

Waterloo, Iowa, WWII Heritage City

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



Figure 1: Aerial photo of John Deere Company factory in Waterloo, Iowa, directly after World War II, approximately 1950
(Photo Courtesy of the Grout Museum District, Waterloo, Iowa)

Introduction

The three lessons, and culminating fourth lesson, support the development of understanding the significance of [Waterloo, Iowa](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). Highlights include defense industries and the increased opportunities for women in work during wartime and women in service. One lesson shares about the home front impacts of the service and sacrifice of the local Sullivan brothers. 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. [War Manufacturing in Waterloo, Iowa, World War II Heritage City \(p. 5\)](#)

- War industries
- Manufacturing
- John Deere Company
- Rath Packing Company
- Women workers
- African Americans

2. [Home Front Experiences and Contributions by Women in Service in Waterloo, Iowa, World War II Heritage City \(p. 16\)](#)

- Women in the armed forces
- Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)
- WAVES
- US Cadet Nurse Corps

3. [The Sullivan Brothers' Legacy and impact on the Home Front in Waterloo, Iowa, World War II Heritage City \(p. 26\)](#)

- Sullivan Brothers
- Armed services
- Home front contributions and morale

- Local history preservation

[4. Waterloo, Iowa: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities \(p. 38\)](#)

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 Iowa Social Studies and literacy standards. Objectives for each lesson, materials, and resources are listed within the lesson.

Time period: World War II

Topics: World War II, women's 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

Iowa Social Studies Standards

The lessons align to and/or contribute to understandings of the **Inquiry Standards** across grade levels, along with the **Reading and Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12**.

The lessons also align to the following content standards:

U.S. History

SS-US.9-12.14. Evaluate the impact of gender roles on economic, political, and social life in the U.S.

S-US.9-12.18. Analyze the effects of urbanization, segregation, and voluntary and forced migration within regions of the U.S. on social, political, and economic structures

SS-US.9-12.20. Analyze the growth of and challenges to U.S. involvement in the world in the post-World War II era.

SS-US.9-12.21. Analyze change, continuity and context across eras and places of study from civil war to modern America.

SS-US.9-12.26. Determine multiple and complex causes and effects of historical events in American history including, but not limited to, the Civil War, World War I and II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

The lesson series was written by Sarah Nestor Lane, an educator and consultant funded by a National Council on Public History's cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.

Lesson 1: War Manufacturing in Waterloo, Iowa, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings and photos to contribute to learners' understandings about wartime production in Waterloo, Iowa. Students will learn about the manufacturing background of the city and the impact of two local manufacturers, John Deere Company and Rath Packing Company. Women were increasingly hired in both factories to fulfill employment demands.

Objectives:

1. Explain the effect of war manufacturing on the population and growth of Waterloo, Iowa.
2. Describe the impact of the John Deere Company and Rath Packing Company and their contributions to the U.S. and the Allied forces.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 2-8 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extensions)
3. *Recommended:* Map of Iowa with Waterloo marked



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did manufacturing and industry in Waterloo contribute to the war effort on the home front?

Photos: John Deere Company



Figure 2: John Deere Battalion members repairing a tank, 1943 (Courtesy of the John Deere Archives)



Figure 3: Women working at the Iowa Transmission Company, July 6, 1944. (Courtesy of the John Deere Archives)



Figure 4: The John Deere “Honor Roll” in Waterloo at the Tractor Works. The sign listed all active employees serving in the war. (Courtesy of the John Deere Archives)



By the numbers:

- Waterloo had over 9,000 workers on the home front line of defense.

Rath Packing Company and John Deere Tractor Company were only two of the city’s manufacturers. More examples include:

- Hinson manufacturing, a textile manufacturer, received a contract from the Army in December 1941 for 100,000 cartridge belts. Employment gaps were filled by retirees, high schoolers, and women. They employed 1,150 workers, and 95% were women in 1943.
- Chamberlain, a munitions manufacturer, was another employer that had 1,500 women employees.



Quotation to consider:

“There were a lot of women working here [at Rath Packing Company]. I mean, they needed a lot of women, but then they hired some women to do men’s jobs also. I guess they weren’t that fussy at that time. I know I was transferred down to bacon, which is where I work now, that first summer, and they had women slicing [traditional male role] in there at the time. . . I’m sure they had women on any job they could get them on.”

- Lucille Bremer, June 2, 1982, [Oral history](#) from Iowa Labor History Oral Project



Read to Connect

Reading 1: Background Reading

Note: This text is revised to meet student reading levels. The original text is from pages 1, 2, and 9 from within the City of Waterloo, Iowa’s [“American World War II Heritage City Program Application”](#) (September 1, 2023). The text is to support students in understanding why Waterloo was an area primed for wartime manufacturing, and its growth, because of the war. Later, in Readings 2 and 3, students will connect to two examples of manufacturing in Waterloo – John Deere Tractor Company and Rath Packing Company.

Waterloo, Iowa: Manufacturing and Growth in Wartime

Waterloo, Iowa, established in 1845, transformed into a hub of commerce and trade. It emerged as a growing industrial force within the northeastern region of Iowa. By the 1920s Waterloo had earned the title of “Factory City.” The city had foundries, engine manufacturing, mills, farm equipment factories, retail, and transportation. It supported agriculture in the northern plains states. The 1920 census counted 36,000 individuals, a tripling of the 1900 count.

By 1940, the city was known as the “industrial capital of Iowa.” It was a still-growing city of 52,000. Although recovering from the Great Depression, population and employment continued to increase. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, many more people in Waterloo began enlisting in the military. The local industries began to hire women to meet employment demands.

The city’s two major employers were John Deere Tractor Company and Rath Packing Company. John Deere manufactured tractors and agricultural equipment. Rath Packing specialized in meat packing. Other businesses supported the supply chain to the major businesses.

To help the United States fight in World War II, factories shifted production to wartime materials. John Deere shifted to supplying the army with tank transmissions and airplane parts. The Rath Packing Company became the country's largest single-unit meatpacking facility. They turned to feeding the troops. Other Waterloo factories produced bombs, munitions, clothing, tents, and other equipment. The manufacturing in Waterloo amounted to many tons of products sent to the Armed Forces. The dollar value today would be in the billions.

Waterloo was a traditional factory city. It succeeded due to several factors. Three major railroad lines located in the city gave it access to major urban areas. Surrounding Waterloo was some of the most productive farmland in the nation. The local workforce included experienced machinists, foundrymen, and engineers. Skilled workers could handle most production problems on site. For example, John Deere tractor engineers solved a weakness in the Sherman tank transmission.

Local managers owned the companies in Waterloo. This allowed for quick decision making. Managers adjusted work schedules, resolved labor challenges, and changed raw material orders. They were able to inspire workers, and later transition to the postwar civilian consumer economy. The success of the war economy depended on factory cities like Waterloo and the companies that filled them.

Questions for Reading 1 and Photos

1. What earned Waterloo the title of "Factory City" by the 1920s? How did these factors impact the city's population?
2. Name two major employers in Waterloo.
3. Describe why Waterloo was a successful city for war manufacturing.

be sturdy and reliable. When war broke out, government regulations limited the production of tractors.

John Deere acquired government contracts to produce Sherman tank transmissions, military tractors, ammunition casings, mobile laundry units, and aircraft parts.

The John Deere Company established the subsidiary Iowa Transmission company. John Deere employed men and women, and both received the same wages. The company hired more women when many men enlisted in the armed services. About 4,500 employees left for the service. John Deere maintained a sign listing all active employees serving in the war, the "John Deere Honor Roll." Women worked every job at John Deere. This included welding, running drill presses, and operating screw machines.

John Deere and the Iowa Transmission Company had an important role in war manufacturing. Consider the following statistics

- John Deere had over 1,000 government contracts from 1941-1943.
- Produced more than \$130 million, or \$2.2 billion in today's standards, in military equipment.
- About 1,000 transmissions and final drive units were made per month at peak production.
- 22,000 transmissions and drive trains were produced during the war.

The Iowa Transmission Company received the Army-Navy Production "E" Award in July 1942. This award was an honor presented by the War Department to encourage and celebrate "Excellence in Production," or "E," for wartime production and mobilization.

The letter from the War Department, Office of the Under Secretary, to the Iowa Transmission Company stated:

"This award symbolizes your country's appreciation of the achievement of every man and woman in the Iowa Transmission Company. Accorded only to those organizations which have shown exceptional performance in fulfilling their tasks, it consists of a flag to be flown above your plant, and a lapel pin which each individual within your organization may wear as a sign of distinguished service to his country."

A magazine insert celebrating the award further stated, "A large percentage of the skilled workmen who build John Deere tractors in time of peace have turned their skill to the making of war machines. Their training and standards of workmanship are standing them in good stead in building the tools of Victory." The ceremony was held in August 1942 in Waterloo.

John Deere also had a unique request from the War Department. They asked the John Deere organization to form a U.S. Army Battalion for service as a maintenance unit. This unit, the John Deere Battalion (303rd Ordnance Battalion) kept mechanized combat equipment in operation. The unit was comprised of nearly 1,000 employees and John Deere dealer employees.

Note: The information in the text was curated from Heritage City supporting documentation, resources from the John Deere Archives, The Grout Museum of History and Science (Waterloo), and additional research.

Questions for Reading 2

1. Examine the photos. How do they connect to your learning in the text?
2. What types of equipment did John Deere manufacture before, and then during, the war?
3. What role did women play in the workforce at John Deere during the war?
4. What award did the Iowa Transmission Company receive in July 1942? How was this significant?
5. Describe the economic and wartime impact of the John Deere Company in Waterloo.

Photos: Rath Packing Company



Figure 6: "Waterloo Packer." A female Rath worker, alongside a male, packing sliced bacon in 1941. (Courtesy of the Iowa Federation of Labor Collection, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City)



Figure 7: Aerial of the Rath Meatpacking Company, as a postcard.



Figure 8: Rath Packing Company buildings; approximately 1937. (Credit: Library of Congress)

Reading 3

Background: This secondary source details the growth, role, and employment at the Rath Packing Company.

The Rath Packing Company

By Sarah Nestor Lane

One of the largest manufacturers in Waterloo, Iowa in World War II was Rath Packing Company. Established in 1891, Rath Packing gained fame for its cured ham and bacon. It soon expanded to process a variety of meats. By the early 1940s, Rath was distributing its products to local, national, and overseas consumers. Rath supplied thousands of butcher shops and grocers.

As the United States entered World War II, Rath Packing secured wartime contracts. This was not the first time Rath had supported the nation's war efforts. Rath supplied meat to the armed forces during World War I. In World War II, Rath increased capacity to supply troops. Rath produced processed meats with extended shelf lives. This was essential for feeding troops, but also civilians at home.

By 1940, Rath's plant in Waterloo had over 130 buildings. They streamlined the meatpacking process from start to finish. In 1941, Rath became the largest single-unit meatpacking facility in the United States. Rath employed over 6,000 workers and was Iowa's second largest employer. (Second only to John Deere.) The workforce continued to grow during and after the war, peaking at almost 9,000 employees by 1956.

Rath Packing had a racially integrated workforce before, during, and after the war. African Americans had migrated to Waterloo seeking job opportunities. The first large migration of African American workers to Waterloo was documented in 1911. The Illinois Central Railroad encouraged African Americans from the South to come to work in Waterloo, and they came, not knowing they were being used as strikebreakers. After the strike, many African American workers retained their positions as white workers left. African Americans in the area faced housing and social challenges from both racial discrimination and from having been strikebreakers. Some left the railroad and began work at Rath. The migration of workers continued in World War II. Workers hoped for economic opportunities and sometimes relied on family connections. However, African Americans often held less desirable roles, such as in foundries and on the kill line.

During the war, Rath faced workforce challenges. Many male employees enlisted in the armed forces. This led to an increase in female workers taking on roles traditionally held by men. The company supported the war effort with visible reminders. Rath had a service flag

displayed. In 1943, there were 1,300 blue stars, representing workers from Rath in the armed forces. Rath placed five gold stars in the middle to honor five brothers, [the Sullivan brothers](#), who had worked at Rath and lost their lives together in the Navy on USS *Juneau*. Rath also had a large, 14-foot neon sign above the Employees Building installed in 1944. The sign displayed the running count of employees serving in the military, 2,689 men and women. It also included the unfortunate count of casualties over time, which was, in total, 76.

Union membership at Rath grew during and after the war. The union advocated for issues like better wages and paid sick leave. Despite the issues, the union honored their no-strike pledge during the war to reflect a commitment to national priorities. After the war labor disputes did arise. Rath also navigated the challenges of transitioning back to civilian production.

The impact of Rath Packing during World War II was profound. The company fulfilled extensive contracts for pork, lamb, veal, and beef. This was approximately \$100,000,000 in wartime procurement, about \$1.7 billion today. During the peak of the war, 27 refrigerated railroad cars left daily with essential food supplies for troops across the country.

Rath Packing Company continued to operate until 1985. The company left behind a legacy of wartime contribution, industrial growth, and economic impact in Waterloo, Iowa.

Note: The information in the text was curated from Heritage City supporting documentation, additional research, and “[Bringin’ Home the Bacon: The Rath Packing Company in Waterloo, 1891-1985](#)” by Rebecca Conard (2010).

Questions for Reading 3

1. What was Rath Packing Company known for before the war?
2. Describe the movement of African American workers, and the challenges they faced in employment. (*The lesson extension may be used to further students’ understandings.*)
3. What was the significance of the displayed neon sign during the war?
4. Explain how Rath Packing Company supported the war effort. Use statistics to support your explanation.

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did manufacturing and industry in Waterloo contribute to the war effort on the home front?

Also Consider: What local impact was seen on employment levels and opportunities?

Extensions

1) Learn About Other Waterloo Contributing Manufacturers

Waterloo had many businesses and companies that contributed to war manufacturing in addition to the John Deere and Rath Packing Companies. Support students in learning about others by sharing the information in “Defense Manufacturing” in Waterloo’s [American World War II Heritage City Program Application](#), pages 7-10.

One option for sharing is to print the pages and cut each example excerpt into slips to distribute to students or student groups, to read and report out the many examples of manufacturing in the area.

2) African American Workforce Migration and Experience in Waterloo: Resources

1. [The oral history of Eddie L. Simmons](#) from the Iowa Labor Oral History Project shares some details about his father’s migration to Waterloo (prior to the war) and his experience growing up in Waterloo. He shares some perspectives on employment at Rath and John Deere, before and during the war. Excerpts may be shared to connect to the information in the lesson’s readings. It is recommended to review and select from pp. 1-11 in the oral history transcript.
2. The newspaper article provided by the State Historical Society of Iowa, ‘[Great Migration Railroad Strike 100 Years Ago Brought an Influx of African-Americans to Waterloo](#),’ shares about the migration of African Americans from the south to Waterloo for employment and opportunities.

Additional Resources

- [Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area](#): Waterloo sites are included in this National Heritage Area, including the John Deere Tractor & Engine Museum.
- [Sullivan Brothers Iowa Veterans Museum](#) (Grout Museum District, Waterloo)

Lesson 2: Home Front Experiences and Contributions by Women in Service in Waterloo, Iowa, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with [Waterloo, Iowa](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings and photos to contribute to learners' understandings about women in service on the home front, in and from Waterloo. The examples in the lesson include the [Women's Army Auxiliary Corps](#) (WAAC), [WAVES](#) (an acronym for Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), and the [U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps](#). The final reading connects to other home front topics, such as war manufacturing and morale.

Objectives:

1. Identify examples of service opportunities for women on the World War II home front.
2. Describe how women in Waterloo served on the home front and contributed to war efforts.
3. Consider how women's service and wartime work might have influenced postwar society.
4. Compare local and historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 9-11 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extension)
3. *Recommended:* Map of Iowa with Waterloo and Cedar Falls marked

Getting Started: Essential Question

What service opportunities were available for women to participate in the war effort in Waterloo, and what impact did their contributions have?

Photos



Figure 9: A newspaper image shows Lieut. Janet Jones, WAAC recruiter, and Mrs. David Lennox, president of the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs, planning for recruitment in Waterloo. December 9, 1942. (Credit: The University of Iowa Libraries)



Figure 10: A newspaper image shows three members of the Women's Army Auxiliary corps pictured in the Waterloo post office building, who were assigned to Waterloo from Fort Des Moines. They are quoted saying, "We're here to stay, for Waterloo girls look good to us—lots of potentialities." (Credit: The University of Iowa Libraries)



By the numbers:

- About 150,000 American women served as a WAAC or WAC in the war
- At Fort Des Moines, Iowa, 72,141 women were trained by the Army between 1942 to 1945
- Approximately 100,000 women served in the Navy WAVES
- 250 WAVES, state guard and civil air patrol members featured a Navy Recruiting Day and parade in Waterloo on August 23, 1943



Quotation to consider:

"Should not women receive the same pay as men if they perform similar jobs? The WAACs are recruited and trained to perform tasks now done by men. Their expenses are the same. They have as much need for recreation. . . . Rep. Edith Nourse Rogers, original sponsor of

the WAACs, has announced that she will seek an adjustment of this inequality. Such an adjustment is a reasonable request.”

- "Raise WAACs Pay," *The Courier*, July 26, 1942, [Iowa Digital Library](#)



Read to Connect

Reading 1: Newspaper Article

We the Women

By Ruth Millett, *The Wichita Beacon* (Kansas), October 23, 1943

There are two ways in which a woman whose family has been her No. 1 interest in life can meet the situation when the war scatters the family and leaves her alone.

She can sit around and feel sorry for herself and figure that since she has given her family to the war effort she has done her share.

Or, she can show the fighting spirit and get-up-and-go of Mrs. Bessie Heers of Waterloo, Iowa, who followed her husband, daughter and two sons into the service on the very day the last remaining member of her family joined the navy.

A woman left alone wouldn't have to join the WACs as did Mrs. Heers, or any of the other uniformed services in order to show the same fighting spirit. She could fill her time with such undisputable worthwhile volunteer work as being a nurses' aide or helping out in a day nursery.

She'd Be Happier

Or, she could get a war job, or go into some kind of work necessary to the welfare of civilians.

It wouldn't matter how she decided to help in the war effort – if only she would decide to devote all of her time and strength to working for the same cause the other members of her family had left home to work for.

Women like Mrs. Heers aren't only playing a real part in winning the war. They are going to be far happier women during the war years than the women who decide to sit the war out.

And, they will have more in common with their daughters, sons, and husbands when the war is over and they are again homemakers.

Questions for Reading 1 and Photos

1. What did Mrs. Bessie Heers do when her family joined the service?
2. How did the author describe women who participate in the war effort versus those who did not?
3. What is the author's purpose in sharing the choices available to women during the war, and how does this shape the portrayal of women like Mrs. Bessie Heers?
4. How does the author describe postwar employment for women? Do you think this was a common belief at the time? Why or why not?

Reading 2: Newspaper Article

Cadet nurses to be trained here; First class forming

Courier, Waterloo Iowa Jan. 17, 1944

Those gray and red uniforms of the [Cadet Nurse's corps](#) are coming to Waterloo.

Such was the prospect Monday as 13 young women enrolled in the first government-financed Cadet Nurse's training program at Allen Memorial hospital, where the Lutheran school of nursing has its headquarters here.

Formal approval of the hospital as a training center for the Cadet Nurse's corps was announced to Miss Sadie W. Holm, superintendent of nurses, in a telegram from the surgeon general's office of the United States Public Health Service, Washington, D.C.

Application for membership in the United States cadet nurse corps was filed with the Public Health Service on September 29, 1943.

Indian is Member

In the first 13 students enrolling Monday was Miss Emily Water, of Pine Ridge, S.D., a full-blooded Sioux Indian. Others reporting for duty were: Lillian Bruhn, 135 Whitney road, Waterloo; Annabelle Lund, Route 2, Waterloo . . . Students enrolled in the present two classes of nursing at Allen Memorial are also eligible for enlistment in the U.S cadet corps and many of the 42 students have expressed their desire to become members, Miss Holm said.

'The cadet nursing corps has been made possible by congress as a means of giving professional nursing training,' she explained. 'Acceptance for training in the corps is considered a privilege as well as an opportunity, as you not only serve your country, but secure your future by joining the nursing profession.'

Is for Duration

‘If you are accepted in the U.S. cadet nurse corps, you promise to engage in essential nursing throughout the war.’ Miss Holm said. ‘A student may choose either civilian or military service and receive full training which meets the requirements of graduation in an accredited school of nursing under the Bolton act.’

Under the arrangement, Miss Holm pointed out, complete tuition and fees will be paid and school uniforms, room, board and laundry will be provided. Students will receive a monthly stipend of \$15 for the first nine months, \$20 for the next 21 months and \$30 for the remaining months until graduation. Those graduating are then eligible to become registered nurses.

Women and girls 18 to 35 years old, in good health, may enroll.

Questions for Reading 2

1. Why may the author highlight diverse and local nursing students?
2. How were women eligible for the Cadet Nurse’s Corps? What benefits did they receive?
3. How do you think the Cadet Nurse’s Corps program impacted the nursing profession in the long term, considering both wartime needs and future careers?

Photo



Figure 11: “Waves Help Rescue Crop here.” A newspaper image shows WAVES working at Prosperity Farms, east of Waterloo. 75 WAVES worked there that day; the previous week over 200 WAVES assisted at the farm, sent from Cedar Falls. May 21, 1944. (Credit: The University of Iowa Libraries)

Reading 3: Newspaper Article

Background: The [WAVES](#) in the text were stationed in Cedar Falls, Iowa, and had high participation in events, service, and recruitment in Waterloo, Iowa. The WAVES social headquarters was at the YWCA in Waterloo. Assisted by the USO council, they held dances and entertainment every Saturday (shared in the Des Moines Morning Register, Dec. 26, 1942). WAVES also participated in Waterloo victory events and war efforts support, such as the example in this reading, and helping at local farms.

Teacher Tip: This text shares examples of war industry and manufacturing that can be connected to [the first lesson in the Waterloo series](#). The reading can be used to illustrate overlapping categories on the home front: women in service, war manufacturing, and morale/education efforts.

WAVE Chorus Helps to Open Victory Show

Some Products of Waterloo Plants Included; Will Last Thru Monday
Courier (Waterloo, Iowa), July 18, 1943

Some idea of what it takes to equip the men behind our guns was shown to Waterloo citizens Saturday night at the opening of the three-day Victory Exposition of smaller war materiel in the Masonic temple.

They saw more than 1,000 items of war goods, ranging from jeeps and 37 millimeter anti-tank guns to 300-pound demolition bombs and the 131 parts that go into a gas mask—including gas masks for horses and dogs.

Several Waterloo manufacturing firms exhibited some of the battle goods they are producing for Uncle Sam and the United Nations.

Jungle Pack

The Hinson Manufacturing company displayed a camouflaged jungle pack, collapsible canvas water bucket, flier's clothing bag, and ski trooper's rucksack.

A collapsible field stretcher cart was shown by the Jerald Sulky company, while 11 links of a steel anchor chain cast by the Harmon foundry, and a tank tread grouser made by the Litchfield Manufacturing company also were on exhibit.

A number of Waterloo's larger war goods factories were not represented.

Boosts Stamp Sales

The Victory Exposition is brought to Waterloo by city retailers as part of national 'Retailers for Victory' month war stamp sale efforts. The show is sponsored by Victory Expositions,

Inc., Indianapolis, Ind., a nonprofit corporation set up by the U.S. war department. Traveling manager of the exposition is Silas A. Smith, superintendent of schools at East Glenn, suburb of Terre Haute, Indiana.

Proceeds above operating costs will go to army emergency relief.

Entertainment at the opening night exhibition included vocal selections by a WAVE choir of 15 voices, directed by Seaman Caroline Brown.

A simulated box shelter, complete with recorded sound effects of an actual London air raid, attracted considerable attention, especially when the shelter attendant announced at the end of the recording: All clear-- no casualties. . . .

Other heavily thronged exhibits were the portable field kitchen with "K" rations, a complete issue of uniform equipment such as is given each man who enters the army, para ski troopers' uniforms and equipment, steps showing the manufacture of shells, and armor plate showing the effects of high explosive shells on quarter inch and three-eighths inch thicknesses.

. . . Radio fans crowded around the "handie-talkie" world's smallest two-way radio developed by the Signal Corps of the US Army. That is used by guards and sentries who are not within voice range but are stationed within two miles from their unit.

Near 5-Meter Band

"Handie-talkies" operate on frequencies assigned from Washington DC, varying from 52 to 65 megacycles, with operation near the 5 meter band. They are powered by special type dry cell batteries. Messages can be intercepted by the enemy but they frequently are in code, and when code is not employed, it is under circumstances where the operations being reported are in progress, so that there is no opportunity for the enemy to take immediate advantage.

Enlarged photographs by the US Army Signal Corps, depicting war materials in combat use, are featured at the exposition, prominently displayed as a message from Lieutenant General Brehon B Somervell, Chief of Supply, U.S. Army.

"In this total war there is no room in America for any bloc. There's no room for a farm bloc, or a labor bloc, or an industrial block or any other kind of bloc except an American bloc."

Questions for Reading 3 and Photos

1. How did WAVES support local agriculture? (Photo)
2. How did the WAVE chorus participate in the victory exposition?

3. What are examples of local war manufacturing? What demonstrations may have enhanced public awareness of the war efforts?
4. How might the Victory Exposition's mix of war goods displays, entertainment, and exhibits have affected public support? How may it have impacted how people viewed the contributions of local industries?

Lesson Closing

Using details from across the readings and lesson:

List and describe opportunities for women to engage in the war effort in and around Waterloo and their impact.

How might women's involvement in the war effort have shaped their roles in postwar society? How may it have shaped women's futures in the Armed Services?

Lesson 3: The Sullivan Brothers' Legacy and impact on the Home Front in Waterloo, Iowa, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with [Waterloo, Iowa](#) designated as an American [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains primary and secondary source readings and media to contribute to learners' understandings about service and sacrifice of local families, and how this inspired home front contributions. The lesson specifically looks at the story of the Sullivan brothers – five brothers who lost their lives together, and whose family campaigned on the home front to encourage others to support the war efforts. The lesson also connects to remembrance and heritage in Waterloo today.

Objectives:

1. Describe how the story of the Sullivan brothers and their family inspired home front contributions in Waterloo and nationwide.
2. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.
3. Share examples of how local communities, such as Waterloo, honor World War II service and preserve local histories.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 12-18 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extension)
3. *Recommended:* Map including Iowa and Solomon Islands (South Pacific)

Getting Started: Essential Question

How did the Sullivan brothers' story of service and sacrifice mobilize and inspire those on the home front?

Photos

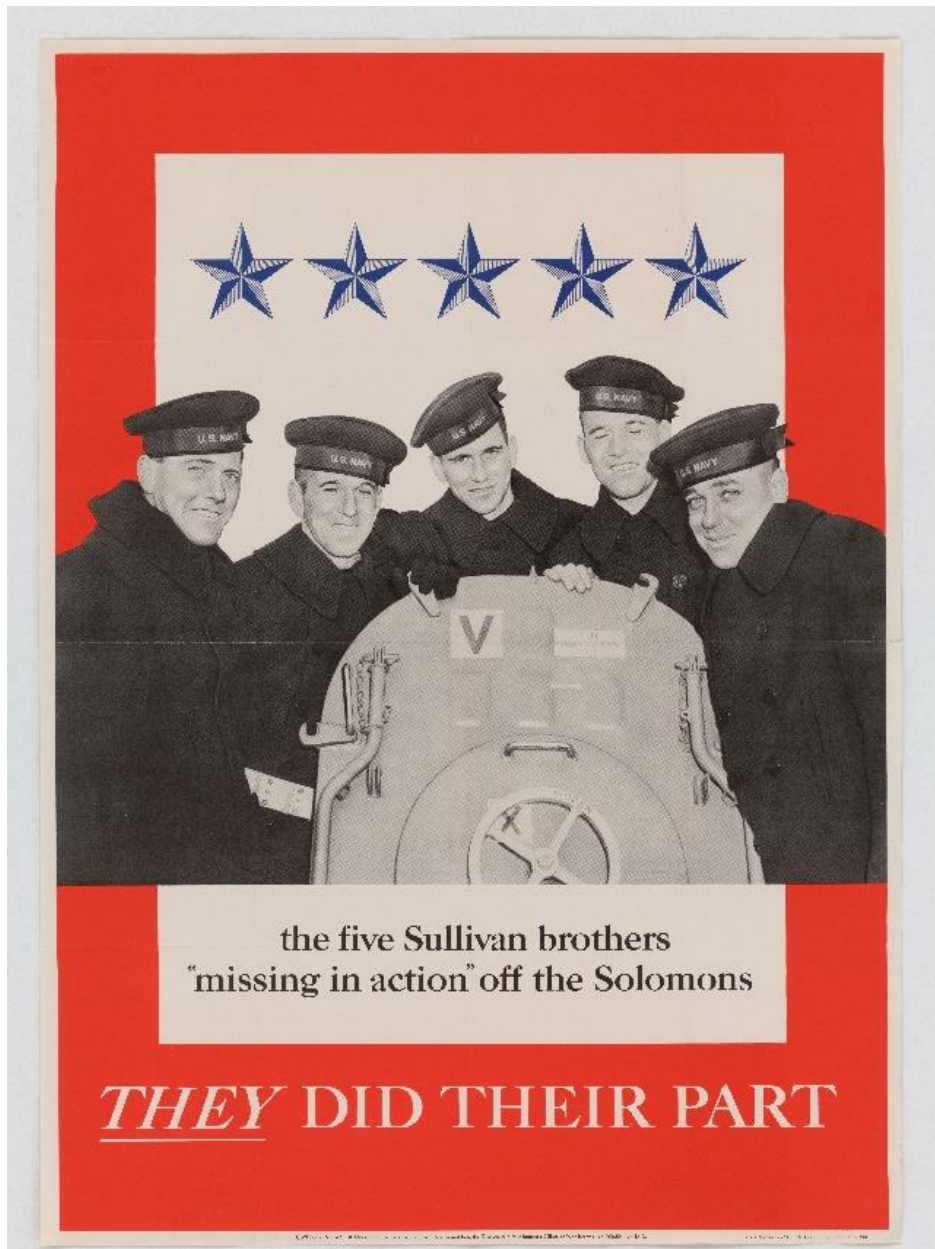


Figure 12: Office of War Information poster: The five Sullivan brothers "missing in action" off the Solomons... They did their part (Credit: National Archives)



Figure 13: The five Sullivan brothers at home (Courtesy of The Grout Museum District)



Figure 14: The Sullivan brothers with heavyweight boxing champion, Jack Dempsey. They were celebrated at his restaurant in New York City. (Courtesy of The Grout Museum District)



Quotation to consider:

“The story of Waterloo in World War II is the story of service and sacrifice. The city maximized its military production capacity, sent soldiers and sailors off to war, and maintained enthusiasm on the Homefront, even in the darkest days of heavy human and material losses. The sacrifices the city made represented the essence of why Americans rose to fight and why they prevailed in a dangerous moment of history. Its heritage should be preserved.”

- August 2023 documentation in Waterloo, Iowa’s [“American World War II Heritage City Program Application.”](#)



Read to Connect

Reading 1: Background Reading

Teacher notes: This reading shares the background of the Sullivan brothers. Reading 2 and the photographs are intended to show how stories such as these were used on the home front to mobilize and inspire action. Reading 3 will share how World War II heritage and stories, such as that of the Sullivan brothers, continue to be preserved and connected to today.

You may also choose to share videos from the extension to share background and the story of the Sullivan brothers.

The Sullivan Brothers and Their Story of Sacrifice

By Sarah Nestor Lane

Stories of service overseas during the war circulated with those on the home front. This kept communities connected to the news and shared the urgency of ending the war. The government used these stories to boost home front efforts, contributions, and enlistments. The military used stories of sacrifice to instill a sense of patriotism. The government and agencies called on civilians to do their part to end the war. Actions included enlistment, working in war manufacturing, volunteering, or buying war bonds.

Waterloo, Iowa, had 8,100 citizens in service over four years. At least 225 did not return from their service. This included the five Sullivan brothers, George, Francis, Joseph, Madison, and Albert Sullivan. The story of the Sullivan brothers of Waterloo, Iowa, was one that became well-known. It is still shared today. The five brothers enlisted in the Navy after

the news of Pearl Harbor. One of their friends, Bill Ball, had died on the USS *Arizona* during the Pearl Harbor attack.

The military capitalized on their family's service. They shared the story of a family of service - five brothers serving - in newsreels and photographs. The Navy wanted family members to split between ships, but the brothers stayed together. The five brothers perished together on the USS *Juneau*. The Japanese torpedoed the ship near Guadalcanal (Solomon Islands, Pacific Ocean). It was the largest single family combat loss in US military history. Almost all their 700 shipmates also perished.

The Office of War Information used the story of the brothers. The government encouraged mobilization, home front contributions, and enlistments. The Sullivan parents spoke across the country. The family visited defense plants to boost morale and share their story. They encouraged others to sacrifice and contribute to ending the war. They also went on a war bond tour. Their daughter, Genevieve, enlisted in the Navy WAVES. She also participated in war bond rallies.

Before enlisting, the Sullivan brothers had worked at the Rath Packing Company in Waterloo. J.W. Rath, the president, wrote a letter of condolence to the Sullivan parents. He "praised the work of the boys at the plant, their heroic sacrifice and expressed sympathy to the parents." The Rath Packing Company added five gold stars to the center of their service flag in honor of the brothers.

Continuing to rally those on the home front, a Hollywood movie, "The Fighting Sullivans," played in theaters across the country. President Franklin D. Roosevelt commissioned a new ship in their memory, the USS *The Sullivans* (DD-537). The brothers' mother, Alleta Sullivan, christened and sponsored it.

The story of the Sullivan brothers resulted in the United States Department of Defense Directive 1315.15. This became known as the "Sole Survivor Policy." This prevented all children in one family from serving in the military at the same time if a sibling had died during military service. This policy was to make sure a family does not lose all their children to war.

Today the Waterloo, Iowa community continues to honor their memory. The city has a Sullivan Brothers Family Memorial, Sullivan Brothers Park, Sullivan Brothers Plaza, and Sullivan Brothers Iowa Veterans Museum. Locals continue to share their story with sailors and visitors as an example of service and sacrifice.

Quotation Source: J.W. Rath letter: "Sullivans Given Two Tributes in Congress Record," Waterloo Sunday Courier, January 17, 1943, p. 1

Questions for Reading 1

1. Why would the enlistment of the five Sullivan brothers be a story shared by the military publicity?
2. Where did the Sullivan brothers work prior to enlisting? (*Note: You can learn more about the manufacturing in Waterloo in [Lesson 1.](#)*)
3. How was the story of the Sullivan brothers' sacrifice used to inspire action on the home front?
4. How did the surviving Sullivan family contribute to home front war efforts?
5. What policy was created as a result of the Sullivan family's story?

Photo



Figure 15: Madison, Alleta, Albert, and baby James Sullivan at home. Kelly Sullivan is the author of reading three, and granddaughter to James. (Courtesy of The Grout Museum District)

Reading 2: Media and Newspaper Article

Note: The following items are presented together to share the perspectives of the parents of the Sullivan brothers and connect to their later advocacy work on the home front. The letter and the broadcast were only a month apart.

Part 1: Media

Alleta Sullivan wrote a letter to the Bureau of Navy Personnel asking for news about her sons in January 1943, as recorded by Alleta's great-granddaughter, Kelly Sullivan. The Sullivans would later receive confirmation of the loss of their sons and receive a condolence letter from President Roosevelt.

Listen to the following letter: [The Sullivan Brothers: Alleta Sullivan's Letter to the Bureau of Naval Personnel from the National Museum of the Pacific War](#) (2:36)

Part 2: Reading

“What Have you Given for War?” Sullivans’ Query

Sister of Five Missing Navy Men Weeps as Parents Broadcast from N.Y.

The Courier, February 1, 1943

‘What have YOU given to win this war?’

That was the challenge issued to the nation Sunday night by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Sullivan, of Waterloo, whose five sons, 20 to 28 years old, have been missing in action with the navy since Nov. 14.

Speaking from New York in a broadcast of ‘We, the People,’ the Sullivans avoided mention of their own great sorrow to appeal for a greater effort toward victory by the people as a whole.

In their 10-minute appearance before the microphone both delivered sincere messages, heard by thousands of Waterloo residents.

‘Today’s Mrs. Bixby’

Mrs. Sullivan, introduced as ‘today’s Mrs. Bixby,’ since she, like Mrs. Bixby of Civil War days, had given five sons for her country, thanked the ‘hundreds and hundreds’ of persons throughout the nation who had sent expressions of sympathy.

She told her audience her five sons went into the navy together, demanded to serve together and were lost together, in the Nov. 14 sinking of the U.S.S. Juneau in the south Pacific, because ‘that was the way they wanted it to be.’

Since it was ‘what the boys would have wanted,’ Mrs. Sullivan said, she and ‘Dad’ were trying hard to ‘keep our chin up, no matter how hard it is.’

“To Make World Better”

She said she knew now her sons, and others in the battles all over the world, were ‘fighting to make this world a better place.’ The brothers always felt, she said, that ‘if you can fight, you ought to.’

Mrs. Sullivan urged all listeners who were qualified to handle war production jobs to pitch in and speed victory.

In his brief talk, the father, an Illinois Central freight conductor, said he and ‘Mom’ were ‘going to miss the boys,’ but observed that Albert, youngest of the five, had left a ‘cute little grandson for us,’ referring to Jimmy, who will be 2 years old on Feb. 13.

Sullivan said he believed the five sons were in the fight to make sure ‘this little kid, and others like him all over the world, would have a decent world to grow up in.’

“All Got to Get In.”

The father declared further:

‘We’ve all got to get into this fight, every one of us. And we feel we have right to ask, ‘what have YOU given to win this war?’”

Tears rolled down the cheeks of Miss Genevieve Sullivan, only sister of the Sullivan boys, as she sat at home here, listening to her mother and father on the radio. With her were Mrs. George Abel, mother of Mrs. Sullivan; and Miss Peggy Ball, Fredericksburg, Ia., whose brother Bill, was killed at Pearl Harbor.

It was Ball’s death that the Sullivan brothers promised they would avenge when they entered the navy Jan. 4, 1942.

Questions for Reading 2

1. *Part 1 (Listening to the letter):* Why did Mrs. Sullivan write to the Bureau of Navy Personnel? What were Mrs. Sullivan’s plans for a ship christening? Describe the tone of the letter.
2. What did Mrs. Sullivan urge others to do?
3. Describe Mr. Sullivan’s stance on the responsibilities of others to contribute to the war.
4. The Sullivans continued to travel and advocate on the home front for war contributions. In another appearance, Mrs. Sullivan’s words were summarized as: “In part, Mrs. Sullivan declared that sacrifices win wars and the worst kind of hoarding is the hoarding of services from a government that needs them.” (*The Daily News*, Feb. 2, 1943)

- a. What do you believe Mrs. Sullivan meant by "sacrifices win wars"?
- b. What effect do you think the Sullivan family's words had on people on the home front during that time?

Photos



Figure 16: Statues of the Sullivan brothers inside of the Sullivan Brothers Iowa Veterans Museum in Waterloo, Iowa. David Marvitz took this photo. His mother used to walk to school with Albert Sullivan; they were good friends and would have graduated together. (Photo Courtesy of David Marvitz)



Figure 17: Alleta Sullivan greets employees at shipyards in Brooklyn, New York, after she had urged them to speed war production. Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan toured war plants to encourage war workers. (Waterloo Sunday Courier, p. 1, February 14, 1943)



Figure 18: One of the signs in Sullivan Brothers Plaza. It highlights Alleta Sullivan on the home front after the loss of her sons, showing the picture from the Waterloo Sunday Courier, February 14, 1943 (Photo Courtesy of David Marvitz)

Reading 3: Letter Excerpts

Background: This letter was included as supporting documentation in Waterloo, Iowa's "American World War II Heritage City Program Application." It is used to highlight the role of preserving history in the local community, how stories of World War II are shared today, and to hear a family perspective on the Sullivan brothers' story. Kelly Sullivan was also the reader of her great-grandmother's letter in part 1 of Reading 2.

By Kelly Sullivan, August 2023

"My name is Kelly Sullivan. I am the granddaughter of Albert Sullivan, one of the five Sullivan brothers who were killed in World War II. I am the proud sponsor of an Aegis Guided Missile destroyer named for my grandfather and his brothers, USS *The Sullivans* DDG 68. . . .

As the ship's sponsor of the USS *The Sullivans* (DDG 68), one of my main jobs is to teach my sailors about the Sullivan brothers and how the community of Waterloo played an important part in World War II. Each year, I have a group of active-duty sailors who get to do what the Navy called a namesake trip. The sailors come to Waterloo to hear the history of the Sullivan brothers and also to hear about all of the other heroes from our community. . . . The best thing about these namesake visits is that the sailors go back to the ship and tell the stories that they learned while visiting Waterloo.

The sailors are actually required to take tests to learn more about the city of Waterloo and how the city played a huge role in World War II, not just with the loss of the Sullivan boys, but also the industry of the city.

The loss of my grandfather and his brothers is known as the greatest loss to one family in a single battle in our country's history. The city of Waterloo does an amazing job of honoring the boys and all of our veterans. For a land locked state, we had many men sign up for the Navy after the boys were killed. The Navy saw it as a wonderful public relations opportunity and made a poster that said they did their part. Waterloo can be credited for a good deal of recruitment during World War II. The movie "The Fighting Sullivans," which was released during World War II, also did a lot to help promote patriotism and support for our American troops.

My great grandparents went on a war bond tour for a whole year after the boys were killed to help support the war effort. My favorite video of my great grandmother is where she says we will continue the fight, as my boys did not die in vain. I have always admired them for their perseverance during their unimaginable loss. . . ."

Questions for Reading 3

1. How does Kelly Sullivan contribute to sharing and preserving local history?
2. What is the purpose of active-duty sailors visiting Waterloo today?
3. How was the story of the Sullivan brothers used on the home front to promote service and sacrifice?
4. How is the story of the Sullivan brothers and their family preserved in local history today?

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did the Sullivan brothers' story of service and sacrifice mobilize and inspire those on the home front?

Also consider: How do communities such as Waterloo honor the heritage and stories of World War II today?

Extension: The Sullivan Brothers in Media

The following videos can be used in part or whole to learn more about the Sullivan brothers.

[The Sullivan Brothers, by Naval History and Heritage](#) (3:36)

[Service and Sacrifice: Remembering the USS Juneau and the 5 Sullivan Brothers, by the Grout Museum of Waterloo](#) (9:06)

[The Sullivan Brothers Sing "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" from the Grout Museum of Waterloo](#) (July 11, 1941; audio only, 0:51)

[The Fighting Sullivans movie from Vintage Classics](#) (1944; 1:52:12, clips could be used)

Additional Resources

[Remembering Waterloo's five Sullivan brothers](#) – A collection of primary sources by the *Cedar Falls-Waterloo Courier*, a local Waterloo newspaper

[Saving Private Ryan: The Real-Life D-Day Back Story](#) – The History Channel shares more information on the background of the "sole-survivor policy," Directive 1315.15 Special Separation Policies for Survivorship, and how it connects to the Sullivan brothers

[Sullivan Brothers Iowa Veterans Museum: Sullivan Brothers exhibit](#) – Learn more about the local exhibit in Waterloo

Lesson 4: Waterloo, Iowa: 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 [Waterloo, Iowa](#) 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 letter that describes home front contributions of Waterloo, Iowa. The second reading connects the region to the designation of a Heritage City. The media activity includes historic radio broadcasts from the home front. 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 Waterloo, Iowa [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 in Waterloo and describe their historical impact to the Allied efforts.
- b. Summarize the contributions of diverse Waterloo civilians and service members to home front wartime efforts, including women in industry and the armed services.
- c. Describe how stories of service and sacrifice were used to mobilize and inspire civilians and service members.
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Waterloo and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 19-21 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, & media activity link
3. Maps, project materials (as needed)
4. Student graphic organizers (See Figure 22 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 in Waterloo and describe their historical impact to the Allied efforts.
 - b. Summarize the contributions of diverse Waterloo civilians and service members to home front wartime efforts, including women in industry and the armed services.
 - c. Describe how stories of service and sacrifice were used to mobilize and inspire civilians and service members.
 - d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Waterloo 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 Waterloo chosen as an American World War II Heritage City, and what are its similarities and differences to other home front cities?

Photos



Figure 19: Rath Packing Company, date unknown, Waterloo, Iowa. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 20: War bond rally in Waterloo on August 3, 1942, with American comedy duo Abbott and Costello. (Courtesy of The Grout Museum District)



Figure 21: "Grow it yourself. Plan a farm garden now." This poster is an example of a wartime poster by the US Dept. Of Agriculture to encourage victory gardens, like those grown in Waterloo. (Credit: Library of Congress)

Quotations to consider:

“Waterloo’s four-year home front battle of production furnished our fighting men and women with billions of supplies. To them, Waterloo sent millions of pounds of meat, thousands of tons of clothing and outdoor housing units, millions of dollars in munition parts, and billions of small and large vehicle parts.”

- City of Waterloo, Iowa’s [“American World War II Heritage City Program Application”](#) (September 1, 2023)

“While my mother taught me to home can vegetables and fruit from our garden, she often spoke of how the victory gardens in Waterloo, Iowa, helped to feed our people while every spare item was prepared for the troops and our Allies who had little food. We continued to have victory gardens from that point on, offering our extra produce to our local food bank to help those in need. I learned of her quitting college to work the night shift at John Deere making tank transmissions. This was because all the able-bodied men who were not farmers had left for the war. My mother's name was Betty, so we affectionately dubbed her

as our hometown "Drill press Betty" with her dark hair and eyes and her sleeves rolled up, she looked like the drill-press Betty image on the WWII war posters.”

- Heidi A. Hultman-Warrington, Colonel (Ret), US Army Nurse Corps, daughter of Evan Hultman (Reading 1). Excerpt from an August 19, 2023 letter within Waterloo, Iowa’s [“American World War II Heritage City Program Application”](#)

Reading 1: Letter Excerpts

Background: This letter was included as supporting documentation in Waterloo, Iowa’s “American World War II Heritage City Program Application. It can be used to summarize and highlight several topics covered in the other three lessons.

By Evan L Hultman, Major General (Ret), US Army, August 19, 2023

Waterloo, Iowa has been my hometown since I was 10 years old when my Swedish and Welsh immigrant parents and grandparents left Albia and moved to Waterloo. I am now 98 years young and remember WWII like it was yesterday.

On that fateful day when Pearl Harbor was attacked, the Japanese military leader was correct when he warned the nation of Japan that they had awakened the sleeping giant. That Sunday morning, our family had just returned from church, seated around the dinner table at my future wife's and her family's log cabin when the radio announcer interrupted the music program and announced, "Pearl Harbor has been bombed." None of us knew at the time where Pearl Harbor was, but we soon found out as our nation and our town, responded to our country's need to defend our land, our people, and freedom from the tyranny of cruel dictatorships both in Europe, northern Africa, and in the Pacific. I was a senior in high school on this fateful day.

Upon graduating from East Waterloo High School, I volunteered to join the US Army at age 17, and spent the next 3 ½ years all over the United States and the occupation of Japan. . .

Back in Waterloo, Iowa, all the citizens - to include the old and young, served in one of the many military-related industries. Waterloo, being the original home of the John Deere Tractor factories that built farm machinery, reprogrammed their production and assembly to make army tank transmissions.

Iowa is one of the breadbasket states in the United States, feeding a great deal of the Allied world in corn and soybeans and hogs and cattle. My wife (Betty) at 19 years paused from attending college at the University of Northern Iowa to work the nightshift making tank transmissions, and by day, her mother and her made sandwiches which they fed to the GIs

on the troop trains as they passed through Waterloo, Iowa, by day. Our entire town participated in this transition to war-time life, feeding the military by day, and working on supporting the military industrial complex by night.

Other Waterloo companies joined the fight to support the war effort. Rath Packing, the largest meat packing company in the world at that time, ratcheted-up production to feed the troops, both at home bases and overseas, with both fresh meat and the meat in canned rations. Waterloo's Chamberlain Manufacturing developed the process and then produced a new, sensitive artillery shell never-before available and was the sole provider of these for the US Army. There were 34 smaller companies in Waterloo that went to war production overnight in switching what their previous 'goods were to wartime materiel to support the war effort. Although similar actions were occurring across America to support the war effort, Waterloo was unique in that our entire town and its manufacturing capabilities, large and small changed overnight to support the war effort.

With John Deere, Rath Packing, and Chamberlain Manufacturing, Waterloo made a herculean effort to support the troops with food, tank transmissions, and the modern artillery shells.

Waterloo, Iowa, is in our nation's heartland. The richest farmland in all the world is located next door in Grundy County, with equally rich black soil here in Waterloo. While our farmers worked on increasing food stores for the Allied world, the people of Waterloo stepped up to the call for what was called victory gardens - to feed the people in their own communities to lessen the burden of taking the food needed for the troops. My mother, grandmother, wife, and mother-in-law all grew huge victory gardens to provide food for family and those less fortunate in the community. These gardens produced tomatoes, corn, beans, cabbage, and other vegetables that they then canned, as well as harvesting apples, cherries, pears, plums, and peaches which they also canned. Waterloo shared, and bartered, and gave to ensure the troops and its people were fed and knew they were cared for. . . .

I have traveled the world, but I always looked forward to my return on each and every occasion to return home to Waterloo. I am proud of our town that supported me, our family, our community, and our nation during WW2 like few other town had. . . .

Questions for Reading 1 and Quotations to Consider

1. Why was hearing the news of Pearl Harbor a profound moment for people at the time, and how did it mark a turning point in history?
2. Major General Hultman is the author of Reading 1. One of the quotations to consider is by his daughter, Colonel Heidi A. Hultman-Warrington. Compare and connect their descriptions of Betty's work and volunteerism.

3. What was the importance of victory gardens in communities such as Waterloo, Iowa?
4. In what ways did the wartime activities in Waterloo show cooperation between local industries and military demands?
5. How did home front contributions in Waterloo 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. Compare the description of the attack of Pearl Harbor in Reading 1, to the description of its importance in the bill. How was this a turning point for the United States?
3. Why do you think Waterloo was designated as a World War II Heritage City? Connect details from the bill and the first reading.
4. Are there other cities you think of when considering home front contributions during wartime? Which, and why?

Media Activity

Waterloo, Iowa: Radio from 1942-1945

The Waterloo local radio station, 1540 KXEL, played a series of radio shows on “Radio’s Golden Age” on the Sundays in May 2024 that shared original recordings of radio from the home front to honor the city’s designation as an American World War II Heritage City. The shows include dramas, comedies, advertisements for businesses, and messages encouraging war work and victory gardens. Stories shared and incorporated current events, such as D-Day, the race riots in Detroit, and a Red Cross campaign.

Audio clips from these recordings, using the time stamps and topics of your choice, can be used to help students connect to and better understand the impact of the war on home front communities, entertainment, and needs. These highlights are from the programming on 1943, played on May 12, 2024, but the rest may be accessed via [1540 KXEL’s Sound Cloud website](#) (search for Radio’s Golden Age: May 5, 12, 19, and 26, 2024).

Hour 1

- Introduction and shares act 1 of an episode of a comedic radio drama, The Aldrich Family, of children’s adventures selling war bonds (1:52-34:42)
- Red Cross Campaign special (39:45 – 53:38)

Hour 2

- Part 1 of a comedy show, Fibber McGee and Molly – an episode about taking in a war worker as an extra roomer (38:34-53:59)

Hour 3

- Part 2 of the comedy episode Fibber McGee and Molly (0:00-14:30)

- Detroit Race Riots coverage (18:22-50:48). [This segment covers sensitive topics, and it is recommended to listen in advance, prior to playing with students. You can [use this lesson](#) to learn more and teach about the Detroit Race Riots.]

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 in Waterloo and describe their historical impact to the Allied efforts.
- b. Summarize the contributions of diverse Waterloo civilians and service members to home front wartime efforts, including women in industry and the armed services.
- c. Describe how stories of service and sacrifice were used to mobilize and inspire civilians and service members.
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of Waterloo 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 Waterloo, Iowa 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 22: Single-Point Rubric (Standards; Blank) [Teacher selects priority standards for assessment.] Courtesy of Sarah Nestor Lane

Acknowledgment

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