Spies to Land; Defense Director Warns Citizens to Be on Alert

The Atlanta Journal, August 2, 1942, p.2

...Axis subversive activities have been discovered in Georgia. Foreign agents have landed in our state. On the Florida coast, not far from the Georgia-Florida state line, German spies landed from German submarines, were apprehended and are now on trial for their lives before a military commission in Washington, D. C. J. Edgar Hoover, director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, asked the entire nation, within the week, to be on the lookout for three men, identified as expert German saboteurs who, he said, may come to the United States. It is the belief of the undersigned that they will undoubtedly land on the eastern coast and just as likely in Georgia as in any other one of our coastal states. . .

Georgia is the gateway to the deep South. Thousands of new faces are seen arriving and passing through Georgia. At certain seasons of the year, strangers will be seen in our stores, at our filling stations, and at our resorts. Deciding who is an enemy and who is a genuine guest will require quick thinking and accurate judgment. Doubt should be cultivated instead of trust however repugnant it may be to our finer senses. Self protection demands that we ferret out spies and enemy agents.

Georgia has an excellent defense organization. The State Guard and the Civilian Defense Committee have been created by the Governor. A coast defense warning system has been

developed, and an aircraft warning system is in operation. There are over 290,000 volunteers in civilian defense in Georgia. Thousands have been trained in duties essential to defense. An appeal to be on your guard goes with this letter to each of our enrollees and to the public at large. Fisherman, hunters, guides and other sportsmen, who frequent the Georgia coast, are particularly asked to join in an effort to detect and report the presence of submarines, also evidence of refueling. Submarines have taken a heavy toll of our coastal shipping. . .

Questions for Reading 2

1. What event prompted this message to the civilian defense workers and Georgians?
2. What did this printed message encourage civilians to do, and how to act?
3. Savannah and Chatham County, located on the Georgia coast, included important shipyards, Armed Forces assets, and the Depot with war material distribution. Why would civilian defense volunteers be important in this area?

Photo

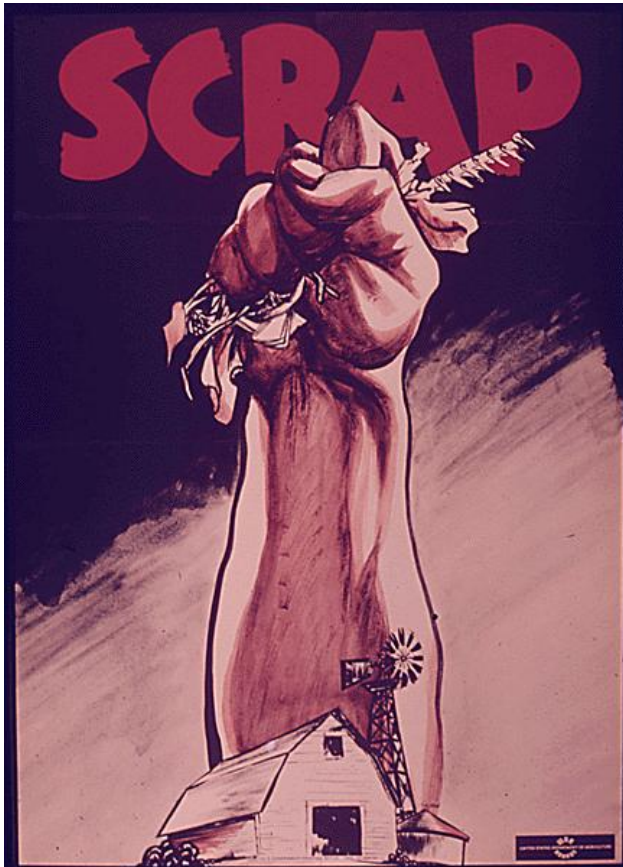


Figure 15: An example of a World War II poster encouraging scrap donations, produced by the United States Department of Agriculture / War Boards. (Credit: National Archives)

Reading 3: Newspaper Article

Teacher Tip: This text describes an example of a [material drive](#). You may wish to discuss other types of materials collected and their purpose during wartime on the home front.

Chatham ‘Scrappers’ Give Fulton, DeKalb Figure to Shoot At

The Atlanta Constitution, October 17, 1942, p. 4

Savannah and Chatham county threw a teeth-rattling challenge at Atlanta yesterday with the announcement that its scrap drive had netted 18,000,000 – yes, eighteen million—pounds of old metal, rubber and rags in the scrap drive.

The two-week total for the coast city and county made the figured in the Fulton and DeKalb county look like a pinpoint in an aluminum dishpan.

Savannah didn’t yell at top voice about its grand collection of scrap, but it should be enough to awaken the people of Atlanta, Fulton and Dekalb counties to the fact they can and should do better than the smaller city.

Hard Work Story.

The story of how Savannah gathered that much scrap is one of hard work. That’s what it takes. . . With a week to go, officials in the newspapers’ drive here were eager to show Savannah and the rest of Georgia just what can be done.

Young, Old Help.

A special story from Savannah on its drive follows:

Savannah, Ga., Oct. 16 – Young and old, from every walk of life, have pitched into the battle for scrap in Savannah and Chatham County and the effectiveness of this all-out cooperation is shown in the announcement of Martin T. Price, chairman of the Savannah-Chatham defense council. That more than 18,000,000 pounds of scrap have been collected in Chatham County since the inauguration of the nationwide newspaper scrap collection about two weeks ago.

The sum measures out about 150 pounds of scrap per capita and, speaking from any viewpoint, that is a real pile of metal. The entire amount of the collection was 18,217,874 pounds as of figures submitted last night from the salvage committee head.

Combined Efforts.

The overwhelming success of this campaign may be attributed largely to the combined efforts of the newspapers and schools of Savannah and Chatham county. Secondly, the

civic clubs, theaters, the county agent and many other organizations started individual drives of their own.

Old safes, antique shotguns, German and American helmets of World War 1, statues, X-ray machines, which had been obsolete for some years, and many other items were among the articles contributed for the drive.

At one theater here, a 'scrap preview' was held with admission by scrap only, a pound of scrap being required for admission. This plan proved to be a great success when a 4-H Club girl, Miss Mercy Hinley, of White Bluff, brought in almost three tons of the salvaged material to win a season pass to the theater, which had been offered to the largest single contributor. Ten tons were collected in six hours.

County Agent Praised.

The work of the county agent, A. J. Nitzschke, who also is a member of the salvage committee in charge of rural collections, was an important factor in the attaining of this high per capita rating. The work of the 4-H clubs under his direction was one of the biggest aids to the scrap collection, as they scoured farmhouses, fields and their own immediate surroundings for the long forsaken materials.

A Savannah bank donated an old safe, which had not been used for over 20 years, but which had been the only vault of the bank at its beginning. Obsolete heating system and a water system, in addition to miscellaneous other fixtures and odds and ends also were gathered from the building. This building was the source of about 25 tons of metal for the scrap drive.

Savannah's ranking as one of the top 30 cities in the scrap collection, classed on the pound-per-person basis, is due to the cooperation of almost every citizen in the county. The citizens are scrap conscious because they have been told over and over the cause of the scrap shortage and the necessity of alleviating this situation at once.

Questions for Reading 3

1. How much scrap did Savannah and Chatham county collect during their scrap drive? Why was this significant compared to other counties?
2. How were youth and youth organizations involved in the scrap drive?
3. What were some creative ways that organizations encouraged people to participate in the scrap drive?
4. Why do you think the citizens of Savannah and Chatham County were motivated to voluntarily contribute to the scrap drive?

Lesson Closing

Using details from across the readings and lesson, answer the essential questions:

- How did civilians, both as paid workers and volunteers, contribute to supporting the war efforts from the home front?
- What other types of home front contributions may have been occurring in Savannah and Chatham County?

Extension

Additional Reading: Rae's Hall Cemetery and the Development of the Savannah Quartermaster Depot

Background: This reading provides more information on the movement of the cemetery to develop roadways to the Savannah Quartermaster Depot, as first addressed with [Reading 1](#). It allows students to use this example as a case study to consider the changing history and purposes of land due to wartime conflicts, and the impact of ongoing discrimination.

Journal Article Excerpt from "Rae's Hall Plantation. Part II"

Savannah Unit, Georgia Writers' Project, Work Projects Administration in Georgia. "RAE'S HALL PLANTATION. Part II." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1943): 1–27.

The site of Irene Mound is now almost level with the bank of the Savannah River. Like the rice fields and cotton lands which the one grass grown and the other covered by railway spurs and industrial activities, now show little of their lost prosperity, the area seems as though no mound had ever risen, mysterious and impressive, above the surrounding low country. In a short time on Rae's Hall there will be left little physical evidence of the history of the land, either of its occupation by Indians in the distant years of antiquity or of its settlement by white planters in the colonial and antebellum period.

The demands of war have brought the storage facilities of the Savannah Warehouse and Compress Company into increased activity. In 1929 the Southeastern Compress and Warehouse Company of Atlanta leased the entire plant under an operating agreement. In 1941, as lessee, the latter company sub-leased approximately two-thirds of the entire warehouse space to various departments of the War Department, principally the Savannah Quartermaster Depot and the Savannah Medical Depot which services all military units in the southeastern division. The rapid expansion of these depots resulted in the purchase of the entire warehousing unit by the United States Government June 24, 1942.

The warehouses, still referred to as "one of the world's largest," are located five miles up the river between the old Brampton Road and Pipemaker's Creek, about one-eighth of a mile east of the Augusta Road known as U.S. Highway No. 17. A number of improvements and expansions have already been made on the property since it was leased by the Government over a year ago and plans are now under way for further expansion.

Among the changes was the moving of an Old Negro burial ground that stood on the route of a proposed road from the Army Quartermaster's Depot to highway 17. Thirty-eight skeletons and aging markers of marble, concrete, and wood were removed to a new site on the river bank, which was enclosed in a rustic fence and given the name Rae's Hall Cemetery. The oldest marked grave was that of a young Negro slave Emily who served the Rae's Hall family during the lavish years of the South's greatest prosperity. Her marble stone reads:

"This Stone is erected by her Master in memory of his faithful servant EMILY who was born in the year 1822 and died 17 Nov. 1844 aged 19 years."

Reflection Questions

How does this case show discrimination and wrongful treatment of [enslaved persons](#)? Consider Emily's gravestone description and the naming of the "new" cemetery.

In what ways might discrimination have affected the planning of the area's development for the Depot?

In your opinion, how do you think wartime development should, or should not, be balanced with the ethics of leaving cemeteries undisturbed?

Lesson 4: Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia: 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 [Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains photographs, two readings, optional media activity, and a culminating mastery project. The first reading shares a review of some of the important contributions of the area to the US and the Allies, and the second reading connects the region to the designation of a Heritage City. There are additional resources, a text and media clip. 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 Savannah and Chatham County 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 locations, businesses, and organizations in Savannah and Chatham County and describe their historical significance
- b. Explain the significance of shipbuilding in Savannah and how this contributed to Allied Forces successes
- c. Summarize the purpose and impact of Hunter Army Airfield in supporting armed forces war efforts from the home front
- d. Describe civilian contributions to the home front war efforts, both in paid work and in volunteerism
- e. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Savannah and Chatham County and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 16-18 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, & media activity link
3. Maps, project materials (as needed)
4. Student graphic organizers (See Figure 19 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 locations, businesses, and organizations in Savannah and Chatham County and describe their historical significance
 - b. Explain the significance of shipbuilding in Savannah and how this contributed to Allied Forces successes
 - c. Summarize the purpose and impact of Hunter Army Airfield in supporting armed forces war efforts from the home front
 - d. Describe civilian contributions to the home front war efforts, both in paid work and in volunteerism
 - e. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Savannah and Chatham County 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 Savannah and Chatham County chosen as an American World War II Heritage City, and what are its similarities and differences to other home front cities?

Photos

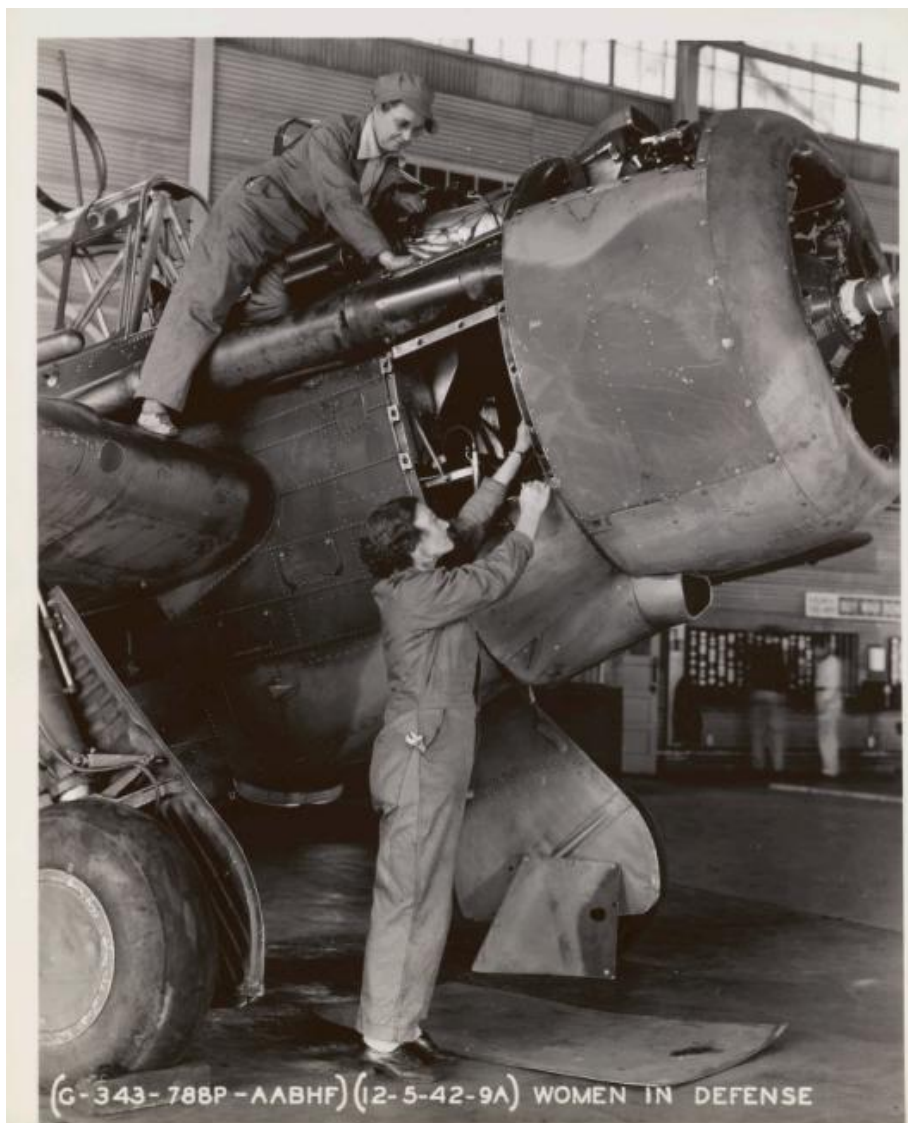



Figure 16: Women in defense. Photo by Harold J. Hart, 1943-1945, the Harold J. Hart Papers, 1942-1945, presented in the Digital Library of Georgia.



Figure 17: "W.A. Jarrell, shipfitter, and Winnie Sue Pritchard, welder, at work on the shell of the newest minesweeper in the yards." From "Ocean Broom Factory," *The Atlanta Journal*, September 10, 1944, p. 5.



Figure 18: Parade in Savannah. Photo by Harold J. Hart, 1943-1945, the Harold J. Hart Papers, 1942-1945, presented in the Digital Library of Georgia.

 **Quotation to consider:**

“Southern states were critical to the war effort during World War II (1941-1945), and none more so than Georgia. Over 300,000 Georgians served in the military, and thousands of civilians worked in rapidly expanding wartime industries. . . . Citizens on the Home Front actively supported the war by doing everything from buying war bonds to working in the two Liberty shipyards located in the state. Job opportunities opened up for women, African Americans and other groups as industries mobilized, requiring tens of thousands of workers.”

- [Georgia World War II Heritage Trail](#)

Reading 1: Contributions of Savannah and Chatham County

Excerpt from: [World War II on the Savannah Waterfront in the American Theater of Operations Wartime Production and Service in Savannah](#)

By the [City of Savannah: Research Library and Municipal Archives \(2008\)](#)

. . . The greater Savannah community was greatly involved in wartime production through the conversion of the Port of Savannah into a military cargo port for Lend-lease goods and the development of wartime industries manufacturing paper, asphalt, naval ships, and much more. Wartime service along the waterfront included citizen soldiers and sailors volunteering in civilian and military organizations, including the Savannah-Chatham County Defense Council and the United States Coast Guard Temporary Reserve’s Volunteer Port Security Force. . .

Savannah was chosen by the Transportation Corps of the War Department, the War Shipping Administration, and the British Ministry of War Transport to help carry the load in supplying Great Britain and its allies with the weapons of war and the necessities of life.” Between spring 1943 and V-E Day in May 1945, shipments to Britain, France, the Mediterranean, and North Africa included tanks, guns, vehicles, ammunition, food, lumber, newsprint, steel, and fabricated bridges. An estimated 200,000 tons of bombs and munitions for British use, 300,000 tons of war equipment (tanks, jeeps, half-tracks, trucks, communication equipment, medical supplies, assault boats, etc.), and 900,000 tons of various Lend-lease goods for rebuilding countries decimated by war (steel, lumber, food, cotton, drugs, etc.) went through Savannah. Altogether over 1.25 million tons of vital supplies went through Savannah ‘in a constant stream of Victory and Liberty ships.’ . .

Questions for Reading 1

1. How did the wartime efforts in Savannah show collaboration between civilian and military organizations?
2. What impact do you think Savannah's involvement in wartime production had on the local community and economy during World War II?
3. How did home front contributions in Savannah support the US and the Allies?
Consider both information from this text and from past lessons.

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 1 and 2, Photos

1. What was the purpose of the bill (H.R. 6118) according to the report?
2. Why do you think Savannah and Chatham County 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?

Review Activities

Text: Contributions of Savannah to World War II

Not all industries and contributions of civilians and service members could be outlined in the series of lessons. Additional reading with photographs can be used within the City of Savannah Research Library and Municipal Archives’ [“World War II on the Savannah Waterfront in the American Theater of Operations; Wartime Production and Service in Savannah.”](#)

Media: “World War II and Savannah Shipyards”

[C-SPAN's video](#) (5:32) Savannah Shipyards shares images and the history of the shipyards, along today’s perspectives. One story is how men were making \$1.20 an hour at the shipyard, and women only 56 cents an hour. A local woman working there fought for income equality.

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 locations, businesses, and organizations in Savannah and Chatham County and describe their historical significance
- b. Explain the significance of shipbuilding in Savannah and how this contributed to Allied Forces successes
- c. Summarize the purpose and impact of Hunter Army Airfield in supporting armed forces war efforts from the home front
- d. Describe civilian contributions to the home front war efforts, both in paid work and in volunteerism

- e. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Savannah and Chatham County 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 Savannah and Chatham County 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: •	
Points		

Figure 19: Single-Point Rubric (Standards; Blank) [Teacher selects priority standards for assessment.] Courtesy of Sarah Nestor Lane

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