THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

WAINWRIGHT SHIPYARD:
THE IMPACT OF A WORLD WAR II
WAR INDUSTRY
ON
PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA

By
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A Dissertation submitted to the
Department of History
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Degree Awarded:
Spring Semester, 1994

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CHAPTER 1

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WAINWRIGHT SHIPYARD

The U.S. Maritime Commission

World War II's beginning created a need for additional cargo ships in large numbers. It also required that these ships be built quickly. This, in turn, necessitated additional shipyards. The Merchant Marine Act of 1936 provided the foundation for such a massive building program. This legislation replaced the Shipping Board with the U.S. Maritime Commission and emphasized the importance of a Merchant Marine to the defense and international commercial development of the United States.¹

The U.S. Maritime Commission began as a New Deal agency with the goal of modernizing the United States fleet of large merchant vessels, ninety percent of which were over twenty years old. The Commission was responsible for regulating the merchant industry. It was also empowered to increase the construction of ships by subsidizing private companies or contracting for the ships directly. Joseph P. Kennedy was the Commission's first chair. Rear Admiral Emory S. Land, a personal friend of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was

were arranged prior to the April 2, 1942, announcement."

The J. A. Jones Construction Company signed an $8,172,102 contract with the U.S. Maritime Commission on April 7, 1942, to build the shipyard. The proposed shipyard included six ways, the inclined tracks where the ship's hull was supported during the final assembly that occurred prior to its launching. Six ways allowed the shipyard to assemble six ships simultaneously. Each way had concrete assembling and welding slabs. The shipyard had sixty-nine buildings, encompassing more than 615,000 square feet. The location provided 4,660 waterfront feet along Dyers Point on St. Andrew Bay."

In April, 1942, Panama City Shipbuilding Corporation filed corporation papers with the Florida Secretary of State, R. A. Gray. The corporation operated as a subsidiary of J. A. Jones Construction Company. The firm opened a local office at Harrison Avenue and First Street in a building previously occupied by the First National Bank."

The announcement of the firm's application for the permit to build the shipyard included provisions for appropriate action by anyone wishing to protest the proposed operation.


""New Ship Firm Incorporated for Work Here," Panama City News-Herald, 6 April 1942."
The community had access to the transportation network necessary to deliver supplies to the shipyard from all parts of the United States. The Atlanta and St. Andrews Bay Railroad had connections with lines serving the East, West, and North. Panama City also had adequate barge line services, with access to necessary river systems.

The abundance of local labor was another advantage of the Panama City location. There were several nearby towns in this West Florida area, such as Graceville, Defuniak Springs and Marianna, with a ready work force. The towns were connected to Panama City by passable roads.

**Wainwright Shipyard's Construction**

Seventy-two acres for the shipyard's site were leased from the Atlanta and St. Andrews Bay Railroad Company for ten years, with a provision to extend the lease for the duration of the plant's operation. The location, on the St. Andrew Bay near the Hathaway Bridge, required the construction of a spur track from the Bay Line track near Harrison Avenue and Fifteenth Street. Permission and materials for that project

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8Evon Brewton (Panama City, Florida), notes written by him and given to Martha E. (Bettie) Ray (Panama City, Florida), (Date unknown).

9Evon Brewton (Panama City, Florida), notes written by him and given to Martha E. (Bettie) Ray (Panama City, Florida), (Date unknown).

10H. Mack Lewis, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 4 June, 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
few years previously. His first recommendation had been Dyers Point in Panama City, Florida. However, the company had selected his second choice, Pascagoula, Mississippi, for their shipyard. Therefore, the Panama City site was still available. Mr. Jones requested Mr. Brewton to update his file on Panama City immediately and contact him when this task was completed. Mr. Brewton contacted Mr. Jones within three days after his return to Panama City. From that point, rapid actions occurred to locate the shipyard in Panama City.

"Raymond Jones...came over, bringing Dave Green with him, and spent two days going over data on all ports. He talked to all the...[railroad and utility] companies, city and county commissioners, and Mr. H. G. Fannin, mayor and president of the local bank. At [the] end of the second day he asked me to take all data on all ports plus the different letters from [the] power company, railroad, Chamber of Commerce and county and city commissioners to Washington. [I was] escorted by his aide Dave Green and presented them [the data] to Admiral Vickery. After three hours of conference, Admiral Vickery gave Green a letter to Raymond A. Jones to proceed with all speed." 7

Mr. Brewton’s notes include the characteristics of Panama City and its location that made it a desirable shipyard location. He described Panama City as:

"built along St. Andrews Bay, a large, deep body of water including East, North and West Bay with a 30’ deep by 500’ wide jettied channel entrance to Gulf of Mexico." Brewton included that "This made it an ideal site for a shipyard -- in a land locked deep harbor which could accommodate hundreds of

7 Evon Brewton (Panama City, Florida), notes written by him and given to Martha E. (Bettie) Ray (Panama City, Florida), (Date unknown).
Port St. Joe, and the Choctawhatchee Bay area. The Panama City News-Herald informed the local residents of this decision April 2, 1942, in an article entitled "Sixty-six Million Dollar Contract Awarded Local Shipbuilders". The J. A. Jones Company wanted to locate the shipyard in its home state, South Carolina. However, the U.S. Maritime Commission insisted on the Panama City location.

Evon Brewton played a major role in having the Wainwright Shipyard located in Panama City, Florida. The Jones Construction Company had a contract to build government housing in Jacksonville, Florida. It hired the Reynolds, Brewton, Smith and Hills firm to assist in this project. Mr. Brewton visited the site to conduct some engineering work. According to Mr. Brewton, Raymond A. Jones,

"called me into his office to read a letter he had received from Admiral Emory Land and another from Admiral Vickery. In these letters they requested he agree to build Liberty Ships to transport war material to war areas. One letter urged him to find a suitable location for a shipyard and report his findings within 30 days."

Mr. Brewton informed Mr. Jones he had sought a port for ship construction for a Birmingham, Alabama, steel company a

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6Evon Brewton (Panama City, Florida), notes written by him and given to Martha E. (Bettie) Ray (Panama City, Florida), (Date unknown).
appointed to replace Kennedy when he resigned in 1937. Commander (later Admiral) Howard Vickery was selected to head the Technical Division, which was responsible for the Commission's building program, in 1940 and became the vice-chair of the Commission. The Commission announced its plan in 1939 to build fifty ships annually for ten years. These ships were to be modern C-class cargo ships. However, President Roosevelt ordered the Commission to build 200 ships in 1940 due to the development of World War II. This goal was impossible to reach using the modern C-class cargo ship design. The Commission sought a simpler design that was faster to produce. The result was an emergency model cargo ship officially referred to as "EC2" but dubbed "Liberty Ship" by the public relations staff. The President ordered 400 ships to be built the following year, 1941.²

Consequently, the Commission approved the construction of nine new shipyards in 1941 to build Liberty Ships. Nine more shipyards were built the following year.³ One of these was the Wainwright Shipyard of Panama City, Florida.

Panama City's Selection

Panama City, Florida, was selected as the site for the Wainwright Shipyard over such competitive sites as Pensacola,


It also indicated each of the Liberty Ships would cost an estimated two million dollars."

In May, 1942, the firm announced U.S. Maritime Commission approval of its suggestion to name the local shipyard after General Jonathan Wainwright "who fell with his men defending Corregidor island in the Philippines." A copy of the letter from his wife, Adele Wainwright, thanking the J. A. Jones Construction Company for honoring her husband in this way appeared on the front page of The Wainwright Liberator on August 22, 1942. She also noted that her son was "the Chief Officer of one of The American South African Line."17

The Wainwright Shipyard was officially dedicated May 22, 1942. The date coincided with the National Maritime Day commemorating the 123rd anniversary of S. S. Savannah's transatlantic crossing -- the first steamship to accomplish this feat. Honored guests for this event included: Major H. M. Clarvoe, representing Tyndall Field; Commander H. R.

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14"Ask Permit to Build Six Ways for Shipyard," Panama City News-Herald, 29 April 1942.

13"Wainwright to Be Honored at Ceremony Here," Panama City News-Herald, 21 May 1942.

16The Wainwright Liberator was a weekly newspaper which, according to its header, was: "Published by the J. A. Jones Construction Company, Inc. for the Builders of Ships for Freedom". Its first issue was published July 25, 1942, and cost five cents. However, beginning with the September 19, 1942, issue, the paper was free.

17This was one of eighty-four general agents that operated freighters for the War Shipping Administration. John Gorley Bunker, Liberty Ships: The Ugly Ducklings of World War II (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1972), 52-53.
Patterson, director of the naval port; Ensign J. A. Alsop, port captain; H. G. Fannin, Panama City Mayor; Albert Pledger, representing the U.S. Maritime Commission's New Orleans office; H. V. Appen, general manager of the shipyard; C. L. Morlsey, the shipyard's resident engineer; and E. G. Overcash, the "Project engineer of J. A. Jones Construction Corporation, builders of the yards." H. P. Sapp, a local attorney, was the guest speaker for the occasion.

J. E. Sirrine and Company was the architect-engineers for Wainwright Shipyard. The project required a relatively complex railroad system to move the steel ship parts to the various parts of the yard. Sam M. Hunter was the company's chief engineer for this contract. "In addition to solving the rail problem he designed the buildings, shipways, craneways, roads, fire-protection, drainage and water system." Wainwright Shipyard buildings were built of wood when possible to save as much steel as possible for the construction of the Liberty Ships. According to Evon Brewton, the Jones Construction Company employed 4,500 to 6,000 men to build the Wainwright Shipyard. Within three


20"Fore and Aft", The Wainwright Liberator, 1 August 1942.

21"Wainwright Yard Built of Wood to Give Ships Steel", Panama City News-Herald, 21 May 1943.
months, "most preliminary engineering, layout and grading was done and warehouses, shops...and railroads throughout the yard were under construction."22 By mid-1942, construction along the water's edge was well underway. The waterway required dredging to insure adequate depth for the ships. Bulkheads, the support walls along the shoreline, were needed. Docks had to be constructed.23

One warehouse was inadequate to store the variety of materials necessary to build and equip the Liberty Ships. The construction of two new warehouses five hundred eighty feet by eighty-five feet was reported in mid-August, 1942. The U.S. Maritime Commission provided the necessary materials to prevent delays.24 "Over 100,000 cubic yards of concrete were poured to construct the shipyard and ways."25

Buildings to accommodate workers' needs also had to be built. The cafeteria, one of the most eagerly awaited buildings, opened in August, 1942. It was built by the company as a non-profit service to the workers. Lunch breaks

22Evon Brewton (Panama City, Florida), notes written by him and given to Martha E. (Bettie) Ray (Panama City, Florida), (Date unknown).

23Evon Brewton (Panama City, Florida), notes written by him and given to Martha E. (Bettie) Ray (Panama City, Florida), (Date unknown).


25Evon Brewton (Panama City, Florida), notes written by him and given to Martha E. (Bettie) Ray (Panama City, Florida), (Date unknown).
were organized in two shifts -- noon for the laborers and 12:30 for the office workers. The dining hall was segregated with seating for 400 in the white dining hall and 100 in the "colored" dining hall. Music was played for the enjoyment of the diners. By September, it was serving 700 meals per day.26

**Equipment**

Attention turned to the arrival of the heavy operating equipment once the buildings were in place. Evon Brewton referred to the variety of heavy equipment necessary to move materials in the shipbuilding operation. The shipyard required "4 or more short length railroad steam locomotive engines...so they could negotiate the necessary tight curves in tracks."27 Cranes capable of handling loads from sixty tons to one hundred tons were needed. Some of these were gantry cranes -- cranes that operated on elevated railroad tracks.28 The *Wainwright Liberator* tracked the delivery of this key equipment in August, 1942. The beams to construct the overhead cranes, capable of moving steel plates weighing up to three tons, arrived by August 15, 1942.29 Seven cranes


27Evon Brewton (Panama City, Florida), notes written by him and given to Martha E. (Bettie) Ray (Panama City, Florida), (Date unknown).

28Evon Brewton (Panama City, Florida), notes written by him and given to Martha E. (Bettie) Ray (Panama City, Florida), (Date unknown).

used to place sections on the shipways were operating. Two gantries were being installed and more were due to arrive. The fabricating shop had two bridge cranes with additional cranes due to arrive. The machine shop had an overhead crane capable of lifting twenty-five tons. However, cranes with a lift of fifty-three to eighty tons had not been delivered.\textsuperscript{39} By late September, 1942, an eighteen-ton locomotive crane and four overhead cranes were in operation. Another eighteen-ton locomotive was due and gantry cranes were being assembled from twelve carloads of parts.\textsuperscript{31}

The shipyard also required equipment to cut the steel into appropriate ship parts. This included a travelgraph, angle furnace, angle and plate shears. This machinery was in operation by mid-August, 1942. The plate furnace was to begin operating within a week. \textquote{The first four platens are functioning and on them 1,200 tons of steel is being processed and a large portion of it will be lifted to the way in finished sections during the coming week.}\textsuperscript{32}

The bending roll was another important acquisition. It arrived in late September and was in operation within three days. This device could bend steel plates with dimensions of

\textsuperscript{30}"Marked Progress on Three Ships Now Being Built," The Wainwright Liberator, 12 September 1942.

\textsuperscript{31}"Big Bender Rolls in Record Time," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 September 1942.

\textsuperscript{32}"Marked Progress on Three Ships Now Being Built," The Wainwright Liberator, 12 September 1942.
one inch by thirty-five feet. Previously, metal had to be transported to other facilities, bent, and returned to Wainwright Shipyard.31

Inspection

Various governmental agencies sent representatives to inspect Wainwright Shipyard shortly after it began operating. L. R. Sanford, regional director of construction for the U.S. Maritime Commission was the first.32 Approximately a week later, William S. Donaldson arrived. Mr. Donaldson was the "Principal [sic] Traveling Ship Inspector of the Merchant Marine Inspection Service, Coast Guard...formerly the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, Department of Commerce."33 Admiral H. L. Vickery, head of the U.S. Maritime Commission's Technical Division, arrived in November. He was accompanied by his secretary, Lt. Webber, and the Regional Director, L. R. Sanford. Admiral Vickery made his visit unannounced, as was custom.34 All three visits ended with favorable reports on the shipyard's progress.

Shipyard Expansion

The shipyard continued to grow as the war continued. The

31"Big Bender Rolls in Record Time," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 September 1942.

32"Regional Director Is Welcome Guest at Wainwright Yard," The Wainwright Liberator, 19 September 1942.

33"Veteran Considers Wainwright Yard Ideal," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 September 1942.

modifications. Despite its official classification, the ship was initially referred to as an "ugly duckling," a name the press borrowed from President Roosevelt's initial reaction when Land showed him the plans. "Admiral, I think this ship will do us very well," President Roosevelt said. "She'll carry a good load. She isn't much to look at, though, is she? A real ugly duckling." Admiral Land referred to the ships as the Liberty Fleet and further attempted to counter this negative image by proposing September 27, 1941, as "Liberty Fleet Day" to coincide with the launching of the first Liberty Ship, Patrick Henry. He undermined this in 1943 when he referred to them as "the expendables" -- a phrase the press quickly adopted.

Design Modification

The Americans modified the British "Ocean" hull design for several reasons. The U.S. Maritime Commission needed a ship that could be produced quickly using mass production techniques. The design had to be as simple as possible because many builders would be new to the shipbuilding

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industry. Steel was scarce; wood was not. Therefore, wood was used for interior items such as furniture, fittings, ceilings, linings and hatch covers. The wooden hatch covers could double as life rafts. Anchor chains were reduced to 240 fathoms from the 300 fathoms in the design. A further decrease to 210 fathoms, divided between two anchor chains, one 135 fathoms and one 75 was later required. Some vessels had only one anchor.

War zone service required greater protection than a peacetime cargo ship. Chain rails were replaced with bulwarks, solid walls to protect people and cargo on deck. Crew members on watch had booths protected by bridge plating rather than canvas wind dodgers. According to Evon Brewton, their slow speed made Liberty Ships "sitting ducks for submarines. So all ships were reinforced by concrete from [the] bottom up to three feet above water line." They were also "fitted with a degouzing [sic] cable around the inside of [the] ship. An anti-magnetic field created by a generator current sent through this cable caused the ship to repel..."
magnetic mines and torpedoes."

Weaponry consisted of two three-inch naval guns and eight twenty millimeter Oerlikon machine guns. The naval guns were placed at the bow and stern of the ship and could be used against U-boat or aircraft attacks. The machine guns were located in shielded tubs along the sides of the ship. Barrels with ingredients to provide a smoke screen were located at the ship's stern.

The war effort demanded ships built to maximize cargo capacity. The decks were steel, rather than wood. Liberty Ships often sailed with full hulls and decks covered with cargo. This required a design modification that replaced the deck camber (arch) between the hatches with a "straight camber from the sides of the hatches to the sides of the ship." The decks had metal "eyes" welded onto them in order to tie down deck cargo. Liberty Ships seemed capable of carrying anything. Examples of the variety and capacity of their cargo include: 2,840 jeeps, 440 light tanks, 230 million rounds of

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9Evon Brewton (Panama City, Florida), notes written by him and given to Martha E. (Bettie) Ray (Panama City, Florida), (Date unknown).


11This device was pointed out to the author by a guide on Jeremiah O'Brien, the last known Liberty Ship on display in San Francisco, California.

rifle ammunition, or 3,440,000 C-rations." Each ship had booms and cranes built into them to load and unload cargo.

A Liberty Ship crew included civilian officers and crewmen, and an Armed Guard. The officers had private rooms but the crewmen and Armed Guard personnel shared rooms. There were separate dining areas for all three groups. These accommodations were in the center of the ship, another modification in the British "Ocean" hull design. The U.S. Maritime Commission preferred this central location for safety reasons for Atlantic Ocean crossings. It also minimized materials for plumbing, heating and outfitting. On the other hand, a civilian crew merited running water in the cabins. The Liberty Ship carried twenty tons of food (an eight month supply) for its sixty-three member crew. The ship's cook had access to "8,500 pounds of meat, 12,500 pounds of vegetables, 6,000 pounds of cereals, 5,000 pounds of dairy products, and 1,500 pounds of fish." A distillation system made sea water drinkable. The ship itself consumed 6,720 gallons of


16 "Liberty Ship Packs Plenty of Food," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 April 1943.

fuel daily at sea and approximately 1,000 to 1,500 in port, depending on whether it was working cargo.\textsuperscript{18}

Welding, rather than riveting was a relatively new concept in shipbuilding. Though used with some ships, welding had not been used for cargo ships with heavy deck loads and wartime conditions. One of the resulting modification mistakes was a square hatch opening, a source of cracks in some ships. A crack in a welded ship could continue indefinitely, with the result that ships could break in two. This was a particular problem in the frigid Arctic waters which made the steel more brittle than usual. In a rivetted ship, the crack ceased once it reached the edge of that sheet of metal. A curved reinforcement strip welded to each corner of the hatch corrected the problem.\textsuperscript{19}

**Liberty Ship Performance**

With these modifications, the British "Ocean" hull design became the American Liberty Ship. The following specific description of the Liberty Ship indicates how standardized a ship this was.

"The standard Liberty was 441 feet 6 inches over all, with a beam of 56 feet, 10 3/4 inches and a loaded draft of 27 feet, 9 1/4 inches. The deadweight tonnage was 10,920, gross tonnage about

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Untitled, The Wainwright Liberator}, 9 September 1944.

\textsuperscript{19}L. A. Sawyer and W. H. Mitchell, \textit{The Liberty Ships}, 2nd ed. (London: Lloyd's of London Press Ltd., 1985), 5. While visiting \textit{Jeremiah O'Brien}, the last known Liberty Ship on display in San Francisco, California, the guide pointed out this corrective device and explained the problem to the author.
7,500, and displacement tonnage 14,257.10 Liberties carried 9,146 tons of cargo with a full load of fuel. It was quite common, however, for them to haul more....

The ship had five holds; three forward of the engine spaces and two aft. Cargo capacity was equal to that of 300 railroad cars....

The Maritime Commission specified a reciprocating [driven by pistons moving up and down in cylinders] steam engine for power, partly because of its simplicity of operation and ease of procurement, and partly because turbines and complicated electrical equipment were slated for warship use.

These three-cylinder 'up-and-down' engines were fed by two oil-burning boilers and produced 2,500 horsepower and a speed of 11 knots with the ship fully loaded, although many engineers were able to get 11.5 knots when boilers and hull were clean and the machinery was in good order.21

Interchangeable parts was an advantage of the standardized design. The ability to exchange parts in foreign ports was particularly beneficial to the ship's operation.22 The uniformity of the Liberty Ship made it possible to make a "new" ship by joining the parts of two ships. After the war Albaro was constructed using the afterpart of Josephine Shaw Lowell, built by Wainwright Shipyard, and the forepart of

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10 The deadweight tonnage was the ship's capacity for cargo, fuel, and stores. The gross tonnage was the ship's cargo capacity, excluding open areas. The displacement tonnage was the amount of water the ship displaced. The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, s.v. "deadweight tonnage," "gross tonnage," "displacement tonnage."


22 "Libertys Carry-on," The Wainwright Liberator, 13 November 1943.
Samdering, built by the New England Shipbuilding Corporation. 23

The ship performed well despite the misgivings of traditional shipbuilders to the mass production concept of the Liberty Ship program. Several articles appeared lauding the ship’s success. One required three days to sink in the South Atlantic after receiving two torpedo hits. 24 The U.S. Maritime Commission sent a congratulatory telegram to the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation with a report of Edgar Allan Poe’s exploits. This ship assisted in sinking a Japanese submarine after having been hit by five-inch and eight-inch shells. After the battle Edgar Allan Poe was towed to port. The crew prevented damage to the cargo by plugging the holes with bedding. In response to criticism of the welded construction, the telegram noted: “This was made possible by welded construction, which confined the shell holes to the immediate points of contact. Riveted plates would have torn apart under the strain, causing openings too large for temporary plugging.” 25 George Ade, built by the Wainwright Shipyard, returned to service after surviving torpedo damage


and a hurricane in one trip. Only one of the seventy-four Liberty Ships built at the Wainwright shipyard was lost during World War II. *John Bagcom* was sunk December 2, 1943, by a German air attack while docked in Bari Harbor, Italy.

**Production Process**

Prefabrication and preassembly were the key elements of the mass production process used by Liberty shipyards. The vast majority of the 250,000 pieces that went into a Liberty Ship were prefabricated (pre-shaped) and preassembled into approximately one hundred sections to assemble on the ways. The last two hundred pieces were added at the outfitting dock, an area where workers added equipment to the ship after its launching. This process minimized the length of time the ships were in the ways.

Uniformity was critical to the Liberty Ship's successful construction. The mold loft department's work was critical to the achievement of this goal. It built a complete full scale model ship. The department developed a pattern from each part of this model. The pattern pieces were called templates.

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26"Our George Ade Survives Sub Attack, Storm," The Wainwright Liberator, 4 November 1944.


28Charles Wollenberg, Marinship at War, Shipbuilding and Social Change in Wartime Sausalito (Berkeley, California: Western Heritage Press, 1990), 28.

Each modification of the Liberty Ship design required the mold loft to develop new templates.

The lay-out department cut out the various parts of the ship using the templates developed by the mold loft. This department also wrote instructions on each piece for further processing. Earl Boone, who worked in this department at the Wainwright Shipyard, explained the process: "The crane would lay four plates of steel on a table. The travelgraph, itself consisted of a torch to each plate of steel." The travelgraph operator traced around the template with the machine's pointer. This directed each torch controlled by the travelgraph to cut along a plate of steel. "There were burners who tended to the steel being laid right and burned properly. When the pointer had completely followed the pattern, they had cut out port and starboard bottom plates for two hulls."*

The fabrication shop bent the steel into the necessary shapes. Some pieces were as large as one thousand feet by one hundred eighty feet. The major pieces of the ship were then assembled by tacking (temporary spot welding) and finally by solid welding. Wainwright Shipyard required two hundred tons of steel daily to maintain the schedule established by the

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*Earl Boone, interview by Peggy D. Felt, 9 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

**Earl Boone, interview by Peggy D. Felt, 9 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
Use of welding, rather than riveting, was a major departure from traditional shipbuilding methods. The welded technique saved time, steel, and personnel. Still, old shipbuilders as well as insurance companies questioned the wisdom of this technique. Nevertheless, welding created a smoother, lighter ship, unlike the ships built two decades earlier. According to a War Production Board statement, "Welding saves 845,000 rivets and 1,790,000 holes." Over 152,000 feet of welding could be done in an assembly line type setting before the building process moved to the ways. These welders used portable welding equipment.

The shipyard assembly line required cranes (rather than conveyors) to move the heavy metal pieces along the production process. The first keel section placed on the ways at Wainwright weighed sixty-three tons and was approximately ninety-seven feet long.

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32"Construction Starts on Liberty Ships," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 August 1942.


36"Section of First Ships Is Safely Placed on Ways," The Wainwright Liberator, 22 August 1942.
The ship’s launching was a shipyard tradition even the war crisis could not eliminate. The U.S. Maritime Commission attempted to discontinue this practice as a waste of time and manpower, especially considering the speed of Liberty Ship production. However, tradition prevailed over such practical considerations. In October, 1942, the Commission announced launchings would resume. At the launching, the ship was "christened" with the name assigned by the U.S. Maritime Commission. The Commission used names of deceased Americans it considered noteworthy. A shipyard’s first launching was always an historic event. This was true of E. Kirby Smith, Wainwright Shipyard’s first ship. Mrs. Raymond A. Jones had the privilege of sponsoring the ship, christening it with the traditional bottle of champagne. The Coastal Defense honored the occasion with planes that “circled and dipped and flew upside down in salute and finally dropped a wreath, suspended by a tiny parachute, which floated down but caught in a gust of wind and missed the deck by inches.” U.S. Senator Claude Pepper was the scheduled guest speaker but his plane was delayed. After waiting twenty-two minutes, the launching proceeded at 11:50 without him. He arrived in time to make a

37 "Launching Tradition Not to Be Abolished," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 October 1942.


brief speech at the luncheon following the launching. The formal launching was generally a brief affair that involved an hour or less. However, the behind-the-scenes preparation to insure the ship began its graceful slide down the ways at the precise moment the sponsor christened it required hours of preparation as evidenced by the following program for the first launching:

7:30 A.M. - Start removal of Tallow Strips inside and out.
7:30 A.M. - Start removal and racking of Grease Irons.
STAND BY FOR WEDGE DRIVING - Three men per ramp at their proper stations
8:10 A.M. - First Rally.
8:20 A.M. - Second Rally.
8:20 A.M. - commence Creep Gauge Readings
8:30 A.M. - Removal of Ramp Rails and temporary spreaders for Wedge Rider.
8:30 A.M. - Remove all Shores inside of Launchways.
9:25 A.M. - Remove alternate Keel Blocks and all Keel Blocks Aft. of Fr. 156.
10:00 A.M. - Remove all collapsible Keel Blocks except No. 8 which will be marked.
10:30 A.M. - Remove all collapsible Bilge Blocks 10 Sets per side.
11:00 A.M. - Remove all collapsible Keel Blocks.
11:15 A.M. - Mr. Lindsay and Mr. Hughes go under ship inboard and outboard of launchways to see that everything is clear.
11:27 A.M. - Drop Dog shores and signal from Forward.
11:29 A.M. - When all clear signal is given, start to Burn off.'

Senator Pepper's tardiness undoubtedly caused a nightmare for those responsible for the launching. Launchings became routine in the shipyard but the tradition was maintained.

40"Plane Delays Honor Guest and Launching," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 January 1943.

41"Launching Is Precisely Timed," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 January 1943.
E. Kirby Smith's launching was celebrated by hair cuts and shaves for two hundred forty members of the Hull Number One crew at Wainwright Shipyard. This group sought a personal incentive to work toward completing a ship for launching by the end of the year. Thanksgiving Day, 1942, "each pledged to remain unshaven and unshorn until the day the first ship should slide down the ways."^2

The launching did not signify the completion of the ship; the ship was launched when the hull was complete and the ship would float. It still had to go to the wet basin, or outfitting dock, to complete the interior."^3 The shipyards built the hull of the ship only. The remainder of the ship consisted of parts provided by subcontractors. These included "a three cylinder reciprocating engine; the propeller shaft, watertube boilers, condenser, a steering engine, anchors, propellers, antiaircraft guns, generators, steam pumps, booms, winches, fans, beds, ventilators, hatch covers, life boats, lockers, furniture, galley equipment, wiring and pipe, and valves. The standard Liberty Ship required 3,425 tons of hull steel, 2,725 tons of plate, and 700 tons of shapes, which

^2"240 Shipyard Workers Visit Barber Shops at Same Time," Panama City News-Herald, 1 January 1943.

^3Earl Boone, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 9 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
included 50,000 castings." The ship had 1.5 million square feet of surface (inside and out) to paint. Some surfaces required more than one coat."

The ship was taken on a trial run when it was completed. The U.S. Maritime Commission inspected the hull, machinery and electrical work. A Navy representative inspected the gun placement. The U.S. Maritime Commission accepted delivery of the ship when it passed its inspection. The Commission immediately delivered it to a shipping company to operate on the government’s behalf. The Waterman Steamship Company in Mobile, Alabama, operated most of the ships built by Wainwright Shipyard."

**Use of Shipyards New to Shipbuilding**

Companies new to shipbuilding could successfully construct the Liberty Ship because of its simple design. Only five of the eighteen firms involved in producing Liberty Ships by the end of World War II were operated by established shipbuilding firms. Even then, the shipyards were sometimes


"Earl Boone, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 9 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

"Renell Poston, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida."
newly built and located far from the established parent company. The American Shipbuilding Company, with headquarters in the Great Lakes area, operated the Delta Shipbuilding Company, located in New Orleans, Louisiana. The J. A. Jones Construction Company was one of the firms new to shipbuilding. It entered this industry at the U.S. Maritime Commission’s request. The Commission also asked the Jones Construction Company to take over the Brunswick, Georgia, shipyard when the original operators could not produce. Some suggested the use of new firms was, perhaps, beneficial because these nontraditional shipbuilders were willing to try nontraditional building methods, such as prefabrication, welding, and assembly line techniques. It was fitting that businesses new to shipbuilding were in charge of workers new to industry.  

**Productivity at Wainwright Shipyard**

Speed of construction was a major consideration in selecting the Liberty Ship design. Therefore, the contractors received rigidly uniform specifications, which made it possible to minimize construction time. The ten shipyards producing Liberty Ships in 1942 decreased their average production time from 108.4 days per ship in July to 82.89 days.

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per ship in August. Typically, a shipyard’s production time decreased significantly within its first year. This resulted from increasing experience and because many yards began construction partially equipped.

The Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation took 253 days to build its first ship, Meriwether Lewis, and 46 days to build its thirty-ninth ship, Thomas Baily Aldrich. The latter was scrapped in Panama City in 1968. Wainwright Shipyard’s first ship, E. Kirby Smith, required 174 days from the laying of its keel on July 9, 1942, to its launching December 30, 1942. Seven months later, the yard’s thirteenth hull, Robert Lansing required only 44 days.

In the first several months of its operation lack of heavy equipment handicapped the Wainwright Shipyard. The shipyard began operation as soon as possible and simply improvised until the remaining machinery arrived. Therefore, early productivity reports dealt with weekly and to-date tonnage of steel received, fabricated, sub-assembled, and

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50“Continue to Reduce Shipbuilding Time,” The Wainwright Liberator, 26 September 1942.


erected. By August, 1942, the shipyard had fabricated one hundred sixty-two tons despite the lack of machinery.\textsuperscript{55} The standardized nature of the design was indicated by progress reports that "sequences one to four are in place" [on way A]; and "sequences one, two and three have been fitted and are now being welded" [on way B].\textsuperscript{56} Reports on welding were in feet per week -- 43,000 feet were welded the week of September 26, 1942.\textsuperscript{57} This increased to 228,000 feet for the week ending April 25, 1943.\textsuperscript{58} A month later, this record was broken with 229,778.5 feet welded for the week ending May 23, despite two rainy days.\textsuperscript{59}

The U.S. Maritime Commission measured a shipyard's productivity in four ways:

1. the number of ships per shipway per year;
2. the average days from keel laying to delivery;
3. the shortest time from one ship keel laying to delivery;
4. the shortest time from contract [of the shipyard] to keel laying\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{55}"Old Timer Fabricates Steel the Hard Way," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 August 1942.

\textsuperscript{56}"Shipbuilding Tempo Being Stepped Up," The Wainwright Liberator, 29 August 1942.

\textsuperscript{57}"Ship Construction Being Accelerated Throughout Yard," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 September 1942.

\textsuperscript{58}"Shipyard Welders in High Record," Panama City News-Herald, 2 May 1943.

\textsuperscript{59}"Ship Welders Shatter Records," Panama City News-Herald, 30 May 1943.

\textsuperscript{60}Kennedy, William M., "Wainwright Yard in First Position," The Wainwright Liberator, 24 October 1942.
The Wainwright Shipyard set a record for the shortest time between contract, April 4, 1942, and its first keel laying, July 9, 1942, with 96 days. The record had previously been Bethlehem-Fairfield's 103 days. By mid-October, 1942, keels had been laid on all six shipways.

Wainwright's production increased as heavy equipment was put in place. By November, 1942, the shipyard had four operating gantries (bridges for the cranes) and four in the process of being erected, six overhead cranes in the fabrication shop, two caterpillars, two Ohio diesel generators, and two locomotive cranes. Three engines and accompanying flat cars made up the railroad system referred to as "The Liberator Line." In January, 1943, the shipyard acquired two barges, "The Big Fox and The Little Fox" needed to test booms for lifting cargo on the ships. The shipyard also insured an adequate supply of oxygen and acetylene (necessary for welding) by building a plant to process liquid

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63"First Ship Takes Shape and Talk Turns to Launching," The Wainwright Liberator, 31 October 1942.

64"Boiler Shop Has Double Launching," The Wainwright Liberator, 23 January 1943.
oxygen into gas form to use with the acetylene.65

Wainwright Shipyard completed its first contract for thirty-three Liberty Ships with the launching of Rebecca Lukens March 4, 1944.66 The U.S. Maritime Commission contracted with the Wainwright Shipyard for fifty-seven ships in 1944, twice the number built in 1943.67 By July, 1944, Wainwright had reduced its production time on its forty-eighth hull to 49 days (36 days on the ways and 13 in the wet basin). The shipyard launched five ships, laid five keels and delivered five ships in June, 1944.68 Comparison of eleven months (January 1 to December 1) for 1943 and 1944, the first two years of operation, show the following data. Seventeen ships were delivered in 1943, forty-nine in 1944. The average days on the ways declined from 134.4 in 1943 to 41.7 in 1944. The days in the wet basin decreased to 25.3 from 29.2. Average feet welded per hour increased from 5.1 to 5.9.69

Raymond Jones reported in March, 1944, the shipyard production of a ship each six days would necessitate


66"Lukens Launching Eventful," The Wainwright Liberator, 4 March 1944.

67Raymond A. Jones, "The Year of Victory," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 January 1944.

68Raymond A. Jones, "Congratulations," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 July 1944.

69"Wainwright Production Record Gets Better Every Month," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 December 1944.
launchings every five days. The Shipyard delivered six ships a month in May, 1944. Delivering a ship per way each month was a record at that time. A U.S. Maritime Commission telegram to Raymond A. Jones informed him the Wainwright Shipyard was expected to deliver five ships in October, 1944, to meet its part of the Gulf Coast quota of forty ships. This quota increased to six ships for Wainwright and forty-two for the Gulf Coast Region the following month. As promised, Wainwright Shipyard met its goal.

Meeting the U.S. Maritime Commission's goals was complicated by the modification of the basic Liberty Ship design for specialized cargoes. Wainwright Shipyard's first contract for thirty-three Liberty Ships (EC2-S-C1) was interrupted in 1943 by a contract to produce eight 2-EC2-S-C2s, a specialized Liberty Ship designed to carry army tanks. (Wainwright was the only shipyard contracted to


71"Wainwright Sets All-Time Record for Deliveries: Six Ships Completed in Month," The Wainwright Liberator, 3 June 1944.

72E. S. Land, "Western Union Telegram," The Wainwright Liberator, 14 October 1944.

73Admiral Land, "You'll Get the Six...Admiral Land!" The Wainwright Liberator, 11 November 1944.

74"Clean Sweep, All-Time High Belongs to Us," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 December 1944.

75"Wainwright Yard History Is Bright One," The Wainwright Liberator, 19 August 1944.
In 1944, the shipyard contracted to build another specialized Liberty design, the Z-EC2-S-C5, for the transportation of boxed aircraft. Wainwright was one of only two shipyards contracted to build these. The sixteen airplane transport ships were included in the shipyard's second contract for fifty-seven ships. Construction of these ships began in late 1944 with five keels laid on the ways. The shipyard scheduled completion of the first two in thirty-six days. The shipyard's production time declined as it became more experienced in building this new style of ship. Before the airplane transport ships were completed, the Wainwright Shipyard began work on six T1-M-BT2 oil tankers. These ships were part of the U.S. Maritime Commission's second contract. However, they were built for the British government as part of a lend-lease agreement. This tanker was a diesel-powered vessel with a cargo capacity of 30,000 barrels of fuel oil. It was also shorter than the Liberty Ship, thus requiring the adjustment of the ways. Wainwright Shipyard modified three of its six ways to accommodate the tanker construction and continued to build the

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77"Wainwright Yard History Is Bright One," The Wainwright Liberator, 19 August 1944.

78"Airplane Transports Well Underway," The Wainwright Liberator, 9 December 1944.
airplane transport ships on the remaining three ways.\textsuperscript{79} The tanker required a higher skill level than the previous designs the shipyard had built. It was also a more modern ship, raising hopes that Wainwright Shipyard would continue production after the war.\textsuperscript{80} The frequent design changes added to the challenge the Jones Construction Company faced as a firm new to shipbuilding in meeting the U.S. Maritime Commission's expectations.

Staffing the shipyard was another challenge. Manpower was, perhaps, in even shorter supply than steel. The pre-war national shipyard labor force was less than 100,000. An estimated 700,000 were needed in 1943 to meet the president's goals. Experienced shipbuilders were inadequate to meet the sharp increase in demand for ships. Additionally, men were required for military service. Therefore, the Liberty Ship program had to rely on an inexperienced work force. The simplicity of the design made it possible to hire unskilled labor, provide minimal training, and produce ships. Not only were these workers inexperienced in shipbuilding; most were new to any industrial environment. The manpower shortage necessitated the introduction of non-traditional workers,

\textsuperscript{79}"Work to Begin on Oil Tankers for the British," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 February 1945.

\textsuperscript{80}"Jones Signs Contract for Oil Tankers," The Wainwright Liberator, 5 August 1944.
i.e., African-Americans and women, into the factory setting.*

Although the standardized design of the Liberty Ship made it possible to hire unskilled workers, over forty trade skills were still necessary for its construction.² The next chapter will address the problems of adjusting to the labor shortage.

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CHAPTER 3
EMPLOYMENT AT WAINWRIGHT SHIPYARD

Recruitment and Employment Practices

Bay County's total population was 20,686 in 1940. This population generated a labor force of 7,436. September, 1942, Wainwright Shipyard's labor force was 2,073. This employment level increased to 13,501 a year later. Obviously, J. A. Jones Construction Company had to recruit workers from outside the immediate area. The U.S. Employment Service offices throughout the region and vocational school organizations in the surrounding states assisted. Florida, Alabama, and Georgia supplied a major portion of shipyard workers. There were four full-time recruiters located in these states. However, many workers also came from South Carolina, Tennessee, and North Carolina. The American Federation of Labor acquired higher skilled workmen for the

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1"Estimate of In-Migration into the Panama City, Florida, Labor Market Area During the Six Months Beginning September 1, 1943," War Manpower Commission Records, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

2"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission Records, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

3"Monthly Field Operating Report, Northwest Florida Area, Panama City, Florida, December, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
shipyard via transfers through union channels."

The shipyard employed local high school students to alleviate the manpower shortage. Thirty percent of the students at Bay High School were on Wainwright Shipyard's payroll, in April 27, 1943. These 275 students earned a combined income of $10,000 monthly. Males comprised fifty-five percent of the student employees; forty-five percent were females. Most worked after school; some worked a full shift from 4:00 p.m. to midnight. Other students worked during the summer. One such student, Millie Nauman, worked at Wainwright Shipyard the summer of 1944, between her junior and senior years. Her position was welding checker; she checked behind the welders for missed spots. According to Ms. Nauman, the shipyard allowed teen-age girls to work the 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. day shift only. She remembered her war industry employment as a novel experience for a small town girl to work with people from all walks of life. She also remembered feeling like "the most patriotic creature that ever walked in Bay County at that time."

Wainwright Shipyard employment required a referral card


"$10,000 Earned Monthly by 275 Bay High Pupils," Panama City News-Herald, 27 April 1943.

Millie Nauman, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 2 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
issued by the U.S. Employment Service. A U.S. Employment Service representative located at the shipyard interviewed prospective employees before the company's personnel office did. Initially, the shipyard hired virtually anyone who applied. It had no age, size, or draft status requirements. By October, 1943, two limitations were established, a minimum age of 21 and exemption from early draft call. The personnel department quickly processed new employees by fingerprinting them and issuing an identification badge that included a photograph of the employee. This department averaged processing 200-300 employees per day in the shipyard's first few months of operation.*

**Training**

**Skills Required**

A shipyard required a wide variety of skills. Wainwright Shipyard had twenty-three different divisions. The administration had the typical personnel to operate the office -- professional and technical, clerical and administrative, and custodial. A list of those with shipbuilding skills included welders, shipfitters, chippers, flame cutter operators, sheet metal workers, layout men, assemblers,

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*"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

*"Personnel Department Sets High Speed Record," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 August 1942.

*"Shipyard Aims to Establish Speed Record," Panama City News-Herald, 7 June 1942.
pipefitters, electric bridge and crane operators, machinist, boilermakers, painters, tank testers, coppersmiths, and electricians. The maintenance department alone had two hundred employees with skills including carpenters, plumbers, glaziers, concrete men, common laborers, and railroad men. The yard had twenty miles of railroad track to maintain. Thirty timecheckers were required to keep hours on the personnel in August, 1942, before the employment level reached its peak.

Because of the skilled labor shortage, the shipyard arranged for employee training. Pre-war shipyards, facing a surplus of shipbuilders, had provided little incentive to employees. As war production began, the shipyards, many new to shipbuilding themselves, had to pay to train their work force. Fortunately, the Liberty Ship’s design lent itself to this task. The assembly line method broke the production process down to a series of very specific tasks which workers could be trained to do in a relatively short time. This new approach to shipbuilding was, perhaps, reflected in the statement that Henry J. Kaiser, considered the leader in mass

10“Manpower Utilization Consultants Check List, Based on Summary of Analysis of Manning Table for: J. A. Jones Construction Company, Wainwright Yard, Panama City, Florida, March 31, 1943,” War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

11Mary Pullen, “Maintenance Dept.,” The Wainwright Liberator, 22 May 1943.

12“Fore and Aft,” The Wainwright Liberator 1 August 1942.
production shipbuilding, "did not build ships but simply produced them."  

In-Plant Training

Wainwright Shipyard began training programs almost as soon as it began operating. It placed employees who completed these programs on the "preferred employment and promotion register." The government's Gulf Zone Standard Wage Rate schedule, effective August 1, 1942, specified workers had to complete 500 hours to receive a pay increase. However, each hour spent in the training program counted as two hours. The shipyard reminded workers that training led to advancement in rank.

Wainwright Shipyard held classes in shipfitting at the local grammar school in June, 1942. The following month the shipyard announced classes in "drafting, pipe fitting, machinery, [and] marine electricity...open to men over the age of 16 years." The training department conducted an

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emergency class in carpentry with fifty men chosen from the existing work force to meet a serious shortage in August, 1942. The employees attended class four hours per day. The department added welding and sheet metal to the list of skills courses and operated a class for secretaries to acquaint them with shipyard terminology. People enrolled in the welding classes more quickly than other programs. When August, 1942, classes in shipfitting and sheet metal work did not fill, the shipyard management emphasized that in normal times an individual would have to pay for the training the company now provided without charge.

Wainwright utilized the local high school classrooms for its training until it built its own facilities in the fall of 1942. When the school year began, the school facilities were only available for evening classes, necessitating improved lighting fixtures. The program used seventy-five percent of the classrooms by September, 1942. The training program held classes in the Wainwright Cafeteria in the late afternoon. Sixty welders per session could be trained in the training school's first building. The shipyard opened an


"Shipbuilders Schools Make Better Workers," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 August 1942.

"Number in Training Proves Disappointing," The Wainwright Liberator, 29 August 1942.

addition to its welding school in November, 1942. The
existing welding school was converted into four modern
classrooms. 23 The expanded facility accommodated the 300
students expected. 24 Over 1,200 people attended classes in
the training school on a regular basis by November, 1942. 25
The welding school could train twenty-five burners weekly.
These workers cut the steel plates and burned out faulty
welding. The shipyard scheduled classes for the convenience
of midnight and swing shift workers. The shipyard’s training
program continued to use the local high school facilities to
offer courses in shipfitting, plan reading, lining and
regulating -- ones that did not require as much specialized
equipment. 26 By February, 1943, the training school, located
just inside the main gate, offered classes Monday through
Friday to accommodate workers on all shifts: 8:00 a.m. to
10:00 a.m. for graveyard shift personnel; 4:45 p.m. to 6:45
p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for day shift personnel; and
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for swing shift personnel. They also
offered pre-employment training. Classes included those for:
"shipfitting, blue print reading, burning, welding, production


25"Real Shipbuilders Teach Trades in Training School," The Wainwright Liberator, 7 November 1942.

26"Gas Welding School Begins to Function," The Wainwright Liberator, 14, November 1942.
checking, steel checking, layout, planning board operators, leaderman training, and foreman training." Nevertheless, a War Manpower Commission report considered the training program poor and suggested consideration of "an intensified in-plant training program and an accelerated up-grading plan." \(^2\)

Wainwright Shipyard instituted a new policy which paid welders $0.63 per hour while attending school ($0.68 for those attending on the graveyard shift) in March, 1943. The shipyard paid trained welders $0.75 per hour. \(^3\) The welding program required "48 hours basic training; 48 hours in tacker and, 3 weeks in the welding school and two weeks in the burning school." Training programs also helped the shipyard retain its workers. Welders who underwent training had a turnover rate of 10%, compared to an overall turnover rate of 15.9% according to a March, 1944, report. \(^4\)

**Vocational School Training**

Wainwright Shipyard also contracted with forty-two public vocational schools in the southeastern states to pay arc..." \(^2\)

"Start Training Now!" *The Wainwright Liberator*, 20 February 1943.

"Manpower Utilization Consultants Check List, Based on Summary of Analysis of Manning Table for: J. A Jones Construction Company, Wainwright Yard, Panama City, Florida, March 31, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.


welding trainees $.63 per hour in 1943. Such trainees agreed to work a minimum of six months at the shipyard after completing the 200 hour training course.31 Half the trainee's pay was withheld until he completed the program and reported to work at the shipyard to insure trainees reported.32 A government policy disrupted this program temporarily the fall of 1943.33 The U.S. Maritime Commission decision to reduce the training program from 200 hours to 48 hours created the disruption. Florida's vocational schools refused to operate this reduced program although Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee and South Carolina still participated.34 This abbreviated program required supplementary training at Panama City and undermined the shipyard's pre-production training. Consequently, the War Manpower Commission suggested "arc welding equipment, now lying idle in vocational education schools throughout the State be brought into Panama City and put into operation either at the shipyard or at some other

31"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

32"Monthly Field Operating Report, Northwest Florida Area, Panama City, Florida, December, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

33"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

34"Monthly Field Operating Report, Northwest Florida Area, Panama City, Florida, December, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
location in the area." By December, 1943, the government was satisfied with the in-plant training programs reporting that the employers "have, out of necessity, developed competent training staffs and organizations in the last 12 months within their plants."

**Management Training**

The shipyard offered training in personnel management as well as in shipbuilding skills. The War Manpower Commission provided instructors from its Training-Within-Industry Branch to teach Job Instructor Training. This program taught supervisors how to train workers on the job, a critical skill considering the nature of the work force." The following year, the War Manpower Commission offered a three part training program for supervisory personnel as part of its Training-Within-Industry Service. By October, 1943, 561 Wainwright supervisors had completed Job Instructor Training to learn how to train workers to do a job and 286 had completed the Job Relations Training session on maintenance of good relations with workers. A third session, Jobs Methods Training, which dealt with seeking more efficient methods of

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35"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

36"Monthly Field Operating Report, Northwest Florida Area, Panama City, Florida, December, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

37"Shipbuilders Schools Make Better Workers," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 August 1942.
doing a job, coincided with the shipyard's new contract to build tankers, a new design. To motivate individuals to take this program, *The Wainwright Liberator* reported on an individual's military rank upgrade from a Carpenter's Mate, Third Class to First Class because he had taken the Training Within Industry program for supervisory personnel. Supervisors' turnover rate declined significantly as a result of this program. A study of July 1 to December, 1943, records revealed a termination rate exceeding one hundred per cent for supervisors who did not receive this training. Those who completed the program had a turnover rate of only 2.3 percent. The program sought to reduce the turnover rate for workers as well by providing better supervision.

The War Manpower Commission also worked with the University of Florida to offer courses in engineering. The program involved night classes three hours twice a week for fourteen weeks. The classes met at Panama City Grammar School.

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41"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

Union Representation

Wainwright Shipyard was officially a "closed shop". The American Federation of Labor and Jones Construction Company had a contract. The various craft unions organized individually and had the responsibility of issuing work permits. By January, 1944, the Boilermakers Union had 2,000 members. New workers' cards were flagged and the worker was "supposed to pay union dues after working four days." The Panama City Metal Trades Council, formed from twelve union organizations in June, 1942, was the sole bargaining agent for Wainwright Shipyard workers.

A. C. Littleton, Sr., a plumber, was the only Wainwright employee interviewed by the author who was a union member prior to working at the shipyard. He received top pay, $1.60 per hour, as a result. Others interviewed did not remember paying union dues or actively participating in a union. The shortage of workers and the unwillingness of employees new to the industrial scene to have union dues deducted resulted in a situation whereby Wainwright was a "closed shop" officially but not in reality. When Z. A.

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45"Bill Cooper Says....," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 September 1944.

46A. C. Littleton, Sr., interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Panama City, Florida.
Cowan, an equipment mechanic, was warned by his supervisor that the union could fine him $100 for repairing a piece of equipment outside his job description, he simply told the superintendent he would quit if they did. That was the end of the matter. As Mr. Cowan worded it, "Now they [the union] had a contract there, but they didn't push it to the limit."*6

The Jones Construction Company spotlighted the labor union during Labor Day activities, especially the shipyard's first, in 1942. Jasper Davis, Assistant President of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Welders and Helpers of America, was the guest speaker at the Labor Day festivities, which included laying a keel (since the shipyard was too young to launch a ship, as older shipyards were doing).*7

A union disruption occurred in the spring of 1943. The United Brotherhood of Welders, Cutters, and Helpers of America, Local 39, an independent union, urged worker support in seeking national recognition of this separate craft.*8 The company suspended eight of this group's members for not paying dues to the Boilermakers' Union. The eight had formed a committee to seek the company's recognition of the group. Two

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*Z. A. Cowan, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 23 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College, Panama City, Florida.

*"Name Speaker for Labor Day," Panama City News-Herald, 30 August 1942.

"Welders Call Meetings Here," Panama City News-Herald, 14 March 1943.
hundred welders supported the eight by voting to "take a holiday." H. V. Appen, the company's General Supervisor, warned the workers would be suspended and their names turned over to the draft board. The Metal Trades Council representative, F. J. Vandillon, criticized the minority of 200 for holding up the production and risking the jobs of the 8,000-9,000 union workers at the plant. That ended the matter.

Jones Construction Company and the Office of Employees Union, L. U. 23300, American Federation of Labor, agreed to allow office workers to decide if they wished union representation. The affected workers included: time workers, accountants, bookkeepers, clerks, typists, stenographers, and IBM room employees, with some exceptions. The National Labor Relations Board had jurisdiction to supervise the July 12, 1943, election. The majority, three hundred seven, voted in favor of representation; forty-four opposed.

**Wages and Fringe Benefits**

The first wage increase for hourly workers became effective August, 1942, with the following pay scale:

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The government established a policy that required workers to work for a specified number of hours to qualify for a pay increase. This was five hundred hours for the Gulf Coast zone. Earl Boone, a Wainwright employee, said the workers received a pay increase of four and a half cents an hour after each five hundred hours of work.*3

The union required its members to purchase War Bonds with the ten percent pay increase they received in 1943. The Shipbuilding Stabilization Committee established this policy at a Chicago meeting. In announcing the policy to the workers, the company noted: "Ask your Union Leader if it is compulsory for you to buy War Savings Bonds. He will tell you that it is if you are a Union member in good standing, and if


*3Earl Boone, interview by Peggy D. Felt, 9 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
you are not, you probably will be required to do both, buy War Bonds and become a Union member of good standing." The company was more adamant about the War Bond purchase than the Union membership.

Workers were paid on a weekly basis. Originally, Friday was payday. However, additional payroll deductions required a change to Saturday mornings beginning at 7:30 a.m. in 1943. The local banks accommodated the change by remaining open Saturday nights instead of Friday nights. The company's payroll was approximately twenty million dollars by January, 1943. During a War Bond drive in mid-1943, the Wainwright management noted the government spent over $700,000 weekly in wages and salaries at the shipyard. Raymond Jones, the manager, reported this was eighty-five per cent of the shipyard expenses. The large work force necessitated staggering pay check dispersal by August, 1943. Grave shift personnel received their checks at 8:00 a.m., swing shift personnel at 12:30 p.m. and day shift at 4:30 p.m. The time

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55 "Banks to Be Open Saturday Night," The Wainwright Liberator, 16 January 1943.


clock stations distributed paychecks. The payroll department had to operate on a seven day, twenty-four hour schedule to process such a large payroll. The department used International Business Machines to process the 250,000 cards necessary to prepare the payroll. The department consisted entirely of females, except for the supervisor and assistant supervisor.

**Governmental Policies**

The Jones Construction Company negotiated wages with the Metal Trades Council. However, the U.S. Maritime Commission established many policies because the shipbuilding program operated on a "cost-plus" basis. (See Chapter 1.) The Commission felt entitled to mandate some cost reducing measures. It persuaded President Roosevelt to issue a decree halting double-time pay for work on a particular day, like Sunday, in September, 1942. Double-time was only payable for working on a seventh day; time-and-a-half pay was given for work over forty hours within a six day work week.

The government required Form Number 96, authorizing the working of the seventh day, for double-time pay. The company denied extra pay to anyone working a seventh day without prior

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60 "Double-Time Payment for Holiday Stops," *Panama City News-Herald*, 10 September 1942.
The War Manpower Commission announced Panama City's inclusion in a list of cities subject to a new forty-eight hour work week law in February, 1943. This law required a forty-eight hour work week but allowed overtime payment rates. This law also prohibited pay increases in hourly rates but allowed a fifteen percent cost-of-living-adjustment over January, 1941, pay levels.

The U.S. Maritime Commission designated holidays. Work was only suspended on Christmas. Other holidays, such as July 4 and Labor Day, simply merited the premium (double-time) pay rate. The War Labor Board's Shipbuilding Stabilization Committee reduced holiday pay to time and one-half in an Amendment of the Gulf Coast Zone Standards. Wainwright Shipyard paid its employees who worked Labor Day, 1943, double time. The U.S. Maritime Commission informed them of the error. The shipyard, Panama Metal Trades Council, and U.S. Maritime Commission discussed the issue for months. Finally, it was submitted to the War Labor Board. That Board ruled the shipyard had overpaid its employees. Consequently, the company had to withhold the amount of overpayment from the

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company expanded the cafeteria in the spring, 1943. The seating capacity increased from four hundred to five hundred, with an additional seating of one hundred for African-American workers. The existing African-American section of the dining area was converted to a bake shop. A new executive dining room was built that would seat sixty." 

Extensive additions to the shipyard were reported on January, 1944. The description below gives an overview of the size of the yard and the diversity of its buildings.

"A modern sewage disposal system for the yard and the housing projects.... The Accessories Store, now under construction in the Administration area. This will be for safety and work clothing. It will also house the Ration Office, now using temporary offices in the Cafeteria.... An addition to the Personnel Building for the staff of a pre-medical examining board. As soon as necessary personnel has been obtained, all new employees are to be required to take an examination as to their fitness for work. A thoroughly modern fire hall.... The building now housing the Safety Shoe Store and Termination Office will be torn down and the new building erected on that site. The Safety Department will have offices in this building. More and badly needed canteens. A new gantry crane to be added to the outfitting dock facilities. Also extensive improvement are to be made to the platens and roadways throughout the yard.... Of prime importance is the installation of the new sewerage system which will completely replace the emergency disposal methods (principally septic tanks). The housing projects and the yard will be connected by sanitary sewers with an adequate disposal plant now under construction for Panama

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"Wainwright Yard Making Cafeteria Easier for Its Employees to Eat In," Panama City News-Herald, 27 May 1943.
The shipyard had expanded to more than one hundred buildings by its last year of operation, 1945. A tour of the yard would include the following buildings. The administration, U.S. Maritime Commission office and personnel office buildings were located in the northeast corner of the yard near the main entrance. The welding, training, and burner schools were also in this area. The main cafeteria was located nearby as were the time office, police/guard office, and first aid station. The shell assemblies were between the administrative corner and the six ways. Next were platens A through F, parallel to their respective shipways along the water front at the southern side of the yard. At the southwest corner of the shipyard were the various shops: paint, outfitters, electrical, sheet metal, boiler, machine and pipe. Also located in this corner were the riggers' loft, the oxygen and acetylene plants, and the air compressor building. Just north of the pipe shop were the superintendent and U.S. Maritime Commission field offices. Along the western water front were warehouses one, two, and three. Twelve steel storage areas, the fabrication shop, mold loft and template storage inhabited the center of the shipyard. The size of the yard required locating canteens and first aid substations.

"Expansion for Yard This Year," *The Wainwright Liberator*, 29 January 1944.
throughout for adequate worker accessibility."

J. A. Jones Construction Company, Incorporated

J. A. Jones founded the Jones Construction Company in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1895. The firm was incorporated twenty-five years later. J. A. Jones continued as his company's directing head, at age 73, in 1942. Despite its incorporation, the firm remained in the hands of the Jones family, as evidenced by the corporate officers:

J. A. Jones President
Sons:
Raymond A. Jones Vice President
Edwin L. Jones Secretary/Treasurer
John H. Jones (Secretary until his drowning death)
Paul H. Jones Assistant Secretary

The company had built hotels, churches, public buildings and office buildings. Government contracts made up much of the company's business. Its pre-war construction included veteran's hospitals, Fort Benning, Fort Bragg, and work in the Canal Zone. The company was very active in building military bases during World War II. These included:

Fort Jackson - Columbia, South Carolina
Camp Shelby - Hattiesburg, Mississippi
Camp Croft - Spartanburg, South Carolina
Keesler Field - Biloxi, Mississippi
Navy Fly Base - Elizabeth City, North Carolina
Camp Gordon - Augusta, Georgia
Camp Rucker - Ozark, Alabama
Air Bases - Colombia and Venezuela

39Wainwright Shipyard Map, Revised and Redrawn June 30, 1945, Panama City Engineering Department, Panama City, Florida.

40"Jones Construction Makes Contribution to Victory," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 August 1942.
In addition to their military construction, the Jones Construction Company was known for building large low-cost housing projects. This experience was quickly put to use in Panama City. Once the shipyard was built and workers poured into the area, a critical housing shortage arose.¹

Wainwright Shipyard was the firm’s first shipworks.² Raymond Jones reflected on this in a speech made to the workers in May, 1945:

"When the J. A. Jones Construction Co., agreed to come here in April of 1942 and build a shipyard and ships there was not a man in the organization who had ever had anything to do with shipbuilding. Add to this the fact that we had to draw our workers from men and women who had never before worked in steel and a great many who had never worked in industry of any kind and it is possible to understand the task ahead of us."³

The company appointed H. V. Appen the general manager of the Wainwright Shipyard when it began operation. He continued in that capacity until September, 1943, when Raymond A. Jones, the Vice-President of the Jones Construction Company, became the general manager. The company promoted Appen to vice-president in charge of construction.⁴

¹"Jones Construction Makes Contribution to Victory," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 August 1942.

²"Jones Construction Makes Contribution to Victory," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 August 1942.

³"Raymond Jones Proud of Record We Are Making," The Wainwright Liberator, 5 May 1945.

⁴"Raymond A. Jones Now Directs Yard," The Wainwright Liberator, 4 September 1943.
The Jones Construction Company was popular among local businesses. Such favor was partially due to its policy "to make sure that anybody that was in business in Panama City got a piece of their business....several people got very wealthy selling goods and services to the shipyard."*5

The U.S. government was satisfied with the Jones Construction Company's performance in shipbuilding. The U.S. Maritime Commission asked the company to take over the Brunswick Marine Construction Corporation in Brunswick, Georgia, effective February 1, 1943. This company had failed to complete its first ship, even though it had been contracted a month before the Wainwright Shipyard. The Brunswick Shipyard had a contract for thirty Liberty Ships. The Jones Construction Company assigned E. J. Kratt the general manager of the Brunswick Yard. He visited the Wainwright Shipyard in January, 1943, to learn from an efficiently operating plant.*6

In April, 1943, B. R. Ashe, War Manpower Commission regional director, announced Panama City's inclusion in a list of cities recommended to receive no further contracts. Other cities in this classification were Mobile, Tampa, Brunswick, Macon, Savannah, Pascagoula, and Charleston. The Commission explained these cities were so classified because "they will

*H. Mack Lewis, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 4 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

be unable to handle them [additional contracts], due to being six months to two years behind in production." Despite this recommendation, Wainwright Shipyard received a second contract to build fifty-seven Liberty Ships in the spring, 1943. This order was in addition to the original contract for thirty-three. The U.S. Maritime Commission awarded the Jones Construction Company contracts to build one hundred sixty-five Liberty Ships in its two shipyards by February, 1944.

The government's request that the Jones Construction Company enter the shipbuilding industry was not the last such request. The U.S. Army Ordnance Department persuaded the company to build and operate a plant to manufacture heavy ammunition type shells in Sheffield, Alabama, in 1945. The company also played a role in the "Manhattan Project." The government presented the company an Army-Navy "E" award in 1945 "for its part in constructing Clinton Engineer Works, Oak Ridge, Tenn., home of the atomic bomb." Shipbuilding remained a minor part of J. A. Jones Construction Company's

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"Saturation Point Here in Defense War Work; No New Contracts, View," Panama City News-Herald, 5 April 1943.

H. V. Appen, "To Our Shipbuilders," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 May 1943.

"Fifty Years of Service," The Wainwright Liberator, 23 February 1944.

"Jones to Run Shell Plant for Ordnance," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 February 1945.

overall operation, despite the firm's ownership of two shipyards.

The government interrupted Wainwright Shipyard's production of EC2-S-C1 Liberty Ships twice. In October, 1943, the firm contracted to build eight Z-EC2-S-C2s, a Liberty Ship modified to carry army tanks. The second interruption occurred in January, 1945, with a contract for twenty-eight Z-EC2-S-C5s. This was another style Liberty Ship modified to carry boxed aircraft. Before this contract was completed, the U.S. Maritime Commission contracted with the company to build another type ship, six T1 type tankers. These were Liberty Ships modified to carry oil.2

Contractual Arrangements

The U.S. Maritime Commission used a "cost-plus variable fee" contractual arrangement to pay for the Liberty Ships. In 1941, the government reimbursed the shipbuilder for costs and paid an additional $110,000 fee if the ship was built using the established average of 500,000 man hours. The fee also varied according to the speed of delivery, ranging from a minimum of $60,000 to a maximum of $140,000. This arrangement sought to avoid the abuses of the straight "cost plus a set percentage" fee used during World War I. The fee schedule was adjusted during the war as the average production time

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decreased.* The Brunswick Yard produced eighty-five EC2-S-C1 Liberty Ships at an average cost of $1,992,000, over $169 million. The Wainwright Shipyard delivered sixty-six Liberty Ships at an average cost of $2,020,000, over $133 million.*

Reports on the total number of Liberty Ships built vary due to confusion surrounding the various modified versions of the ship. According to the American Bureau of Shipping, the total was 2,742, inclusive of the various models.** Jones Construction Company's two shipyards built a total of 195 ships, involving four different designs.** This was seven percent of the ships built. Wainwright built approximately four percent of the total, a substantial contribution to the war for a six-way shipyard in a small northwest Florida town new to shipbuilding.

The Liberty Ship's simple design made its production under such circumstances possible. The introduction of new assembly techniques, such as prefabricating the parts and welding them together, contributed to the success of this

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emergency shipbuilding program.
CHAPTER 2
THE LIBERTY SHIP
Design Selection

The Liberty Ship's design was a modified version of a British tramp cargo ship. Initially, the U.S. Maritime Commission designed three standardized ships to meet the needs of different trade routes as part of the shipbuilding program begun in 1937. The designs were for turbine driven ships capable of averaging fifteen knots. The U.S. Maritime Commission's long-range plans were to build fifty ships annually for ten years. However, President Roosevelt doubled this goal to one hundred per year in 1939. Construction of ships using these designs began in 1940. The first all-welded version was completed in November, 1940, and weighed six hundred tons less than the average rivetted ship.

A British Merchant Shipbuilding Mission team came to the United States in September, 1940, to order sixty ships. Admiral Emory Land of the U.S. Maritime Commission assisted them. The British brought a J. L. Thompson & Son design with modifications that made it simpler to build than the American model. This "Ocean" hull design, capable of carrying ten thousand tons and travelling at eleven knots, became the basis for the Liberty Ship. Admiral Land disliked this slower ship
and disassociated the U.S. Maritime Commission from this design by making arrangements for the British to contract directly with private shipyards.

Land changed his opinion of the British design when German destruction of British cargo ships necessitated faster construction. President Roosevelt suddenly increased the U.S. Maritime Commission's quota to two hundred ships annually in August, 1940. The propelling machinery necessary for the turbine driven design in use was not available in quantities necessary to meet the new quota. Consequently, the U.S. Maritime Commission had to change to a simpler ship design. There was no time to completely design a new ship. After considering alternatives the Commission decided to use the British "Ocean" hull design, with modifications. The President informed the American public of the emergency shipbuilding program in a February, 1941, broadcast in which he described the ship as "dreadful looking objects."

The U.S. Maritime Commission's official classification of this ship was "EC2-S-C1," which described many of its characteristics. The "EC" designated an "emergency cargo" ship. The "2" indicated the ship's large size with a waterline length between 400 and 450 feet. The "S" designated a steam engine and "C1" the specific ship design and

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paycheck of each employee who had worked the previous Labor Day. The company announced the adjustment would occur in the paychecks issued March 31 and April 1, 1944.64

The management considered ceasing Sunday operations as a method to reduce absenteeism in the summer, 1943. However, the shipyard’s goal to produce three ships within the month made this impossible. At this point, the shipyard employed 15,000 and sought 2,000 to 3,000 additional workers.65 Ship production became less frantic beginning in 1944. The U.S. Maritime Commission request that contractors close on Sundays reflected this. The Commission expected the new policy to alleviate worker absenteeism and fatigue and thereby enhance efficiency. Sunday closing reduced the wear and tear on machinery and allowed for routine maintenance.66

Wainwright Shipyard reduced shifts from three eight-hour shifts to two nine-hour shifts in May, 1944. The first shift was 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The second shift was 5:30 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. Each shift schedule included a paid thirty minute lunch break. Although the workers actually worked only nine hours, they were paid for nine and a half hours. Previously, they worked seven and a half hours and were paid for eight


66“Sunday Now Day of Rest,” The Wainwright Liberator, 1 January 1944.
hours. In addition, the second shift workers received the additional five cents per hour pay differential the swing and grave shifts had been paid. The management's goal was to equalize the number of workers on each shift. The shipyard had been unable to employ a number of workers on the night shifts (swing and graveyard shifts) equal to the day shift. In moving to two shifts, the shipyard simply combined the swing and grave shifts into a work force equal to the day shift. Mary Darr processed the paper work for employees leaving Wainwright in the termination office. She remembered graveyard shift employees had the highest turnover rate.

Fringe Benefits

Shipyard workers had few fringe benefits. The Labor Management Committee's attempt to introduce an insurance program with life, accident, and health coverage paid for by the employees failed because the required seventy-five percent of the work force refused to enroll. Office personnel earned sick leave and vacation time. The company encouraged them to accept pay for unused vacation time. The management

67"New Plan Effective Monday," The Wainwright Liberator, 6 May 1944.

68Mary Darr, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 22 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.


70Mary Darr, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 22 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
introduced a vacation program for some shipyard workers in October, 1944. An individual employed a continuous year by Wainwright Shipyard by June 1 with an absentee rate below twenty-five percent qualified for seven days of vacation. The employee was paid for unused vacation time either by choice or because his supervisor considered him too vital to release.7

The shipyard's absentee and turnover problems were attributable to the lack of vacations. According to Earl Boone, a Wainwright employee in the lay-out department, many workers quit because they simply "burned out" working six and seven days a week.72

Taxes and War Bond Drives

Inflation was a national economic concern associated with the wartime production. Newly employed war workers received very good salaries. They were ready to buy, as they had been unable to do during the Depression. Unfortunately, the war effort consumed a significant share of the nation's resources. The government informed Americans they received $125 billion in salaries in 1943; there were only $80 billion worth of goods to buy. The government encouraged workers to pay debts and taxes, save, and purchase life insurance policies and war

7"Paid Vacations Given Employees Who Can Qualify," The Wainwright Liberator, 14 October 1944.

72Earl Boone, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 9 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
bonds to prevent inflation.\textsuperscript{73} The government proceeded to do all in its power to minimize inflation using taxes and war bond drives.

**Taxes**

In December, 1942, Wainwright Shipyard informed its employees of the government’s new five percent Victory Tax, collected by payroll deduction, on all income above $12, effective January 1, 1943. The government planned to partially refund the tax after the war at a rate of twenty-five cents per dollar tax for single people and forty cents per dollar for couples plus two cents per child.\textsuperscript{74} The Victory tax was in addition to the personal income tax. All individuals earning $500 or more and couples earning $1200 or more had to file returns by March 15, 1942. Exemptions were $500 for individuals and $1200 per couple plus $350 per dependent (excluding wives).\textsuperscript{75} Wainwright’s management had people available to assist workers with their forms during the workers’ non-working hours. The shipyard also forwarded any employee’s tax payment.\textsuperscript{76}

The government required employers to begin withholding

\textsuperscript{73}"If You’re Making More Money...Watch Out!" The Wainwright Liberator, 21 August 1943.

\textsuperscript{74}"Everybody Must Now Pay Five Percent Victory Tax," The Wainwright Shipyard, 24 December 1942.

\textsuperscript{75}"Most Workers to Pay Income Tax to Finance War," The Wainwright Liberator, 16 January 1943.

\textsuperscript{76}"Trained Men Will Assist Workers Make Tax Returns," The Wainwright Liberator 20 February 1943.
income taxes from pay checks (as they did Social Security payments). This announcement came in June, 1943. Wainwright Shipyard employees were required to file the Employee’s Withholding Exemption Certificate, indicating marital status and dependents, with the company by June 24 to receive their June 26 paychecks. Weekly deductions were $24 per couple plus $6 per child. The payroll department withheld twenty percent of the individual’s pay above the deduction for the income tax and the Victory Tax. As the September 15 due date approached, the shipyard sent tax experts to assist those who had not already filed through the payroll office.

War Bond Drives

The government conducted seven national War Bond drives during the 1942-1945 war years. Beginning in 1943, there were two annually; each usually lasted three to four weeks. Generally, the company encouraged workers to designate ten percent of their pay to war bond purchases. Wainwright Shipyard always conducted an intense campaign, typically contacting employees individually and noting the various departments that gave one hundred percent. The administration located concession stand type booths throughout


79“All Workers Must Buy War Bonds,” The Wainwright Liberator, 24 July 1943.
the shipyard for the convenience of those wishing to directly purchase War Bonds. The payroll department included special cards in pay envelopes to designate payroll deductions for the majority of workers expected to use this method of purchasing War Bonds.80

In January, 1943, Panama City Grammar School and Cove Grammar School conducted a War Bond Drive to raise $150,000 to buy a bomber. Wainwright Shipyard agreed to designate its bond sales for January 16 to this effort. The shipyard contributed $34,675 to the schools' bond drive.81

The U.S. Treasury Department issued a "Minute Man" pennant (also called a "T" pennant) to those factories in which ten percent of the total salaries went toward War Bond purchases. Wainwright won this pennant in the Third War Bond Drive in October, 1943, by purchasing almost one million dollars in bonds. This was in addition to the regular ten percent payroll War Bond purchases made by ninety percent of the employees. The pennant was raised at the launching of the yard's next ship, the Mary Ball, named after George Washington's mother.82

Wainwright Shipyard employees purchased $1,112,225 in the

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82"Let's Cheer! We Win the War Bond 'T'," The Wainwright Liberator, 16 October 1943.
Fourth War Bond Drive, February, 1944, despite the discontinuance of overtime and Sunday work and a work force 1,000 smaller. The shipyard earned a gold star to add to its Treasury "T" pennant and the War Bond Department the honor of sponsoring a ship.*

The Wainwright Shipyard set a one million dollars goal for the Sixth War Bond Drive (December, 1944). This was used to "buy" a super fortress to be named after General Jonathan M. Wainwright's wife and indicated by a plaque proclaiming "bought with war bonds purchased by the Workers of Wainwright Yard of the J. A. Jones Construction Co."*4

The final drive occurred April, 1945, as the war neared its conclusion. Economic policy makers sought to minimize post-war inflation with this war bond drive. As with the previous drives, the Wainwright Shipyard employees exceeded the goal with an average purchase of $129.41.**

Z. A. Cowan, a Wainwright equipment mechanic, had $5,000-$6,000 in War Bonds from such purchases when the war was over. He commented he and his wife lived in Wainwright housing at minimal rent. They had no children and there was little to


**"Yard to Buy Super Fort 'Adele Wainwright'," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 December 1944.

"War Bond Drive Off to Big Start; Cash Sales Soar," The Wainwright Liberator, 14 April 1945.  "Jones Shipbuilders Purchase $1,473,525.00," The Wainwright Liberator, 14 July 1945.
buy. Besides, as he explained to his wife, "We've got quite a little bit of money saved there. Why don't we go and buy bonds? If we was to lose this war, our money wouldn't be any good. If we win the war, well, the bonds'll be good. Well, let's go...buy all we can."**

William A. Cooper, president of the Metal Trades Council, and Raymond A. Jones, general manager, urged Wainwright workers to buy War Bonds and Stamps with their Labor Day holiday pay in 1943.** The shipyard used bonds as work incentive program rewards and prizes at entertainment activities. The shipyard suggested workers give them as Christmas gifts.

**Community Charity Drives**

The Jones Construction company encouraged its employees to support community charity drives as well as the war effort. The *Panama City News-Herald* reported Wainwright Shipyard contributed $2,066.76 to the United Service Organizations-County Defense Council campaign in August, 1942. Contributions totalled $4,085.27 at the time of the report.**

The shipyard contributed generously to the March, 1943, Red Cross War Fund drive. Raymond A. Jones contributed $2,000

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**Z. A. Cowan, interview by Peggy D. Peit, 23 June 1992, Wainwright Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.**

**"15,000 Workers to Buy Bonds Stamps with 'Holiday' Pay," Panama City News-Herald, 5 September 1943.**

**"Shipyard Adds to USO Funds," Panama City News-Herald, 4 August 1942.**
on behalf of the Wainwright Shipyard management." The Marine Pipefitters Local Union contributed $100 from its treasury. Its members pledged an additional $1,452.45. Wainwright Shipyard's office workers donated $1,649 to the drive."

October, 1943, the American Red Cross and Community Chest conducted a War Relief Fund drive. The Community Chest consisted of several charitable agencies. Therefore, the one contribution served to support a variety of causes. The company arranged a payroll deduction program for those wishing to contribute to the American Red Cross Fund. The October, 1943, launching of John Barton Payne, named after the late American Red Cross chairman, was the kick-off for this drive."

The United Service Organizations (USO) also had fund drives at the shipyard. The management expressed pride in its workers' contributions to these drives and criticized those workers who did not participate. On the other hand, the

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89"A $2,000 Contribution to Red Cross War Fund," Panama City News-Herald, 23 March 1943.

90"Labor Donates $1,733 to Red Cross Campaign," Panama City News-Herald, 25 March 1943.

91"Shipyard Office Force Gives $1,649," Panama City News-Herald, 5 April 1943.

92"Give Once for All in One Drive," The Wainwright Liberator, 23 October 1943.

93"Workers Asked to Donate to War's Needy," The Wainwright Liberator, 30 October 1943.

94H. V. Appen, "To Our Shipbuilders," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 August 1942.
shipyard attempted to limit fund drives to one annually until notified by the Department of Labor they could not have such a limitation."

Management Style

General Managers

H. V. Appen managed Wainwright Shipyard until August, 1943, when he returned to the home office as vice-president in charge of all construction for the Jones Construction Company. Raymond A. Jones, one of the company founder’s sons, became the new manager of Wainwright Shipyard. H. V. Appen authored a front page editorial article titled "To Our Shipbuilders," in the weekly The Wainwright Liberator. He used this as a forum to compliment workers and to threaten them as well. Following a visit by an unnamed Washington official, Appen wrote, "he [the visitor] was most favorably impressed to observe that all of the people on the job were working and seemed to know what they were doing....Wars are won in the shipyards and this one will be out in front....If a man or woman can’t deliver here they are going to get out.""Paste"

The Jones Construction Company was very competitive and

"Red Cross to Conduct Drive in Yard," The Wainwright Liberator, 17 February 1945.


"H. V. Appen, "To Our Shipbuilders," The Wainwright Liberator, 5 September 1942."
expected its shipyards to rank first among comparable shipyards. General manager H. V. Appen expressed the company's outrage in September, 1942, when the U.S. Maritime Commission ranked Wainwright Shipyard fifth of the six shipyards begun at the same time. In his weekly editorial "To Our Shipbuilders," he applied the patriotic theme that such performance let down the armed forces then went on to lambast the workers by stating the cause of the poor ranking was "TOO MUCH LOAFING AND STALLING." His editorial continued with the threat to dismiss loafers so they could be drafted. He further threatened if they were not drafted, Wainwright would "see that they do not get another defense job." Wainwright rose to second place in the following monthly report. Though pleased with the improvement it was not enough as indicated by the announcement's title, "We Are Not Proud." Raymond Jones discontinued this weekly article. However, he did rid the company of lax employees when he arrived a year later. In fact, he had to issue a statement to stop rumors of lay-offs, explaining the company was simply dismissing those employees who were not working. Mozelle Kasiah was a night shift clerical worker in the field office. The office was on

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88H. V. Appen, "To Our Shipbuilders," The Wainwright Liberator, 19 September 1942.

89"We Are Not Proud," The Wainwright Liberator, 17 October 1942.

100"No Cut Downs at the Shipyards," Panama City News-Herald, 17 September 1943.
the top floor and had many windows. The personnel were expected to watch for loafing among the shipyard workers when their office duties permitted. She did not remember observing much loafing.¹⁰¹

November, 1943, the shipyard developed a weekly award, the "Big J" emblem, to recognize a department that made an outstanding contribution as determined by the management. The training school received this award first.¹⁰²

Labor-Management Committee

The shipyard created a Labor-Management Committee in September, 1943, soon after Raymond Jones became manager. The committee consisted of four members each from labor and management. Its purpose was "to work out plans for closer cooperation, higher production and the betterment of working and living conditions in the Yard and in this area."¹⁰³ More specifically, the committee addressed problems relative to "absenteeism, training of workers, transportation of employees, parking space, morale, food and housing."¹⁰⁴ The shipyard informed the employees of the committee's creation at

¹⁰¹Mozelle Kasiah, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 23 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.


¹⁰³"Labor-Yard Committee Assured," The Wainwright Liberator, 4 September, 1943.

its Labor Day activities, which included a thirty minute program by the Labor-Management Committee.\textsuperscript{105} The committee met Thursdays afternoons chaired by Mr. Bateman, executive assistant, who served as a non-voting presiding officer to maintain the equal vote of the two groups.\textsuperscript{106}

The management gave this committee responsibility for the suggestion awards program already in place.\textsuperscript{107} This program, begun October, 1942, awarded $100, $75, $50, and $25 war bonds each month for the best four suggestions submitted by shipyard employees. The U.S. Maritime Commission authorized it.\textsuperscript{108} Some of the award winning suggestions were relatively simple. A recommendation to sell newspapers only to those going off shift so workers would not read on the "government's time" won second place. A fourth place prize went for the suggestion that a mirror be placed with a sign over it saying "CAN YOU LOOK YOURSELF IN THE FACE AND SAY, 'I DID AN HONEST DAY'S WORK TODAY'?"\textsuperscript{109}

The Labor-Management Committee created the "Clean Broom"


Award March, 1944, to promote cleanliness in the work areas. A $100 prize, to be spent as the area chose, accompanied this honor. The dirtiest area received the "dirty broom." The shipyard was divided into six sections for this contest: "wet dock, shipways, shop buildings, platens, steel storage and warehouse sections." Apparently, this program failed to achieve the desired results. Raymond Jones remarked at the launching of Alanson B. Houghton, that the shop area continued to win the "clean broom" and the platen area kept the "dirty broom."  

The Labor-Management Committee renamed the program the Labor-Management Suggestion Award Program and created a sub-committee responsible for its administration in 1944. The sub-committee moved its deliberations from the administration building to the hull field office. It further reorganized the program by forwarding each suggestion to the relevant department's supervisor for a report on its feasibility and savings.

Inventions

The shipyard recognized those whose inventions and innovations improved their production process. William T. "Broom Awards Point Way to Clean, Orderly and Efficient Shipyard," The Wainwright Liberator, 4 March 1944.

"Must Build 57 Ships This Year," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 March 1944.

Fox, General Superintendent in the Boiler Department, invented a press that saved $22,480 in pipe production on the shipyard's contract. The company praised the pipe department personnel for developing a process to finish the pipe before installing it in the ship. This simplified process saved an estimated 2,150 of the 3,500 manhours necessary to do this work on the ship. C. R. Dudley and W. A. Connally invented a strap-making machine for the shipyard that saved the labor of five men.

The Labor-Management Committee reassured workers that winning an award did not negate the ability to patent an invention. However, government policy stated, "all Maritime Commission contract shipyards may use, without payment of any fees, licenses, royalties or other expense, such suggestions or devices as they determine to be of value."

**Worker Morale and Human Interest**

The management used a variety of methods to maintain productivity at the shipyard. Patriotic appeals were common, especially in 1942. Untitled statements were found throughout The Wainwright Liberator urging workers to do their best such as:

113“Inventor Fox Exhibits His Masterpiece,” Panama City News-Herald, 12 July 1943.

114“Pipe Department Saves 2150 Man-Hours Per Ship,” The Wainwright Liberator, 25 September 1943.

115“Saving the Labor of Five Men,” The Wainwright Liberator, 3 April 1943.

as: "Hitler will sign your paycheck for the days you lay-off." and "One poor weld may sink the ship - your brother may be on that ship. Penetrate, boys, penetrate."

The shipyard admonished workers to be careful despite the need for speed so their ships would pass the government's strict inspection tests. The U.S. Maritime Commission's Office of National Service sponsored two guest speakers to the Wainwright Shipyard in October, 1942. These merchant seamen, Demitri Goulandris (Greek) and Colin MacKenzie (American) had survived torpedo attacks on their ships. The management released workers from work for thirty minutes to hear the speakers.

Later that month, the shipyard distributed cards to the workers to sign pledging their loyalty and energy in building ships for the war effort. The company forwarded the pledges to President Roosevelt with their comments on the importance of shipbuilding to the war. The Wainwright Liberator published some of them.

The company newspaper frequently published patriotic poems written by employees. The shipyard held a brief

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118 "Build Carefully," The Wainwright Liberator, 17 October 1942.


120 "Pledges to President Reveal Determination to Work Harder," The Wainwright Liberator, 17 October 1942.
ceremony to commemorate the first anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack. Many workers chose to work two-hours overtime without pay in June, 1944, to demonstrate their support of the war effort. The list of those who participated covered a page in The Wainwright Liberator.

The shipyard encouraged programs to help servicemen. In 1943 the employees decided to send cartons of cigarettes to military personnel serving overseas. Individuals purchased coupons for fifty cents each and wrote their names on them. The coupons were included in the cartons of cigarettes when they were delivered. The program collected $4,804.50 which purchased 10,559 cartons of cigarettes. The R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company delivered 2,000,000 Camel Cigarettes to the Special Service Supply Division of the Armed Service Forces for distribution. A Wainwright worker's Navy son received some of these cigarettes and sent a letter to his father expressing his appreciation. The shipyard repeated this

121"We Will Observe War Anniversary," The Wainwright Liberator, 5 December 1942.


123"Shipbuilders Donate Free Cigarettes to Our Boys Overseas," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 September 1943.

124"Wainwrighters Send 2,111,800 Cigarettes [sic] to Troops Overseas," The Wainwright Liberator, 16 October 1943.

125"Your Gift Cigarettes Head for Firing Lines," The Wainwright Liberator, 29 January 1944.

126"Navy Also Receiving Your Free Cigarettes," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 February 1944.
program in 1944, expanding it to include tobacco for pipe smokers. A coupon for a pound of tobacco cost sixty cents.\textsuperscript{127} This drive collected $3,638.11 to buy 6,000 pounds of tobacco for servicemen. The workers were informed the tobacco would be divided equally between Navy and Army personnel. Half would be shipped through New York and half through San Francisco Post Offices.\textsuperscript{128}

In July, 1943, the hull drafting department decided to furnish the next ship with reading material for its crew. The \textit{Wainwright Liberator} reported the department sought two hundred magazines and books.\textsuperscript{129}

The management recognized employees through \textit{The Wainwright Liberator} articles for human interest appeal. William "Billy" Tait, a Scottish shipbuilder was one such topic. The story emphasized his lengthy training and experience. It indicated prior to the war an individual almost had to be Scottish to be employed in a shipyard.\textsuperscript{130} The first child born to the shipyard's "family" was named "Wainwright Clarke" by his father, burner foreman, William

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{127} "Give Soldiers Tobacco for Yule Present," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 12 August 1944.
\item \textsuperscript{128} "Tobacco for Soldiers Overseas," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 16 September 1944.
\item \textsuperscript{129} "Off the Board," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 10 July 1943.
\item \textsuperscript{130} William M. Kennedy, "Billy Tait Earned His Trade in Shipyards of the Clyde," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 12 September 1942.
\end{itemize}
Clarke. The Wainwright Liberator gave front page coverage to shipyard employees, G. L. and Fannie Hutchison, when they received a letter from their son, Dick, a prisoner-of-war for three years at that time. Even a stray dog named "Spot" made the front page when he became an unofficial mascot for the shipyard after making the personnel building his home.

The shipyard operated a "radio station" over its public address system. The company made necessary work announcements over the system as well as personal announcements, such as birthdays and anniversaries. The station played march music at shift times to get workers started on their work day. A. C. Littleton, a Wainwright plumber, remembered the system playing a march tune composed by Wainwright worker Al Pesses at shift change. This made the clocking out process more orderly as employees naturally kept step to the music and virtually marched out of the gates. The station also broadcast popular music and operas, such as Carmen. Bob Armstrong of Augusta, Georgia, was the announcer.

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"A Little Wainwright," The Wainwright Liberator, 29 August 1942.


A. C. Littleton, Sr., interview with Peggy D. Felt, 24 June 1992, Panama City, Florida.

Promotion and Recognition

Promotion. The Wainwright Liberator recognized employees for outstanding work. Four men were promoted to burner leadership after working at the shipyard for just over a month. Their supervisor pointed out such early promotion was typical at a young shipyard for those employees wishing to take advantage of opportunities for advancement.  

Recognition. The shipyard ceased formal launchings following that of its third ship, the John Bascom, sponsored by Mrs. Harry G. Fannin, the mayor’s wife. Afterwards, shipyard personnel carried out the launching ceremonies. The company initiated a program to have the most efficient worker in each department select a ship’s sponsor, rotating the honor among the various departments. The welding department was the first to have this privilege. George Washington Commander, 28, had the honor of naming the sponsor of the fourth ship, the William Bryan. An apprentice welder in the fabricating shop he had a rating of 247%, indicating he welded approximately 2.5 times the expected rate. An inexperienced worker when hired, he received ninety hours of training, began as a tacker, and had advanced to welder three months

124"Promotions Come Quick to Four Young Burners," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 August 1942.


134"Efficiency on Job Will Determine Workers Selected," The Wainwright Liberator, 6 March 1943.
previously. He chose his wife to sponsor the ship.\textsuperscript{139}

A fall, 1944, program awarded a $500 prize for hull superintendents responsible for the most efficient hull production. The winner also named the sponsor, co-sponsor and flower girl for the launching. \textit{The Wainwright Liberator} announced this with a picture of two previous winners who hosted parties for their workers.\textsuperscript{140}

\textbf{Welding Records}. The shipyard focussed attention on the welding records since this was such an important part of the production process. Wainwright welders set a new record for the Gulf Coast region with 10.1 feet per hour in March, 1943. The previous record was eight feet.\textsuperscript{141} The swing shift crew set a new record of 12.2 feet welding per hour, April 16, 1943, then promptly broke it the next day with 14 feet per hour.\textsuperscript{142} George Darsen, the U.S. Maritime Commission Welding Coordinator for the Gulf Coast District was quite satisfied with the shipyard’s welding levels during his inspection in April, 1943. The shipyard’s rate had progressed from 41,000

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\textsuperscript{139}"Apprentice Sets Records, Names Wife as Sponsor," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 27 March 1943.

\textsuperscript{140}"Competitors for Prizes," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 14 October 1944.


\textsuperscript{142}"Swing Shift Welders Beat Own New Record," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 24 April 1943.
feet per week in January, to 228,000 feet per week in April. C. H. Scott noted his department's welding levels exceeded an unnamed shipyard two years older than Wainwright in 1943.

The swing shift responsible for erecting 400 tons of steel with no injuries was featured in July, 1943. This crew established two records simultaneously, one for the amount of steel erected and one for the lack of injuries.

Contests

The shipyard management used contests to maintain morale and encourage productivity. A competition always seemed to be underway. War Bonds, in various denominations, were the normal prizes. A November, 1942, contest to write words to a march in honor of General Wainwright was one of the first and carried a $25 War Bond reward. Al Pesses had written the music. In 1942, some supervisors offered prizes within their respective departments. S. L. Smith of the burning department issued a $5 prize for the best suggestions within

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16"Swing Shift May Have Two Records," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 July 1943.

his department. Jack York, assistant welding superintendent, offered weekly prizes to each male and female welder with the highest efficiency.

**Welding Contest.** The management established an ongoing contest among welders in March, 1944. The contest divided welders into six groups. The group with the best (most) week’s welding record won and its best welder received a $25 War Bond. The second week’s contest selected the best week’s welding from the remaining five groups and again awarded the group’s best welder a $25 War Bond. The elimination process continued for a third week, at which point the company awarded a $75 War Bond to the best welder of the best group. The contest then began for another three-week cycle. However, the welding records continued from one competition to the next.

Fannie Mae Hutchison, a Wainwright welder, remembered winning several of these $25 War Bonds. She noted that many felt the prizes were not worth the additional effort and made no attempt to compete.

The focus on welders led to some jealousy. The newspaper

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150 Fannie Mae Hutchison, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
featured a picture of the outside layout crew along with a letter from a wife claiming the paper ignored the hard work of this group in favor of the welders. Other workers expressed displeasure at the attention paid to the welders and questioned why there were no contests for them.

Wainwright-Brunswick Shipyards. The Jones Construction Company also sponsored contests between its two shipyards, Wainwright and Brunswick. The first such contest was to design a flag to fly over the companies' offices and on ships until they were delivered. The winner received the traditional $25 War Bond.

The 1944 welding competition was the most significant. The shipyard selected the twelve best men and women welders based on their respective welding records February 14 through March 13, 1944. Four male and four female welders were selected in the next elimination round. Supervisors nominated two male and two female welders to compensate for the different time required for different types of welding. Each contestant's footage for the week of March 18-25 divided by forty-eight hours, the typical work week, established the

151"Outside Layout Department Has a Job to Do - and Does It," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 June 1943.

152Pee Wee Berry, "Wainwright Anvil Chorus," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 March 1944.

final elimination score. The company chose the best male and female welders and runners-up. The winners competed with Brunswick's best welders at Brunswick Shipyard. The winner of that contest participated in a national contest on the Pacific Coast. Lurie S. Radford, outfitting dock, and L. A. Whitehead, shipways, won the competition at Wainwright. Fannie Mae Hutchison, one of the shipyard's top female welders, came in fourth in the competition but was awarded the highest runner-up prize, a $100 War Bond. The Brunswick welders won the competition by four points.

The two shipyards continued their competition. April, 1944, the management placed a board in front of the cafeteria to compare the manhours per ship constructed. Wainwright Shipyard won this contest by reducing its manhours per ship by 195,586.82 and delivering sixteen ships, compared to Brunswick's 68,591.75 manhours per ship reduction and thirteen ships delivered. The Jones Construction Company contributed the $500 prize to the Labor-Management Committee's Fund for emergency relief purposes. The contest paid off in increased

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155 "Two Swingshifters Compete in Brunswick," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 April 1944.

156 "Our Aces Lose to Brunswick," The Wainwright Liberator, 15 April 1944.

157 "Delivery Record Smashed," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 April 1944.
efficiency for both shipyards. Wainwright required 792,201.16 manhours per hull and Brunswick 714,436.90 in February, 1944, prior to the competition. This declined to 596,614.34 manhours at Wainwright and 645,845.15 at Brunswick at the competition's close, June, 1944. 158

Maintaining a Safe Work Environment

Security Personnel

A shipyard the size of Wainwright required its own police force, originally named the Plant Protection Corps. The shipyard's Plant Protection Corps' Chief conducted a training program that included "Laws of Evidence and Preservation, First Aid, the Arrest Act, Police Courtesy, Law Enforcement, Self Defense (Judo), Riot Prevention, Criminal Investigation, Safe Use of Fire-Arms, and Close Order Drill." 159 Later, it became the Wainwright Yard Police Department. The U.S. Navy Coast Guard incorporated this group into its ranks February, 1943, granting them federal authority and parallel rank in the Coast Guard. 160 The Wainwright Liberator reminded employees of this federal backing in an article describing groups' attempts to intimidate officers making arrests. 161 Walter G.

158 "Win $500 Save Five Million," The Wainwright Liberator, 24 June 1944.


160 "Police Inducted in Coast Guard," The Wainwright Liberator, 20 February 1943.

Cornett led the shipyard's legal department. He also judged all cases of violation of yard rules beginning January, 1944. Previously, the Yard Police issued summary penalties.  

Fire Hazards

Fire dangers warranted a fire department that increased from a six-man crew in 1942 to 130 men in 1943. Their equipment included two fire trucks and an auxiliary truck. The crews dealt with an average of twenty-five to thirty incipient fires daily. The variety of fire sources included those started by acetylene torches, electric fires caused by sparks from welding electrodes, short circuited/overloaded welding machines, greasy rags, and cigarette smokers. A fire destroyed a ship under construction in June, 1944. Workers had to dismantle the charred ruins of the ship and the way had to be closed while the damage was cleared. The Wainwright fire department was responsible for the nearby housing projects as well as the shipyard. Its job became more difficult in the winter months as workers used the fire

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162 "Meet the Judge," *The Wainwright Liberator*, 8 January 1944.


164 "Wainwright Sets All-Time Record for Deliveries: Six Ships Completed in Month," *The Wainwright Liberator*, 3 June 1944.

buckets for warming fires. Any buckets were difficult to keep due to this cold weather practice, which involved putting holes in the bucket to ventilate the fire built inside it. The superintendent of cleaning ships, shipways, and outfitting docks area reported the same problem with the buckets needed in his area.

**First Aid Stations**

The shipyard had a first aid station maintained by the Travelers Insurance Company. The insurance company had an adjuster, investigator, and three office workers in its Wainwright office. A physician, Dr. John C. Branham, and seven nurses made up the medical staff at the first aid station. The facility had ten cubicles and an X-Ray room and was capable of caring for serious injuries, except those requiring surgery. The first aid station provided quick treatment for shipyard injuries and also avoided placing additional demand on the community's medical facilities.

The medical staff increased to twelve nurses by February, 1943. The first aid station had four doctors on duty by


168 "First Aid Station Offers Most Modern Care to Injured," *The Wainwright Liberator*, 1 August 1942.

June, 1943. The shipyard located a first aid substation in the center of the shipyard in July, 1943. The substation had two treatment rooms and remained open twenty-four hours. A worker seeking treatment at the first aid stations had to obtain a first aid treatment form from his supervisor, to avoid having his pay docked for the time involved. The shipyard also attempted to maintain the health of their employees during the winter months by offering free treatment to immunize the workers against colds in 1942. The effort failed and the program was not used in following years.

Safety Gear

The shipyard mandated the use of hardhats, goggles, and safe-toe shoes beginning October, 1942. The shipyard provided the goggles and hardhats; the workers had to purchase the shoes. However, the Wainwright Yard Safety Shoe Store sold the shoes at cost. When rationing began, a worker could buy these shoes without a valid shoe stamp as long as he had

170"Field Station for First Aid to Open Soon," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 June 1943.

171"New First Aid Station Soon for Shipbuilders," The Wainwright Liberator, 17 April 1943.

172"First Aid Treatment Form Must Be Signed," The Wainwright Liberator, 7 August 1943.

173"Employees to Get Free Treatment to Prevent All Colds," The Wainwright Liberator, 19 December 1942.


a Number 3 Ration Book. The shipyard could secure special shoe ration stamps.  

Injuries

The shipyard’s use of a work force unaccustomed to a heavy industry environment increased the risks of personal injuries. The Wainwright Liberator frequently published articles warning these shipyard novices of the hazards of wandering around outside their assigned work area. Often, workers took short cuts through other buildings. The management noted this increased danger in late November, 1942, as the shipyard changed from a construction environment to a steel construction industry. The company emphasized the importance of safety equipment and reported specific instances in which workers escaped serious injuries by wearing safety gear or received injuries for failing to do so. A piece of metal hit a chipper’s goggles so hard his eyeglasses were shattered but his eyes were not injured. Jimmie Mann’s hair was singed by a spark from a welder’s arc when he failed

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to wear his safety hat on the wet dock. A rigger in the riveting department lost an eye when he failed to wear goggles while working. H. E. Hamm, 21, was seriously burned when his welder’s rod “hit an arc” while working on Hull Number 14. An electrician was seriously burned when a switch he closed without first removing the ground connections on the line exploded. The management urged workers to report unsafe conditions to the safety man. It also used patriotic incentives, such as stating injuries reduced necessary war production just like a saboteur.

The first aid station reported on the 812 cases it handled in July, 1942. These cost 867 man days lost. The report gave the following breakdown of the types of injuries in order of frequency: handling of materials, hand tools, dropping on feet, falls, striking against nails or other projections, mashed fingers, foreign particles in eyes, burns, stepping on nails/scrap, lifting strains, machine

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20 “Welder Suffers Serious Burns,” Panama City News-Herald, 18 August 1943.


operation. Flash burns, burns to the eye around welding sites, increased seriously in August, 1942. Observers, rather than the welders themselves, received most of these burns. Management warned it was "going to stop this wandering around and avoidable accidents and is going to be hard-boiled about it." 

**Fatalities**

Wainwright reassured prospective workers that the shipyard was a safe place to work if careful. As evidence, it cited the January, 1943, report that its 1942 average of 28,851 accidents resulting in lost time for every 1,000,000 man hours worked was below the region's average.

Nevertheless, the shipyard experienced several accidental deaths. Its first fatality occurred October, 1942, when David E. Pittard was killed by steel beams falling from a crane in the steel storage warehouse. The Wainwright Liberator did not report on the accident itself but referred to this avoidable accident in an editorial emphasizing the importance

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186 "Fore and Aft," The Wainwright Liberator, 29 August 1942.


188 "Steel Worker Is Crushed by Falling Beams," Panama City News-Herald, 23 October 1942.
of thinking before acting to insure safety. Hardy G. Keel died when a section of shell plate that was not securely fastened fell on him in December, 1942. Fannie Hutchison, a Wainwright welder, was nearby when this accident (or one very similar to it) occurred. She ran to see if she could assist. Though not a squeamish person, the sight was so grisly she went into hysterics and had to go home. Darfie M. Parrish, a 16-year-old welder's apprentice, died from a fall. O. Z. Pillman, thirty-years-old, died from a crushed skull when he fell against heavy equipment. A worker died when he chose to take a short cut by jumping from a scaffold to a platform, lost his balance and fell 16.5 feet to a tank top. The Panama City News-Herald was more likely to publish reports on fatal accidents at the shipyard than The Wainwright Liberator.

The shipyard emphasized injuries' cost to production by

18"Think-Be Careful," The Wainwright Liberator, 31 October 1942.


20Fannie Mae Hutchison, interview by Peggy D. Felt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

21"Broken Skull Fatal to Boy," Panama City News-Herald, 24 May 1943.

22"Fall Fatal to Shipyard Worker," Panama City News-Herald, 31 August 1943.

including the manhours lost in most of its reports. One in three employees lost time from an injury the last six months of 1942. This cost the shipyard 2,575 days.\textsuperscript{195} The shipyard averaged 110 to 120 injuries daily in 1943.\textsuperscript{196} The shipyard began to include the lost wages in its accident reports in 1944. The first aid station reported 3,757 employee injuries for January, 1944; ninety-two required workers to leave work, losing 809 days' wages (over \$6,000).\textsuperscript{197} The injury rate decreased to 3,203 injuries and \$5,000 lost wages the following month.\textsuperscript{198} June's injuries increased to 4,733; 50 resulting in lost time. July's injuries decreased to 4,005, and 44 lost time injuries but involved the deaths of a rigger and a welder.\textsuperscript{199} The U.S. Maritime Commission sponsored a safety contest for the month of March, 1944, to determine which shipyard would have the honor of building a Liberty Ship named after Raymond Clapper, a popular war correspondent.

\textsuperscript{195}'A Man Hurt Here May Cost the Life of a Soldier,' \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 9 January 1943.

\textsuperscript{196}'E. M. McCullough, "Safety Thoughts," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 1 January 1944.

\textsuperscript{197}'E. M. McCullough, "Safety Thoughts," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 5 February 1944.

\textsuperscript{198}'Avoidable Accidents Cost workers Here \$5,000 in February,' \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 8 April 1944.

killed in Far East fighting.\textsuperscript{200} The St. Johns River Shipbuilding Company, Jacksonville, Florida, won the honor.\textsuperscript{201} The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics maintained statistics on the accident frequency rates (the number of lost-time accidents per million man-hours worked) in the maritime shipyards. The national rate was 32.6 in 1943; the Gulf Region’s rate was 31.0. The first six months of 1944 the national accident frequency rate was 25.6. The Gulf Region’s rate of 20.5 fell below the national rate. Both of the Jones Construction Company shipyards were among the twenty-eight shipyards whose June average was below the national average rate of 25.6. Both were also below the Gulf Region average of 19.6 (Brunswick’s was 11.1 and Wainwright’s was 16.3.).\textsuperscript{202} Wainwright Shipyard received a letter from the U.S. Maritime Commission’s Chief Safety Consultant, John M. Roche, complementing Wainwright on its 50% reduction in its accident rate November, 1944.\textsuperscript{203} The annual report for 1944 gave the following summary:

\textsuperscript{200}“Safest Yard Will Win Honor,” \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 4 March 1944.


\textsuperscript{202}“Accident Frequency Rates in Maritime Shipyards,” \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 14 October 1944.

\textsuperscript{203}John M. Roche, “John M. Roche Praises Safety Record in Yard,” \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 18 November 1944.
"Fatalities
Lost Time Injuries 9
Time Lost Due to Injuries 208 years, 8 months, 22 days
First Aid Cases 45,210
Time Lost for minor injuries 11 years, 7 months, 13 1/2 days
Total time lost during 1944 220 years, 4 months, 3 1/2 days
Accumulative frequency rate 21.99%*"

The average number of workers in the shipyard January, 1945, was 11,925; 3,745 received injuries. Workers' failure to wear goggles caused 59.5% (2,229) of these injuries and cost approximately 7,000 manhours for the month.\textsuperscript{295} March, 1945, workers received 1,371 eye injuries (52.35% of the total injuries); 700 were flash burns and 671 were caused by foreign objects in the eye. The welding department was the source of 511 of the injuries.\textsuperscript{296}

The shipyard gave significant recognition to those areas that finished a ship without injury. Hull Number 77, \textit{Charles A. Draper}, was the first ship built and delivered without a lost time injury. Three ships had been launched without a lost time injury, but \textit{Charles A. Draper} was the first to complete the outfitting process injury free.\textsuperscript{297} Bill Wingo,

\textsuperscript{294}F. P. Yearsley, "Your Future in 1945?" \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 20 January 1945.

\textsuperscript{295}"Injuries to Eyes total 60 PCT. of First Aid Cases," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 10 February 1945.


ship superintendent of shipway A, was given the honor of choosing the sponsor of Tannadice, a tanker, because of his shipway’s outstanding safety record.\footnote{Mrs. Mary S. Wingo Sponsors Tanker Tannadice,\textit{" The Wainwright Liberator}, 9 June 1945.}

Accidents decreased significantly from 1944 to 1945. Worker familiarity with the dangers associated with the shipyard was one reason for the decline. The shipyard also placed more emphasis on safety. However, a significant reason may have been the decline in production as the war came to a close.

The following statistical comparison illustrates the reduction in injuries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1944</th>
<th>1945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Rate (February)</td>
<td>35.52</td>
<td>11.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost time Injuries (February)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhours Lost (July)</td>
<td>36 years 10 months 21 days</td>
<td>3 years 3 months 21 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Injuries (June)</td>
<td>4733</td>
<td>2287\footnote{Accidents Highest with New Workers,\textit{ The Wainwright Liberator}, 14 November 1942.}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Safety Training}

Safety Engineer E. M. McCullough observed in November, 1942, that seventy-five percent of the accidents were among new employees.\footnote{F. F. Yearsley, \textit{"A Job Well Done," The Wainwright Liberator}, 8 September 1945.} However, safety training was not made a part of new employees’ training until July, 1943. Employees who went through this training had an accident rate twenty
percent less than others for the month of December, 1943. The superintendents of the electrical facilities and the marine electrical departments decided their men should learn artificial respiration. They made arrangements with the safety engineer to train them. Twenty men per shift received training in this technique for six days.

**Problems**

Large numbers of workers in a new plant inevitably produced problems. Workers unused to any industrial environment, much less a shipyard, increased the difficulties. The management addressed minor problems with editorials in *The Wainwright Liberator*. Some employees did not behave appropriately when the Wainwright Band played the national anthem. The management simply outlined the proper behavior in *The Wainwright Liberator*, taking the view that this behavior was due to ignorance, since some workers had not had the "advantages of school and probably never heard a band until they came to work here." The management reminded workers who forgot the identification badges necessary for admittance to the facility that wearing the badges saved everyone

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The administration threatened to dismiss workers wearing the white hats reserved for supervisors only.215

Misuse of Materials

Many lamented the waste of metal materials, especially welding rods. J. T. Culpepper, the assistant superintendent responsible for steel salvage, reported 431,000 pounds of rods valued at $125,000 had been made unusable by moisture in April, 1944.216 By February, 1945, the shipyard had more difficulty obtaining such materials and production levels declined.217 Workers misused materials to try to keep cool in the summer, such as using compressed air as fans. Water and ice were also in short supply. Workers delayed deliveries of soft drinks by failing to return their bottles. The manufacturers only delivered as many drinks as they received refundable glass bottles.218 The shipyard also had difficulty keeping its materials. Workers took building materials and tools home as one method to circumvent the government red-tape required to obtain these scarce materials. Protective goggles


215 "Important Notice to Every Yard Employee," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 April 1943.


became a favorite children's toy. The management reminded employees all shipyard materials belonged to the government and warned such thefts would be turned over to the U.S. Attorney for action.219

Promptness

Promptness was a problem locally as well as nationally. Clock production had been discontinued to conserve metal but workers lacked a reliable method to awaken to get to work on time. The War Production Board announced the development of a "Victory Model" alarm clock which became available in April, 1943.220

Workers stopping on time was apparently a different problem. One employee expressed concern that children selling peanuts and papers at shift change risked being trampled and suggested concession stands for their protection.221 Some workers, approximately thirty to forty percent, dealt with this problem by simply leaving early. The management and union reached an agreement whereby a whistle blew at 4:25 for those who needed to put up tools before the 4:30 whistle to stop work. Anyone in sight of the time gate prior to 4:30

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220"Will This Help?" The Wainwright Liberator, 3 April 1943.

lost an hour's pay.\textsuperscript{222} When this proved unsuccessful, the punishment increased to suspension from work for a full day.\textsuperscript{223} This latter policy coincided with a report on U.S. Maritime Commission Admiral H. L. Vickery's surprise inspection. He complimented the improvement of work since his previous visit but criticized the degree of loafing he observed in his address to the workers.\textsuperscript{224} Some employees took loafing to new highs. According to H. Mack Lewis, a local businessman, a few of the local employees arranged for someone to pick them up in a rowboat after they punched in and row them back in time to punch out without doing any work.\textsuperscript{225} Two workers were arrested and faced a possible $500 penalty and a year jail sentence for punching each other's time cards.\textsuperscript{226} Raymond A. Jones weeded out loafers as one of his first policies as general manager.\textsuperscript{227} As an example, the shipyard dismissed two workers who refused to work on

\textsuperscript{222}"All Employees Must Work the Full Eight Hour Day," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 24 December 1942.

\textsuperscript{223}"Important Announcement!" \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 6 March 1943.

\textsuperscript{224}"Admiral Vickery Declares Loafing Here Must Cease," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 6 March 1943.

\textsuperscript{225}H. Mack Lewis, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 4 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

\textsuperscript{226}"Arrest Two Shipyard Workers on Charge of Conspiracy and Attempt to Defraud Company by Illegal Time Card Punching," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 27 June 1944.

\textsuperscript{227}"Fleet Day Is Victory for Yard," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 2 October 1943.
Saturday, causing them to lose their draft deferment, and notified the draft board.\textsuperscript{22}

\textbf{Absenteeism}

The shipyard had a major problem with absenteeism throughout its operation. In January, 1943, The Wainwright Liberator, reported unexcused absenteeism ranged from 334 to 637 per day with an average of 394. This cost the shipyard 3,152 man hours.\textsuperscript{226} A ship required 375,000 man hours to build. Absenteeism cost the shipyard almost ten percent of a ship daily.\textsuperscript{230} Absenteeism declined from January's 6.7% to 4.8% in March, 1943.\textsuperscript{231} War Manpower Commission reports invariably included information on the absentee problem. One such report (March, 1943) reported absentee rates of 5.8% for December, 1942; 3.8% for January, 1943; and 7.0% for February, 1943.\textsuperscript{232} Another report (December, 1943) stated the shipyard's absentee rate of 6.7% was not "too far out of line

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{22}\textit{H. V. Appen, "To Our Shipbuilders," The Wainwright Liberator, 15 August 1942.}

\textsuperscript{221}\textit{Not a Holiday," The Wainwright Liberator, 23 January 1943.}

\textsuperscript{232}\textit{H. V. Appen, "To Our Shipbuilders," The Wainwright Liberator, 6 February 1943.}

\textsuperscript{231}\textit{"Sharp Cut in Absenteeism at Shipyard Here," Panama City News-Herald, 29 March 1943.}

\textsuperscript{232}\textit{Manpower Utilization Consultant Check List, Based on Summary of Analysis, of Manning Table for J. A. Jones Construction Company, Wainwright Yard, Panama City, Florida, March 31, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.}
\end{footnotes}
with other war production centers." The problem became worse in 1944. March, 1944, the absenteeism was 283,000 man-hours, the amount necessary to build one-half of a ship. The company's change from three shifts to two shifts in 1944 created better attendance and production levels. Nevertheless, two of five welders were absent one to three days weekly, according to a November, 1944, report. This translated into 649 of 1,459 welders absent -- the equivalent of 1,645 workdays (14,805 man-hours) in one week. The 1944 absentee rate "cost" the shipyard eight ships and increased the man hours necessary to produce each.

Leading causes for absenteeism were "alcoholic hangovers, laying off to rest and spend accumulated money, sickness of self or in family, visiting relatives, and trying to get dental or medical care. In addition to these reasons women are frequently absent in order to shop, do the family laundry, visit beauty parlors, etc. These things cannot be attended to

233 "Monthly Field Operating Report, Northwest Florida Area, Panama City, Florida, December, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

234 "Delivery Record Smashed," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 April 1944.

235 "New Hours Increase Output," The Wainwright Liberator, 13 May 1944.

236 "All New Ships at Wainwright for Army-Navy," The Wainwright Liberator, 4 November 1944.

outside working hours because commercial and service establishments are overcrowded and inadequate. Lengthy commuting distances also contributed to the absenteeism problem. Some workers travelled four to six hours daily because local housing was unavailable. Such commuting exhausted the worker and reduced his net income. The shipyard also noted higher absentee rates among unskilled workers and departments suffering from a shortage of workers because the workday was so much more exhausting for those who did report. Not surprisingly, attendance was higher on the weekdays than during the week-end.

The shipyard used a variety of techniques to reduce absenteeism in 1943. Initially, the administration simply recognized employees who had worked six months or more without missing a day in The Wainwright Liberator. Next, the company established a new policy to reward attendance. Welders with perfect attendance were allowed to ride the ship down the ways at the launching and around to the outfitting dock. Welders who worked on S.S. Elihu Root, the shipyard's

239 "Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

240 "Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

241 "Hundred Percenters Club," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 May 1943.
sixth ship, received this honor first. The shipyard formally established this policy with the launching of S.S. John Hay on May 22, 1943, Maritime Day and the first anniversary of the shipyard's dedication. Workers with a perfect attendance record for six months received special gold and silver merit badges and souvenir booklets at the launching ceremonies beginning June, 1943. The management created a new department to maintain records on workers' absenteeism December, 1943, indicating the seriousness of the problem. Headed by Ralph Moss, this department reported each worker's absentee record to his respective supervisor with recommendations to terminate habitually absent employees. This information also affected promotions, rehiring, merit pay, housing and deferment requests for males. The Selective Service Board ceased extending deferments for habitual absentees. They were reclassified from 2-B to 1-A. The shipyard management was more tolerant of absenteeism than might otherwise have been true because of the

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26"Merit Will Be Rewarded," The Wainwright Liberator, 5 June 1943.

27"New Bureau to Control Absentees," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 December 1943.

28"Draft Boards to Reclassify All Absentees," The Wainwright Liberator, 9 December 1944.
shortage of workers.

Worker Turnover

Worker turnover was more serious than absenteeism. Separations numbered 6,171 for the six months prior to March, 1943. Of these, 1,115 went into the military and 1,950 officially quit. At the time, the shipyard employed 10,508, indicating the high degree of turnover. The rate declined to 9.7% in December, 1943. The separation rates for July and August, 1943 were 19.8% and 16.6%, respectively. The shipyard dismissed approximately five hundred employees monthly. By October, 1943, seventy-five percent of the terminations were by those quitting. The shipyard's efforts to maintain an adequately trained work force was seriously hampered by one-third of the workers leaving within a two-month period. During the October-November, 1943 period, 4,087 workers terminated — 375 dismissals, 436 for military service, and 3,177 for no given reason. During the same

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246 "War Manpower Commission Manning Table, March 20, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

247 "Monthly Field Operating Report, Northwest Florida Area, Panama City, Florida, December, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

248 "Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

249 "Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
period, 3,854 workers were hired, 808 of which were rehires. Wainwright Shipyard employed twenty percent more workers than it needed in 1943 to compensate for the shortage of skilled workers, the absenteeism, and turnover. In essence, they used quantity of workers to overcome lack of quality. The shipyard reached its peak employment in summer, 1943, with approximately 18,000 workers. Replacement of personnel was the purpose of the employment after that time. The movement of workers aggravated housing shortages and food allocation problems.

The community housing shortage, poor quality supervision and the management’s termination of unsatisfactory workers were three major reasons for the high turnover rate. Use of workers from small town rural experience was another. They simply could not adjust to an industrial environment. Southern workers had difficulty accustoming themselves to punching a time-clock. Northerners who migrated to the South


21"Monthly Field Operating Report, Northwest Florida Area, Panama City, Florida, December, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

22"Job Wanderers Held Menace to War Production," Panama City News-Herald, 23 July 1943.

23"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
were unprepared for the humid heat in the summertime. Frequently, workers quit to seek a better job elsewhere. Workers moved from one shipyard to another along the Gulf Coast. As an example, forty to fifty former employees of Ingalls Shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, applied for employment at Wainwright Shipyard more than once. Government attempts to halt such migration were hampered by employers, facing shortages, being unenthusiastic in rejecting any potential workers. Workers also circumvented such programs by falsifying applications about former employment, especially relative to movement from farm employment.

Various government agencies cooperated with the Jones Construction Company to alleviate the housing shortage. Development of adequate housing and community facilities was predicted to reduce the turnover rate by an additional one to two percent in 1944. The Jobs Relations and Job Instruction Training programs by the War Manpower Commission


256 "Monthly Field Operating Report, Northwest Florida Area, Panama City, Florida, December, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

257 "Monthly Field Operating Report, Northwest Florida Area, Panama City, Florida, December, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
were offered to deal with the supervision problem.\footnote{Training Promotes Efficiency, \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 11 March 1944.} Training reduced the turnover rate some. A study of the July-December, 1943, turnover rate revealed a turnover rate of 2.3\% for the 161 supervisors who had received training. This compared to a termination rate exceeding 100\% (364 of 351 employed) for those not trained. Trained welders had a turnover rate of 10\% compared to 15.9\% for those who did not take the training program.\footnote{Reviewer Strives to Readjust Jobs of Discontented, \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 16 January 1943. \textit{J. L. Drake - Your 'Father Confessor', \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 20 March, 1943.} Fourteen of the thirty men who completed the first classes at the Wainwright Training School in May, 1942, were still employed April, 1944.\footnote{Some of Yard's First Welders and Burners Still on Job Here, \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 22 April 1944.}

Wainwright Shipyard created the "Quit Review" Office in January, 1943, in an attempt to stem the exodus of employees. Headed by J. L. Drake, a former instructor in applied psychology, the office analyzed reasons workers were terminated or quit and attempted to resolve problems so that workers would remain at Wainwright Shipyard.\footnote{Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943, War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.} The shipyard itself formed the "3-Year Club" in 1945 to recognize those
employed for that length of time.  

**Employment Stabilization**

Federal government policies significantly affected the shipyard's operation, especially relative to its work force. The *Panama City News-Herald* reported a special Congressional committee addressed policies to alleviate manpower shortages in October, 1942. Reporters expected the committee to approve recommendations that included government authority to stop pirating of labor and a Selective Service policy to reclassify deferred defense workers who left essential war industry as 1-A.

The War Manpower Commission established a new policy based on the 1943 Stabilization Act to prevent "job hopping" by workers and "pirating" by employers in January, 1943. This program required workers to receive clearance from the U.S. Employment Service, War Manpower Commission, when changing jobs. A branch office of this government agency was located in the Wainwright Shipyard Personnel Office. However, the law was widely misunderstood as freezing workers in their current jobs. Harvey Driscoll, the area's War Manpower Commission representative, clarified the law as follows:

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263 "Rationing of Manpower Seen as Early Need," *Panama City News-Herald*, 7 October 1942.

Workers wishing to leave a war industry completed a form indicating the reason for the request. If the employer agreed to the separation, the U.S. Employment Service gave the worker a referral card to another employer. If the employer rejected the request, the U.S. Employment Service first attempted to persuade the worker to stay. If unsuccessful, the U.S. Employment Service conducted a review. A front page story in the Panama City News-Herald indicated the seriousness of this policy. Marcus DeJong, Jr. moved to the area from Gulfport, Mississippi. He lost his wallet with the transfer slip verifying he had been released by the Koski Company and could legally apply for a job at the Wainwright Shipyard. The article appealed to anyone who might find the wallet to return the papers in it at least.

A War Manpower Commission policy established for the Northwest Florida area beginning October 15, 1943, increased the penalty period from 30 to 60 days for those workers who terminated without cause. A worker was unable to obtain work at another war industry unless he had lived in the area for thirty days, had been idle for sixty days (an increase from thirty days), or had a release from the former employer. In addition, a worker could take a higher paying job only if his

265"Driecoll and Constangy Say Stabilization Act Does Not 'Freeze' Workers in Job: It Only Defines Method by Which He May Change His Employer," Panama City News-Herald, 6 July 1943.

existing pay was below state or federal standards or below War Labor Board rates for the community. This new rule applied to 25,000 workers in the Panama City area. However, workers who were fired were given a clear release to seek employment elsewhere. Therefore, instead of quitting, employees wishing to migrate elsewhere would simply get themselves fired, thereby circumventing the intent of the policy. The Selective Service Regulations were changed to reclassify those with deferments for war industry employment to Class I-A, Class I-A-0, or Class IV-E if they left their job without adequate reasons in 1944.

The Personnel Department reported in February, 1944, employment of 40,000 from the shipyard's opening with 25,000 terminations, 4,000 for military service. A minimum of fifty employees were rehired daily. Neither company nor government policies completely eliminated the turnover problem. The company also faced problems caused by the

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268"25,000 Workers in This Sector Under WMC Rule," Panama City News-Herald, 18 August 1943.

269"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

270"Army to Get 18-38 Class Who Quit Jobs," The Wainwright Liberator, 30 December 1944.

Selective Service changing deferment policies for war industry workers.

Selective Service Policies

Selective Service Director Lewis B. Hershey, announced in 1942 the military would refuse volunteers who worked in war industries (or had done so within the previous sixty days) because of the war industries’ worker shortage. Though not deferring all such workers, the military drafted as needed and as replacements were found. Paul V. McNutt, War Manpower Commission, presented a master list of three thousand professions considered essential to the war which included those involved in ship or ship parts production. A year later, the policy changed. The Florida Selective Service System placed Wainwright employees subject to the draft on a Replacement List. This gave the shipyard time to replace a worker before he was inducted into the military. The policy allotted thirty to sixty days for a single man; sixty to ninety days for a childless, married man; and six to twelve months for a married man with children. Edna Knight of the personnel office dealt with employees receiving draft notices. She could arrange deferment for those with skills not easily replaced. She had previously worked for the North Carolina

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22"War Workers Forbidden to Enter Service," The Wainwright Liberator, 24 November 1942.

23"Possible Draftee on Replacement List," The Wainwright Liberator, 11 September 1943.
State Selective Service Board. The Selective Service changed induction ages to men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-eight in 1944. The previous maximum age had been thirty. Wainwright’s management urged affected workers to see the Selective Service advisor within eight days of their reclassification. The shipyard could still arrange deferments for those in critical areas.

Wainwright previously had to employ males not familiar with a heavy industry work environment. The government’s changing draft policies decreased the available white male work force. War industries such as Wainwright Shipyard had to seek a new labor supply. They turned to two new groups of non-traditional workers, women and minorities.

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274 "Keep Right with Your Draft Board," The Wainwright Liberator, 6 November 1943.

CHAPTER 4
WOMEN AND MINORITY WORKERS

Employment of Women

Traditional Employment

Wainwright Shipyard required a work force of 8,000 to 9,000 when it opened in 1942. Bay County's population was only 20,000. The shipyard's use of non-traditional sources for workers was inevitable. A January, 1943, War Manpower Commission report included Panama City as one of thirty-one areas with a labor shortage.1

Wainwright Shipyard employed women for secretarial and other traditional positions initially. Wainwright Liberator articles referring to women were accompanied by their pictures; the newspaper often used pictures of female workers as space fillers. Traditional positions held by women included: switchboard operators, cafeteria workers, stock record keepers, bookkeepers, timekeepers, receptionists, nurses, canteen operators, printshop workers, company store clerks, and, of course, secretaries and office workers.2 The

1"Panama City Short of Labor, Says WMC," Panama City News-Herald, 4 January 1943.

shipyard staffed offices exclusively with women (except for the manager) when possible. The tool checkers department and the labor cost accounting department were examples of this practice.

Even office workers were scarce and the paperwork generated by a large shipbuilding firm required many such employees. Some of the offices operated twenty-four hours a day. In addition, governmental agencies such as the U.S. Maritime Commission and the U.S. Employment Service had offices on site which required office personnel. Consequently, the various shipyard offices recruited personnel on an informal basis. Renell Poston's father encouraged her to come from Montgomery for a job in the U.S. Maritime Commission office. The Jones Construction Company office had her do filing while she waited for her interview. She went to work almost immediately. Mary Darr came to the shipyard's


'Renell Poston, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
termination office from Geneva, Alabama. Some offices lost their personnel to high salaried jobs in the shipyard. The field office employed Mozelle Kasiah to replace a woman who had become a welder. A September, 1942, news article noted five of the twenty female burners employed in the yard came from the cafeteria. As the draft reduced its bases for deferments, shipyard jobs became more available to office workers. One article in The Wainwright Liberator pictured Mary Metcalf, who had been in the time department office, operating a drill with the notation, "A woman was needed to replace a man in the Machine Shop...."

Secretaries earned $15 per week. Welders could make $50 or more, depending on the amount of overtime they worked. Pay increases for office workers came more slowly than for the shipyard production workers. Office workers earned sick leave

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5Mary Darr, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 22 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

6Mozelle Kasiah, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 23 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

7"Helen Townend, "Photographers Model Is Welder 'Leaderman'," The Wainwright Liberator, 19 September 1942.


10Earl Boone, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 9 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
and vacation leave, although it was often not used.\footnote{12} Production workers did not earn such leave.\footnote{12} Female office workers often had transportation from the gate to their respective offices. Renell Poston, of the U.S. Maritime Commission office, remembered an individual provided this service on a regular basis.\footnote{13} Mozelle Kasiah, who worked the night shift, was often given a ride home by her supervisor.\footnote{14}

Frances M. Dutton, the cafeteria dietician, received a great deal of coverage in the first issues of The Wainwright Liberator as attention focused on the opening of the cafeteria. She and her assistant, Ms. Elizabeth Del Peso, had operated the cafeteria in a Trinidad construction site. The cafeteria began serving meals in mid-August, 1942.\footnote{15} The shipyard newspaper featured nurses in articles informing the

\footnote{12}Mozelle Kasiah, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 23 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

\footnote{13}Earl Boone, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 9 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

\footnote{14}Renell Poston, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

\footnote{15}Mozelle Kasiah, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 23 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

"Fore and Aft," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 August 1942. 
workers of the first aid station’s location. The shipyard emphasized their value to the local community and the first-class medical equipment of the clinic.

As females entered the welding field, the shipyard emphasized the importance of women in the office. "The Office Girl: A Patriot Without Uniform" in The Wainwright Liberator stressed the importance of office workers. However, most of the article dealt with the need to conserve office supplies. The management bestowed on secretaries the honor of sponsoring two ships in 1944. Virginia Dickerman, secretary in the welding department and considered the first female in Panama City hired by the Jones Construction Company, sponsored the shipyard’s fortieth hull in April, 1944. Eva Pearl Parker, the fabrication shop secretary who began work at the shipyard before it was completed, sponsored a ship in November, 1944.

Wainwright Shipyard employed some women for office jobs that were traditional male territory, such as drafting. Opal Reaver was a hull engineering draftsman.

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16"First Aid Station Offers Most Modern Care to Injured," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 August 1942.

17"Stork, Express/Big Infirmary Operated for Yard Folk," The Wainwright Liberator, 29 July 1944.


19"Loyal Worker Honored," The Wainwright Liberator, 22 April 1944.

20"Miss Eva Pearl Parker," The Wainwright Liberator, 4 November 1944.
involved drafting or sketching plans for the ships' interiors. Although the outlines of the Liberty Ship were standardized, the interiors were customized to meet the needs of the various cargos they carried. Ms. Reaver had taken evening courses in engineering at Millsaps College. The instructor asked students to volunteer for civil service work supportive of the war effort. She did. After working briefly in the engineering drafting department at the Mississippi Power and Light Company, she was offered a position with the Wainwright Shipyard. The $40 salary was a twenty-five percent increase over her previous pay. Ms. Reaver and two other females worked with approximately forty men in the engineering drafting room. She recalled a congenial attitude among the group.21

Need for Women in Non-Traditional Jobs

The Wainwright Shipyard's newspaper published several articles on the national need for women workers caused by the shortage of male workers beginning August, 1942 -- shortly before announcements to train women for production jobs at Wainwright. The War Department issued statements that twenty-five per cent of the 700,000 civilian workers in arsenal production were women who worked in "ordnance and supply depots, airfields, communication centers...as color testers, chemical workers, precision metal workers and storage and

21 Opal Reaver, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 25 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
distribution clerks." Selective Service Director Hershey announced that war industries would have to learn to use women and older men. He further stated that the Army would not continue to issue deferments while industry found replacements. Paul McNutt, director of the War Manpower Commission, reported on the need for women workers, even those with small children, in an appearance before the U.S. House Appropriations Committee in October, 1942. He noted such workers would require the government's assistance to provide child care.

Thelma McKelvy, Chief of the Women's Labor Supply Service of the War Production Board, announced that 13,000,000 women were working in September, 1942, and by the end of 1943, 5,000,000 more would be required. This was reinforced by Paul V. McNutt, head of the War Manpower Commission, who quoted statistics from a Works Progress Administration 1942 report that 13.9 million of the 53 million employed were women. Women composed .7 million of the 1.7 million new

22"Women Replace Men in War Production," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 August 1942.


24"McNutt Urges Quick Action for Manpower," Panama City News-Herald, 8 October 1942.

25"18,000,000 Women Required as Workers," The Wainwright Liberator, 12 September 1942.
employees during the May to June period.²⁶

McNutt reported eighty percent of the jobs in twenty-one key war industries could be done by women. The report also reflected governmental action to assist working mothers, with, "Employment of thousands more mothers in war industries is now being made possible by establishment of new war nursery schools, for which the W.P.A. is expending a minimum of $6,000,000. "²⁷

The Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor reported female employment had risen from eleven million in 1940 to between thirteen and fifteen million in September 1942. The government expected female employment to increase to seventeen million by the end of the year and achieve twenty-two million in 1943 — twice the 1940 employment.²² An Office of War Information report elaborated on this data. In 1940, 1.4 million women (of the 11 million employed) were in war jobs. This increased to 4 million of the 15 million female employees in 1943, less than twenty-three percent. The office expected 6 million women in war industries (of a total of 18 million working) by the end of 1943. Women would comprise thirty percent of the 20 million workers needed in

²²Francie M. LeMay, "Women May Be Listed Soon as War Workers," Panama City News-Herald, 5 August 1942.

²³Francie M. LeMay, "Women May Be Listed Soon as War Workers," Panama City News-Herald, 5 August 1942.

²⁴"Women Take Place--In Production Line," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 September 1942.
war jobs.²⁹

Paul Porter, chairman of the Shipbuilding Stabilization Committee of the War Production Board, estimated that 150,000 more women were needed to meet the scheduled tonnage of ships in a September, 1942, report. Kaiser, Todd, and Federal Yards already employed 2,000 to 3,000 women in welding and light machine work. New Jersey's Federal Shipbuilding Corporation planned to hire 1,000 additional women, mostly welders, within the next three months. Allies had criticized the United States because fewer women were entering its work force than in Great Britain and Russia.³⁰

Merely weeks later the Selective Service Bureau of the War Manpower Commission reported it would no longer defer married men with children. Deferment required a war related job. Chairman McNutt indicated that non-essential industries could use women as well as the disabled and elderly for their workers. He encouraged men to fill jobs in war industries.²⁹ A March, 1943, report numbered 4,500,000 potential female employees between the ages of 18 and 45 with no children less than 16 years old. There were an estimated 9,000,000 women


under 45 years of age with children under 16. These numbers excluded farm women. The 1944 report noted female employment in private shipyards along the Gulf Coast increased from .5 percent in March, 1942 to 12.7 percent in January, 1944.

Reports on firms already using women workers emphasized their effectiveness. A nineteen-year old female at Piccatiny Arsenal made a suggestion that speeded up production significantly. The management encouraged Wainwright workers to make suggestions that would do likewise. Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation, which employed 270 female welders and 26 female electrician helpers, reported the women employees were good and did not expect favors. At Farmingdale, the women broke drilling records. Some unions voted to give women permits. Their finger dexterity made them particularly suited for many industrial tasks. "Studies by the United Stated Employment Service show that women can be satisfactorily used as boilermakers' helpers, draftsmen, machinists' helpers, blueprint machine operators, and flash

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3"Vast Army of Women Workers Scheduled for This Year," The Wainwright Liberator, 20 March 1943.


welders," the U.S. Employment Service reported.  

Wainwright Shipyard's Record of Female Employment  

Shortly after it began operation in September, 1942, Wainwright Shipyard employed only seventy women. They comprised 3.4 percent of the total work force. By March 20, 1943, women made up ten percent of the shipyard's work force. The U.S. government felt this could be increased to seventy-five percent of the shipyard's employees and reported an underutilization of women in the heavy equipment and transportation departments. Wainwright Shipyard's management disagreed with the desirability of training women in these areas.

Wainwright Shipyard became enthusiastic about female employees by July, 1943. Unlike California shipyards, Wainwright sought smaller women as evidenced by a new policy requiring a maximum weight for women shipbuilders of 140 pounds. The management justified the smaller weight with the statement, "We find that small women are far more useful in this type of work since they can get in tight places where a

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37 "Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission Records, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

38 "Manpower Utilization Consultants Check List, Based on Summary of Analysis of Manning Table for: J. A. Jones Construction Company, Wainwright Yard, Panama City, Florida, March 31, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
larger person would have difficulty." The shipyard also listed other advantages of female employees who: welded efficiently, responded well to direction, required less supervision than their male counterparts, took care of equipment, proved adaptable and patient in performing repetitive tasks, and maintained low absentee rates and high safety records. Women in production work did not create a distraction problem, as originally feared. Reports emphasized the unfeminine clothing but countered that such workers maintained their femininity. Many saved their money to fulfill the American dream of buying a house at the war's close. U.S. Maritime Commissioner Vickery set a goal of thirty-five percent female production workers at Wainwright Shipyard by the end of 1943.40

Female employment increased to nineteen percent (2,544) less than six months later in September 1, 1943. Predictions indicated Wainwright would need 1,500 employees to replace those lost to military service over the next six months. Of the 1,560 total workers needed by the area's industries for replacement purposes, 565 were designated as female workers and 995 as males. Three hundred of the 565 jobs for females were for unskilled blacks. Of the 265 jobs for white females,


100 were designated as unskilled and 100 as skilled labor positions. Only 65 positions for women were classified as skilled or professional. The area’s need for 2,496 workers to replace those lost to military service and for expansion purposes included 1,024 women. The local supply of 1,354 workers fell far short of the demand. Women comprised 854 of this supply, including 524 women not normally in the labor force. Most, 650 of the 854 total supply of women workers, were unskilled. Government reports predicted 665 females would have to migrate into the community to meet its needs. Of these, 200 women were expected to accompany male immigrants into the local job market; 300 unattached females were expected; and 165 females with "one or more dependents" were predicted. The U.S. Employment Service reported the area’s hourly wage levels for males and females as: $1.14 to $1.20 for skilled workers, $.57 to $1.06 for semi-skilled workers, and $.40 to $.65 for unskilled workers."

The U.S. Employment Service reported in October, 1943, that Wainwright Shipyard’s management did not favor active recruitment of women in the community. They argued that local women who wanted to work were already doing so. Therefore, any program seeking additional female employees would attract those unlikely to remain long enough to merit the cost of

""Estimate of In-Migration into the Panama City, Florida, Labor Market Area During the Six Months Beginning September 1, 1943," War Manpower Commission Records, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia."
training them. The U.S. Employment Service's local office agreed that local recruitment of women employees was undesirable but for different reasons. They feared a negative impact on living conditions in the local community if too many women were taken from clerical and retail jobs. Most local women who chose to enter the work force were expected to seek employment at the shipyard. Nevertheless, Wainwright Shipyard had increased its female work force from 14.9% of the total in July, 1943, to 18.8% by September. This increase occurred during a period when the overall employment at Wainwright decreased from 14,454 workers to 13,501. Raymond A. Jones had assumed the management of the shipyard and was terminating those employees who failed to produce. Obviously, a higher percentage of men than women fell into this category. Although the shipyard's management had originally maintained a practice of hiring females for only 10% of the total production work force, this policy changed to one by which Wainwright Shipyard established a goal of hiring more women. The poor quality of the available male work force caused the change in attitude. Also, the approach of cool weather was expected to make female employment in the production ranks more acceptable. The regional vocational-technical training programs, shortened to forty-eight hours (from two hundred hours), were open to women when they resumed. A resumption of a paid training program was expected to encourage additional
female employment.\textsuperscript{2}

Further reductions in the Wainwright Shipyard work force resulted in the first decline in female employment by November, 1943. The overall employment decreased by 1,420. Women employees declined from 2,544 to 2,235, dropping from 18.8\% to 18.5\% of the total shipyard work force. Nevertheless, this was still the highest rate of any shipyard in the region. Women employees made up one of every five workers hired by the shipyard during this time.\textsuperscript{3}

Wainwright reversed its hiring trend the next month. The work force rose from 12,081 to 14,188 with 40\% of the additional positions going to women. By December, 1943, females comprised 22\% of the shipyard's work force.\textsuperscript{4}

Often women employees had a male relative who worked at the shipyard as well. Fannie Mae Hutchison was a welder; her husband was an outside machinist. Minnie Riley was another welder; her husband was a shipfitter. The shipyard paired them to work together when possible. Zema Cowan was a mechanic; his wife kept the records of trainees at the

\textsuperscript{2}"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission Records, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.


\textsuperscript{4}"Estimate of In-Migration to the Panama City, Florida, Labor Market Area, December 6, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
training school. Ms. A. L. Helms worked in the blueprint office; her husband was a carpenter at the shipyard. Renell Poston's father was employed in the shipyard while she worked for the U.S. Maritime Commission office there. Wives followed their husbands, who came to work at the shipyard or were stationed at one of the nearby military bases, into the area. As their husbands moved or were reassigned to other military installations, the wives moved with them adding to the turnover at the shipyard.

The following chart provides a summary of Wainwright Shipyard's employment of females.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>MALES</th>
<th>FEMALES</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept., 1942</td>
<td>2,003</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1943</td>
<td>9,374</td>
<td>1,034</td>
<td>10,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July, 1943</td>
<td>12,286</td>
<td>2,168</td>
<td>14,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept., 1943</td>
<td>10,957</td>
<td>2,544</td>
<td>13,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov., 1943</td>
<td>9,846</td>
<td>2,235</td>
<td>12,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec., 1943</td>
<td>11,105</td>
<td>3,083</td>
<td>14,188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Training Women

Initially, the company provided classes to acquaint women with shipbuilding terms to improve their secretarial work. As one article reported, "...they have the girls going to school now to learn about ships. They are learning a lot,


"Shipbuilders School Make Better Workers," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 August 1942.
such a galv. stands for galvanized and dia. for diameter."

The training school showed films to the women of the order and distribution department to acquaint them with the use of the blueprints they stored and distributed."

Raymond A. Jones, the company's vice-president, suggested training women as welders on an experimental basis. The shipyard announced the policy in August, 1942. Management required participants to be in good health and eighteen to thirty-five years old. Announcements emphasized that this was experimental and women would not be used in jobs requiring climbing. Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Corporation's employment of women had been successful with the observation of the supervisor there that, "They take every precaution to avoid burns or injuries that would detract from their good looks.""

The local newspaper carried the announcement that women interested in the welding class should register at the shipyard. The first class of twelve women welders began August, 1942 -- only three months after the shipyard opened. The class met 5:00 to 8:30 p.m. The instructor, Ray Conway,

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"Society," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 August 1942.


"Welding Class Will Be Open to Women Here," Panama City News-Herald, 9 August 1942.
reported the women did well. Before that class ended, plans were made to add two "experienced women welders" as instructors; to double the classes, once equipment was available; and to add another schedule of evening classes (meeting 8:30 to 12:00). Women gave the desire to earn better pay and to release men for military service as their reasons for training for this non-traditional job. The graduation of the first eight female welders was quite noteworthy. One of the eight, Ms. Edna Seymour Woodham, died as a result of a motorcycle accident the following January. Her obituary noted she was "one of the first women members of the local Boilermaker's Union." The *Wainwright Liberator* article listing the graduates' names reported that Jack York, the assistant welding superintendent, was not originally enthusiastic about women welders. He changed his opinion after seeing such records as Dorothy Strom's 127% average welding record. There were additional reports on the nationwide trend to train women in shipbuilding trades. In September, 1942, the shipyard announced plans for a new building for classes "equipped with the necessary conveniences

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for taking care of men and women students. The need for these training facilities was explained by the shortage of skilled workers which made training "men and women in our own establishment" the only alternative. More than 1,200 men and women attended the training school in November, 1942. The shipyard held its first class in electrical trades for twenty-five women in October, 1942. By November, coeducational classes for shipfitting and plan reading were scheduled.

The shipyard was not the only organization to conduct local training for women. The University of Florida, in conjunction with the U.S. Office of Education, offered night classes for women (but also open to men) in pre-engineering drawing and basic engineering. The courses required a minimum of thirty students, were without cost to the student, and had no age limit.

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58 "Real Shipbuilders Teach Trades in Training School," The Wainwright Liberator, 7 November 1942.


60 "Gas Welding School Begins to Function," The Wainwright Liberator, 14 November 1942.

Training women for such non-traditional positions as welders, shipfitters, electrical workers, and plan readers changed from a tentative, experimental program to an accepted means of developing the personnel to produce war goods in a matter of months. Separate classes for men and women soon ended. After the excitement associated with the first groups of female welders, there were few specific references to their training as a group.

Women in Non-Traditional Jobs

The Wainwright Liberator featured women in non-traditional jobs in numerous articles, particularly when a female entered a new field at the shipyard. Women's reasons for taking on a "man's job" and their effectiveness were often highlighted.

Ms. Mildred Greer set an efficiency rating of 331/2% in May, 1943. Her husband was employed as a shipfitter. She joined him in August, 1942, graduated from the training school in November and went to work as an apprentice welder. She had previously done post graduate work in nursing.*2 Mamie Clack was the shipyard's first female burner. Another efficient burner was Anita 'Little Bit' Franklin, who weighed eighty-four pounds and was four feet eleven inches tall. Emphasizing her small size, the article noted, "She carries her own hose

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that weighs half as much as she does." Ms. Bonnie Normandin, also a burner, represented the 1,800 female employees on the 1943 Labor Day celebration platform in pledging their loyalty to the war effort. Four female burners were given the honor of being the only women crew to assist in a formal launching in April, 1945. They earned the privilege by their attendance and outstanding production records.

Women entered the sheet metal department in October, 1943. A picture of Dessie Culpepper, the shipyard's first "plumber-ette," appeared in a January, 1944, issue of The Wainwright Liberator. Lalar Armstrong became Wainwright's first certified pipe welder in April, 1944, after passing the American Bureau of Shipping test. Ester Slagle became the shipyard's first pipefitter first class. Previously a beautician, she began work at Wainwright as a pipefitter's helper in May, 1943; graduated to a pipe-fitter's apprentice

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"Yard United to Promote Production," The Wainwright Liberator, 11 September 1943.

"Four Girl Burners Honored," The Wainwright Liberator, 14 April 1945.


"And Now--A Plumber-ette!" The Wainwright Liberator, 8 January 1944.

"Holds Job of Distinction," The Wainwright Liberator, 22 April 1944.
in November, 1943; and, with encouragement from her supervisor and the women counsellors, took the pipefitter's test in June, 1944. The news article reporting this accomplishment cleverly compared her pipefitter's tasks with those she had as a beautician. It also noted she pursued women's interests such as cooking during her off-duty time. Ms. Bessie Brooks and her daughter Mary were pictured in The Wainwright Liberator as they attended the welding school.

Other articles praised the female workers and their outstanding records despite the hardships of shipyard employment. One written by Nelle Messer pointed out the accomplishments as well as the difficulties associated with the job:

"Mrs. Marie (Gipsy) McCollum...is out to show these Fab Shoppers what lady welders can do. She has run 2000 inches of weld several days lately....[T]here is 'Little Pearl' Robbins, just a kid who is making good as a welder, with records of her own. Mrs. Fowler and Mrs. Peel also deserve credit for the way they have worked out here through hot and cold, and for the good job they are doing...." Messer gave "A royal salute...to a quintet of lady burners....[They] have been Fab Shop burners for well over a year and are doing a well-deserved place at the top and they came up the hard way--learning to burn when machines, hoses and tracks had to be carried about the shop, to the ways or to the plats. They lived through it, and now are first-class burners."
Several women working at the shipyard had family members serving in the war -- the relation of the servicemen and their locations were normally included in news articles. Mamie B. "Mom" Houston of the layout department not only worked after the age of 60 but rented out rooms in her Lynn Haven home as well.

The women welders set shipyard records. Eloise Dykes Hoffman, a post-graduate nurse, had a 232% rating. The Wainwright Liberator pictured nine female welders in its May 1, 1943, edition with their Superintendent Noble S. Kirkwood quoted as saying, they "are among the most efficient welders he has - thus disproving the theory some men hold that the male is always the cock-of-the-walk." The shipyard sought a female to challenge Ms. Vera Anderson, a 19-year-old welder at Ingall Shipyard, the "Champion Woman Welder of America."

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7Nelle Messer, "Fabricated from Scrap," The Wainwright Liberator, 6 November 1943.


7"Fab Shop's Women-Welder Record-Breakers," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 May 1943.

7"Look for Champ Woman Welder," Panama City News-Herald, 30 May 1943.
Apparently the quest was unsuccessful. She was still the
champion when she came to work at Wainwright in October, 1944,
as Vera McDonald, after marrying a serviceman stationed at
nearby Camp Gordon Johnston.\(^7\)

Fannie Mae Hutchison was one of the most well-known women
welders at Wainwright. She continues to live in Panama City
and is the community's own "Rosie the Riveter." She attended
the training school in September, 1942.\(^8\) The training was
free but she received no pay. Half-way through the program
the instructor told her she might make a "tacker" but she
would never make a welder. A tacker spot welded pieces
together and only made $.75 an hour; a welder made $1.20. She
was delighted when she was one of five in the class chosen to
be a welder.\(^9\)

Ms. Hutchison did electric welding on the "graveyard
shift." She described the work as hard. It involved carrying
a heavy inch thick line that connected the welding machine to
an electricity source. She welded inside and outside hulls,
sometimes standing on narrow wooden walkways fifty to seventy-
five feet high. She felt the male workers were supportive of
their female counterparts. They often saved her the trip of

\(^{7\text{"Mrs. McDonald, Welding Champion of U.S., Comes to Work in Yard," The Wainwright Liberator, 21 October 1944.}}\)

\(^{8\text{"Orchids to Fanny Hutchison; Her Work Wins Sponsor's Honor," The Wainwright Liberator, 20 November 1943.}}\)

\(^{9\text{Fannie Mae Hutchison, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf
Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.}}\)
getting new welding rods from the supply location about half a block from the welding area.*

Ms. Hutchison earned the honor of sponsoring the Stephen R. Mallory at its launching November 27, 1943. As part of the launching tradition the shipyard gave each sponsor a gift. Ms. Hutchison’s was a lovely wooden chest with an engraved plaque stating "SS Stephen Mallory launched November 27, 1943, sponsor: Fannie Hutchison, Wainwright Shipyard." According to her, only five such chests were made. Inside she stored her mementoes of the occasion. These included the net bag holding the remains of the champagne bottle used in the launching. It had red, white, and blue ribbon streamers stating the name of the ship and the date of the launching. She also saved the card that accompanied her corsage. The shipyard asked her what kind of flowers she wanted in her corsage. Most sponsors requested roses but Ms. Hutchison requested an orchid. She was surprised to receive a corsage with two huge orchids. This was in addition to the bouquet of roses she received. Ms. Hutchison had the picture of the launching prominently displayed in her dining room. For the occasion, she wore her normal work clothes rather than dressing up because, as she told the management, "I won this

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*Fannie Mae Hutchison, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
She maintained an efficiency rating exceeding 100% working seven days per week. Her average welding rate was slightly over twenty feet per hour; the yard average was approximately four feet per hour. She had eleven children in her family, including eight stepchildren; three children had died. One son was a prisoner of war taken with General Jonathan M. Wainwright, for whom the shipyard was named, at Corregedor. Two other sons were in the service. Five children worked in the war industry, including a daughter Jacqueline who worked in the shipyard's mold loft. Three were in school.\textsuperscript{2}

Ms. Hutchison's employment by Wainwright was her first experience working outside the home. In reaction to her work record, \textit{The Wainwright Liberator} quoted, "I have just worked but I have something to work for. It's not very hard work. In fact it's like a vacation to what I have had to do most of my life...." The article continued, "There are other women in the yard doing almost as well, working as hard, but for the time she enjoys the distinction of being the most useful member of this great shipbuilding team."\textsuperscript{3}

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\textsuperscript{1}Fannie Mae Hutchison, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
\textsuperscript{2}Orchids to Fanny Hutchison; Her Work Wins Sponsor’s Honor, \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 20 November 1943.
\textsuperscript{3}Orchids to Fanny Hutchison; Her Work Wins Sponsor’s Honor, \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 20 November 1943.
\end{flushright}
The shipyard used a variety of methods to recognize outstanding welding records. "Welderess" C. M. Cope won the honor of most effective welder for the week ending September 12, 1943.* In 1944, Wainwright Shipyard sponsored an ongoing welding contest with weekly and monthly prizes awarded. One winner was Winnie D. Cheek with an average efficiency of 154% for a two week period ending April 8, 1944. Mary T. Lanham won the prize for the three weeks ending April 15, 1944." The challenge went out, "And the men are fighting back. Having been snowed under in every department of the game by women welders, the men snapped out of it and, for the week ending April 2" a man was the winner." A picture of Thelma Michen had the notation, "[O]ne of the many women whose daily record proved the new shipyard saying that women can weld just as good or better than the men." When the Boilermakers International honored "crack welders" with a gold Maritime Merit Badge, six of the nine honorees were women.** According to William T. Comer, director of training, "The fact that women are winning


practically every welding contest proves the theory that with proper training almost anything can be accomplished. Just a few years ago, there were no women welders. Today, through the medium of production training, thousands of women are doing a magnificent job of production welding thereby releasing men for the armed services from essential industries. Women were reliable in their attendance as well. A 1944 picture of twenty workers with perfect attendance for a three-week period included eleven women.

A major event in 1944 was the competition with the Brunswick Shipyard, also owned by the Jones Construction Company. The contest was open to all welders. The twelve best welders of each sex were selected on the basis of the month’s welding by each. These twelve participated in an elimination process to choose one winner for each sex. The winner of the female competition was Lurie S. Radford. "Also worthy of note was the fact that the lowest score made by the women was higher than the highest made by the men." The highest score for men was 1,976.4 feet, for women 2,348.3 feet. The lowest score for men was 1,510.7, for women


90"They Get to Their Work Regardless," The Wainwright Liberator, 13 May 1944.

The winners and their alternates travelled to Brunswick for the contest, which they lost.

The entrance of females into the factory raised the question of the most effective gender for supervisors. According to a Modern Industry article, women responded better to older male supervisors. However, three methods of supervision were suggested: male supervisors only, male supervisors assisted by women gang-bosses or "subforemen", or male supervisors with female counselors to serve as the communication link between male supervisors and female workers. Wainwright used a mixture of all three options. They began with an all male supervisory staff. Later, some women were promoted to "leaderman" positions, comparable to a "subforeman." The shipyard also employed women counselors as support personnel.

Women quickly assumed low-level supervisory positions. Dorothy Strom was the first woman at Wainwright to be a "leaderman" (an assistant supervisor) due to her welding record of 127%. She had been a commercial photographers' model. She had two small children, 6 and 2 years old. She herself weighed 104 pounds. This information emphasized that

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women could do this job. She was promoted to leaderman after five months of employment. In February, 1944, the shipyard selected Ms. Strom to accept the Maritime Commission's "M" badge from Admiral Vickery on behalf of the women workers. A separate merit badge was issued for the men. The badges were to honor the workers for Wainwright's outstanding production record. Ms. Strom was chosen to sponsor M. Michael Edelstein in June, 1944, in recognition of her work as "leaderman of the highly efficient crew of women welders who did much to complete it ahead of schedule."

Anne Sanders followed her husband when he came to work in the Wainwright lay-out department. She also went to work at the shipyard and became an assistant superintendent of burning in the fabrication shop after four months of employment. She had previously been photographic studio manager in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. According to her superintendent, S. L. Smith, "if there are any more women of her calibre around, they certainly will be given every opportunity for advancement.

"Helen Townend, "Photographers Model Is Welder 'Leaderman'," The Wainwright Liberator, 19 September 1942.

"Pretty Leaderman," The Wainwright Liberator, 17 April 1943.

"They Accept for the Yard," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 February 1944.

"Sponsors Own Ship," The Wainwright Liberator, 3 June 1944.

and the utilization of their individual talents." Women in supervisory positions became less unique. The Wainwright Liberator gave only passing notice when Mary Martin became a welding leaderwoman on Way 3 the summer of 1944.

**Adjustments and Accommodations**

Adjustments had to be made to accommodate women on the job, particularly in non-traditional jobs. As they were hired, the management redesigned jobs, by breaking them into smaller units, and designed new tools. An extensive article from the *Modern Industry* dealt with the broader ramifications of women in shipyards. Tools needed to be redesigned to "overcome some of the physical handicaps of women."

At Wainwright Shipyards, workers developed a device called "The Jeep" which could weld where most machinery could not reach. It weighed thirty-eight pounds as opposed to two hundred pounds for similar equipment. Pictures showed women as well as men operating it to illustrate its lightweight advantage and ease of operation. Other shipyards along the

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100"Welder Leaderwoman and Superintendent," *The Wainwright Liberator*, 5 August 1944.


coast adopted it. 103

Women at Wainwright often redesigned the tools they had to use themselves and won prizes for their suggestions. Ann Saunders, a burner-coordinator in the fabrication shop, won a prize for such a development. 104 Shortly afterward, the shipyard began to sponsor prizes for suggestions. Lula Merchant won the first $100 for an invention that made it possible for her to do the work of two. Her job involved making cables, light cords, and primary cable connections. She created a portable cable bench that weighed approximately fifteen pounds. She had previously developed a socket wrench and wire guide that made her work easier. 105

Appropriate clothing for women on the job was a major issue. Women typically wore dresses in the 1940's; the change to pants was significant. Women workers in the yard were expected to wear thick cotton pants, boots with steel toes, and hair coverings. Welders wore a hard hat with a shield attached. A style of bib overalls more convenient for women to wear was developed. 106 The prices for this ensemble's

103 "Handy 'Jeep' Sets New Record on Unionmelt Job," The Wainwright Liberator, 29 January 1944.

104 "Two Burners Rewarded for Production Hints," The Wainwright Liberator, 9 January 1943.


106 Minnie Riley, Panama City, interview by Peggy Pelt, 13 April 1989.
pieces were estimated as $1.50 for a cap; $5.96 for coveralls; $3.00 for work shoes and $1.50 for welder's gloves.\textsuperscript{107}

Nationally, the Navy and Maritime Commission on shipyard health and safety suggested development of uniforms with standardized designs for safety which would "take into consideration women's preferences."\textsuperscript{108} Prominent pictures illustrating acceptable and unacceptable clothing for women workers appeared in the shipyard newspaper.\textsuperscript{109} Mary Anderson, Director of The Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, admonished women to "tuck up their hair" in a pamphlet referred to in \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}. (The pamphlet was the ninth in a series "on standards for employment of women in war industries.")\textsuperscript{110} Helen Townend, the assistant editor of \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, suggested selecting a uniform for women as a morale booster.\textsuperscript{111} The shipyard distributed cards to the women for input as to the type of hat they wanted with the uniform. Workers were assured wearing the uniform would


\textsuperscript{109}"A 'Do' and a 'Don't',' \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 2 January 1943. "How to Avoid the First Aid Station and Undertaker," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 7 August 1943.

\textsuperscript{110}"Tuck Up Hair Women War Workers Advised," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 20 February 1943.

\textsuperscript{111}"Of Women's Uniform," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 26 September 1942.
be voluntary. At Wainwright, the idea failed. Apparently, it was impossible to find a design acceptable to a large number of women as evidenced by The Wainwright Liberator cartoon of a badly beaten man with two associates captioned, "I understand he tried to design safety clothes that’d please ALL the girls!" When the suggestion was first made the shipyard newspaper reported, "(F)air hands are for it. In fact there is no end of unanimity on everything exempt the color and design and some really seamanly expressions are being exchanged on the sort of skullguard they will adopt." No one interviewed remembered a uniform and the absence of any major press reports indicates this idea failed to attract the female workers’ support.

Maintaining a production schedule seven days a week created strenuous work schedules. In 1944 the U.S. Maritime Commission reduced the shipyard’s operation to six days to improve efficiency and to provide opportunity for equipment repair. Wainwright’s highest absenteeism and lowest efficiency occurred on Sundays. The new schedule was "expected to be especially beneficial to women employees,

"Uniforms for Women," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 September 1942.

"Don’t Be an Accidentee!" The Wainwright Liberator, 17 June 1944.

"Of Women’s Uniforms," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 September 1942.
older men, and handicapped workers."

On a lighter note, a cartoon appeared in The Wainwright Liberator showing a nurse handing a new mother a bouquet of flowers with, "It says greetings from your fellow welders." Bay County experienced a significant increase in births beginning in 1943. J. S. Newbern, Bureau of Vital Statistics, reported Bay County's birth rate exceeded its death rate by three to one during the first five months of 1943. The county had 355 births and 124 deaths during this period. The ratio was well above the national average. December, 1943, the national government requested information on the number of women "expecting" via a questionnaire included in workers' paychecks. The government needed the information to plan for adequate clinics and hospitalization. For those not pregnant, an article from Modern Industry noted successful use of vitamins to decrease "women's periodic absenteeism."

Management also recognized the need to hire female security personnel. The Panama City News-Herald carried

"Sunday Now a Day of Rest," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 January 1944.

"Cartoon, The Wainwright Liberator, 6 February 1943.

"Births Exceed Deaths by Three to One in Bay County During the First Half Year," Panama City News-Herald, 2 July 1943.

"Seek Data About Care of Mothers," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 December 1943.

announcements for women police positions at Wainwright in January, 1943. Physical requirements for the job were an age of 30-40 years, a minimum weight of 145 pounds, and a minimum height of five feet eight inches. Education requirements were a high school diploma, or its equivalent, and passage of a first aid exam. Married women were preferred but spouses of shipyard employees were disqualified. These police personnel worked eight hour shifts, six days per week. They had to buy their uniforms and received forty dollars in weekly pay. (A typist’s pay was fifteen dollars per week.) Six policewomen were employed "to deal with women workers...[and] have the added duty of protecting women from the evils of loafing on the job."\(^{21}\)

Nationally, the Women's Industrial Production Service (WIPS) was organized. A local chapter was organized by Lanell Ingram. The announcement regarding its formation stated its purpose was to "cooperate with established safety programs and agencies in the Yard, to do everything possible to stimulate better and quicker building of ships."\(^{22}\)

The shipyard recruited Marie Wilson as a counselor for

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\(^{22}\)"WIPS Are Organized to Speed Production," *The Wainwright Liberator*, 12 February 1944.
the women in 1943. The announcement of her employment noted she had a similar job at Consolidated Yard in Orange, Texas. In addition to working conditions, Ms. Wilson addressed recreational and personal needs of the female employees.\textsuperscript{123}

The staff increased to five counselors available for all three shifts by April, 1944.\textsuperscript{124} The office was moved from the Public Relations office in the Administration Building to the Hull Field Office Building in February, 1945, to make it more accessible to average workers.\textsuperscript{125} The \textit{Wainwright Liberator} articles about this support service were infrequent and did not receive front page coverage. The people at the shipyard worked under a lot of stress caused by a variety of factors. The war itself caused many shortages that made life difficult -- getting plumbing parts to finish a bathroom in the A. L. Helms' house was almost impossible. Materials to divide the rooms and finish the roof were unattainable -- paper mill paper and tar paper for the roof were all that was available. The tripling of the local population aggravated the normal shortages of the war. The shipyard itself was a bustling beehive of activity -- requiring difficult adjustments for

\textsuperscript{123}"Expect to Direct Women's Activities," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 13 November 1943.

\textsuperscript{124}Marie Wilson, "For Women Employees," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 29 April 1944.

\textsuperscript{125}"Women's Counsellor Now in New Office," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 10 February 1945.
native workers of a small, "laid-back" community. Women entering non-traditional roles faced additional stress. Their husbands often opposed their decision to work as welders and burners. Divorces among shipyard workers were not uncommon. Women also faced opposition from male workers concerned about their own job security or embarrassed by women doing "a man's job" as well as, or better than, a man. These women needed help from counselors.

Women Working with Men: Attitudes

Male workers required reassurance that the women were there to help with the war -- not to take their jobs. Another major concern was possible disruption caused by women working in the shipyards, traditional "all-male" territory. Consequently, articles in The Wainwright Liberator frequently addressed these issues. Reports of successful use of women at other shipyards appeared before women were hired at Wainwright. The President of More Drydock Company indicated women working with men there were not a distraction adding, "there is nothing glamorous about a welder's suit." As women began to work as welders at Wainwright, Jack York,

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156 Ms. A. L. Helms, Panama City, interview by Peggy Pelt, 13 April 1989.

157 Minnie Riley, Panama City, interview by Peggy Pelt, 13 April 1989.


assistant welding superintendent, complimented their work and indicated they knew how to handle flirts. Again, the unfeminine nature of the work clothes was mentioned.\textsuperscript{130}

In a September, 1942, interview with Dorothy Strom, "Someone asked whether the girl welders worked along side the men welders. Ms. Strom was emphatic in her reply: 'Most certainly not!'\textsuperscript{131}" Yet, the attempt to keep women and men welders segregated was shortlived. Pictures showing men and women welders appeared soon in the shipyard newspaper, such as a mixture of thirty-six newly hired male and female burners in December, 1942.\textsuperscript{132} Myrtle Childers, a burner, was shown working with Ernest Womble, a shipfitter, "while Owen Thomas, of management, is making a speech in New Orleans about the problems (if any) of men and women working together.\textsuperscript{133}" According to Minnie Riley, husband/wife teams were used when possible. She and her husband, a shipfitter, were often teamed together.\textsuperscript{134} A 1944 editorial following a major welding competition held in April applauded the effectiveness

\textsuperscript{130}Helen Townend, "Women Reporter Discovers that Women Do Good Welding," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 5 September 1942.

\textsuperscript{131}Helen Townend, "Photographer's Model Is Welder Leaderman," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 19 September 1942.

\textsuperscript{132}"Burners Waiting Visit from Santa," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 19 December 1942.

\textsuperscript{133}"Busy at Their Jobs," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 18 December 1943.

\textsuperscript{134}Minnie Riley, Panama City, interview by Peggy Pelt, 13 April 1989.
of the female welders and went on to note:

"Most supervisors dismissed the woman welder as something they had to put up with, but did not necessarily like. They scoffed at the possibility that any one of them could do a job as well as a man had done it. In fact they were batted around from pillar to post and no one in particular wanted them." Noting the change in attitude, the article continued, "Now the supervisors are not only willing, but are eager to get women welders. In fact women have done so well in this and the other places where they have been trained, that the whole picture is undergoing a change and women will be added to the force as rapidly as their services can be secured."¹¹²

Articles and editorials from men and women varied greatly in their viewpoint. All indicated some area of concern relative to the presence of women in the shipyards. One report pointed out that when women first entered the shipyard they were a novelty and as novices made mistakes which made them the target of jokes. They may have been treated tougher by their bosses. However, according to the author, they had taken all this in stride and proved to do a good job. By October, 1942, the reporter argued women were no longer a novelty and had been accepted as fellow workers by the men.¹⁶ An editorial by George Peters praised women for doing their job, despite the weather and hardships, with a smile.¹⁷ Another editorial urged the men to be careful of teasing women

¹¹²"No Softies Here," *The Wainwright Liberator*, 1 April 1944.


who may be a bit awkward. The writer closed with the admonition, "Laugh, joke and be merry, but always remember to treat others' women folks just like you'd want other men to remember and treat your women folks."  

An anonymous editorial written by one of the women welders expressed in very emotional terms her preference for a life at home as a wife rather than the hardships of a welder. She contrasted the carefree days of dating and being a housewife to the drudgery of welding with the heavy equipment, the burns that inevitably resulted, and the heat. Her main point was that she worked because her husband was in the service and this was the one way she could help bring him home.

Ms. W. T. Howard presented the viewpoint of those who continued in the role of homemaker rather than work in the shipyard. Her husband was a burner leaderman who worked the swing shift. She described her daily routine including preventing the children from waking their father who slept until 10:30 a.m. Describing herself as a swing shift worker, she emphasized she was a much a part of the war effort as those who worked in the plant.

138 "Swing Shift Sadie Says," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 April 1944.

139 "The Reason I Work," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 April 1943.

140 Mrs. W. T. Howard, "Home Front Soldiers 'They Also Serve...',' The Wainwright Liberator, 13 November 1943.
As late as 1944 some still opposed women working in the yards. An April article stated that Americans were still unused to women doing manual labor but that since labor was a scarce commodity just like any other, "Would not the women and the rest of us be much happier and profit more if we permit them to do ...[their work] and forget personalities while on the job?" In an open letter to male workers, a welder sent to the wet dock to help reported admiring some welding to a female welder before stating he "didn't think they should let women weld on the rigging details and that first class welders should weld them. The lady spoke up and said she had done the work I had been admiring—and I had said whoever did that work could beat me or any other welder I had ever seen!"

The presence of women contributed to wasted time according to some. Others suggested women, by their inappropriate dress, were responsible for lowering the morals of the yard. Still others argued the presence of women should cause men to watch their language and their manners. Others felt the women and men should be segregated when possible. Valera Dean suggested separate time gates for women to clock in and out to avoid men "crowding and cussing and that while it is all right to work with men on the job the same time gate

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as the men use is no place for working girls." In 1944, a worker suggested women and men be segregated because "too much time [is] lost by the men talking to the women instead of going about their business." Nelle Messer took issue with this suggestion, feeling it insulted women. She wrote, "We had prided ourselves that we were a lot of help--had helped to win that 'M'. Local papers, national radio hook-ups and magazines are pleading with women to get into war work. We admit freely that there are those who waste time in idle talk but that is a problem of supervision not sex." The Wainwright Liberator editor was quick to note the earlier complaint had referred to men talking to women, not the reverse. A female worker concerned about the morals in the shipyard suggested women "workers who work beyond the clock-house wear overalls, as this will stop the attention and embarrassing remarks made about the women workers in THIS shipyard." T. F. Fussell complained men and women gathering "to talk about the night before or tell some uncouth joke or 'gag' indecent for any man, woman, or girl to hear"

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143 "Suggestion Box," The Wainwright Liberator, 16 January 1943.

144 "The Suggestion Box," The Wainwright Liberator, 29 January 1944.

145 Nelle Messer, "Fabricated From Scrap," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 February 1944.

146 "Letters and Suggestions," The Wainwright Liberator, 22 May 1943.
wasted time and extended the war. On a broader note, one female criticized the men who excused their lack of "chivalry" with, "women have taken equal places with men--let them maintain it." She also expressed concern that women lacked courtesy, as in failing to express appreciation for such actions as a man giving up a seat on the bus. The Wainwright Liberator did not carry articles relating such concerns frequently. Of those published, most were editorials or articles written by the workers themselves rather than the management.

Articles often included phrases that illustrated the male chauvinism of the era. For example, the announcement of Laurel Johnson's impending marriage referred to her "sweet disposition" as well as her efficient work. Pictures of women were sometimes accompanied with such captions as, "Everything's lovely around the pipe shop" or "Why so many men want jobs in the pipe department." In January, 1943, a contest to select "Miss Wainwright" was announced. Each division chose a representative and "Miss Wainwright" was

147 "Workers Says Women and Gossip Hurt War Effort; States Facts," The Wainwright Liberator, 12 February 1944.


selected at a dance January 16. Pat Hurt was the winner of the title. Pictures were prominent in the next edition of The Wainwright Liberator. The shipyard held another "Miss Wainwright" contest in conjunction with its Seventh War Bond Drive in 1945. Each dollar spent on a War Bond represented a vote, making it less of a "beauty contest." The purchaser designated the contestant he wanted to receive his votes. The three contestants with the most votes also received the honor of launching a ship. Ms. Melba Richardson won the title of "Miss Wainwright" from a field of eighteen candidates.

Ms. Mattie Walsh was credited with saving a male worker when a crane dropped its load. She jumped out of the way, pulling him with her, "And then, just to show that she is still a woman, fainted."

The women's entrance into heavy industries was significant during World War II. They proved capable of doing "a man's job" with minimal adjustments. Their arrival at the predominantly male domain of the shipyard was accompanied by

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\[152^\] Miss Wainwright, The Wainwright Liberator, 23 January 1943.

\[153^\] In Contest for 'Miss Wainwright', The Wainwright Liberator, 12 May 1945.

\[154^\] Mrs. Richardson Wins 'Miss Wainwright' Contest 7th War Loan Drive, The Wainwright Liberator, 14 July 1945.

skepticism and trepidation by both sexes. However, the problems were not as serious as expected and were dealt with effectively. As the war progressed, women became more necessary to the work force. In the 1943 Labor Day ceremonies, Raymond Jones commented on the necessity of hiring more women as more men were drafted into the military, adding: "Ordinarily, any construction company would view a situation like this with grave concern. I do not. Throughout industry, in this Yard and elsewhere, women have taken the place of men, releasing them for duty with the Armed Forces, and are doing a man's work - not only doing it, but doing it well."**

These Wainwright women made a significant contribution to the war effort. A 1944 U.S. Department of Labor bulletin stated: "Without...extensive use of women labor in shipyards, this country could not have met its blue prints and time schedules on Libertys, tankers and Naval vessels. Today thousands of women - 10 per cent of the industry’s production wage earners - are helping build the ships."**

The U.S. Maritime noted the role of women by naming over 114 Liberty ships for women.**

**Yard United to Promote Production," The Wainwright Liberator, 11 September 1943.

**Women in Shipyards," The Wainwright Liberator, 7 October 1944.

Employment of African-Americans

Wainwright Shipyard's employment of African-American workers did not receive the same attention as its employment of females. Government documents and articles encouraging the use of non-traditional workers emphasized women, senior citizens, and the handicapped -- but not racial minorities. African-Americans were employed in unskilled positions -- a continuation of their traditional employment. The Wainwright Liberator rarely published articles about African-American employees. However, articles regarding construction of government housing, with some designated for racial minorities, indicate a significant number of such workers were hired.

Southern shipyards generally had union agreements with the Metal Trades Department, particularly the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders, of the American Federation of Labor. This was true of Wainwright Shipyard. The Boilermakers did not grant African-Americans full membership.

Wainwright Shipyard's Record of African-American Employment

Nationally, African-Americans comprised 9,770, or 6.4 percent, of the 152,005 employees in the shipbuilding industry.


in 1940. Most, 97.8 percent, were in the Middle Atlantic and the Southern and Gulf Coast regions. The latter region employed 65.8 percent of the African-American shipbuilding work force. African-Americans accounted for 19.1 percent of the total shipbuilding work force in the South Atlantic and Gulf region. Florida had only 2,561 employees engaged in shipbuilding in 1940; 303, or 11.8 percent were African-Americans. 

Nationally, African-American shipyard employment increased from 1,200,000, 5.5 percent, in September, 1942, to 8.4 percent by March, 1943. However, most African-Americans were employed in unskilled labor positions. Only 3.1 percent of those employed in 1942 were in skilled positions. African-Americans were not included in training programs leading to skill development, like welding. Fearing strikes if African-Americans were granted equality, shipyard management assigned such workers to unskilled positions. The U.S. Maritime Commission did not pursue the issue of equality for African-Americans because it feared a disruption of the critically needed wartime production. 

Bay County’s 1940 census reflected 20.4 percent, 4,220, of its population were African-Americans. For Panama City’s


population, African-Americans comprised 24.0 percent with 2,790. Bay County’s 1940 total labor force was 7,436. Of this, 1,922, 24.8 percent, were classified as non-white. Wainwright Shipyard’s employment of non-whites changed as indicated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>WHITE</th>
<th>NON-WHITE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September, 1942</td>
<td>1,608</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>2,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1943</td>
<td>9,121</td>
<td>1,287</td>
<td>10,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July, 1943</td>
<td>13,154</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>14,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 1943</td>
<td>12,261</td>
<td>1,240</td>
<td>13,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February, 1945</td>
<td>9,981</td>
<td>1,554</td>
<td>11,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1945</td>
<td>10,185</td>
<td>1,730</td>
<td>11,915</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

War Manpower Commission reports had such notations as:

"Use of Negroes: At present they are employed only in

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169 "Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943." War Manpower Commission Records, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia. "Manpower Utilization Consultants Check List, Based on Summary of Analysis of Manning Table for: J. A. Jones Construction Company, Wainwright Yard, Panama City, Florida, March 31, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point Georgia. Fair Employment Practices Committee, Record Group No. 228 FEPC; J. A. Jones - Wainwright Yard, 7-BR506; B0162362 Box 4, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
unskilled occupations." The same report criticized the under use of women. Seven months later, the Commission noted the increased employment of "non-white women as laborers in less strenuous jobs." The report continued, "Additional non-white workers, both men and women are needed for work as laborers and helpers."

By September, 1943, Wainwright Shipyard's total labor force was established -- it did not need to expand its labor force. However, the shipyard did require new employees to replace those lost to military service. A September, 1943, War Manpower Commission report noted an estimated 1,560 such replacements needed for the area, 1,500 at the shipyard. A breakdown by race reported a need for 450 African-American employees, 300 women. All the female positions were classified as unskilled while 125 of the male positions were classified as unskilled and 25 as semi-skilled. The area's total African-American labor demand, for replacement and expansion purposes, was listed as 276 males and 500 females. There were only 110 African-American males and 80 females in the local labor supply. The report estimated a need for 616 African-American workers, 450 women and 166 male, to in-

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165 "Manpower Utilization Consultants Check List, Based on Summary of Analysis of Manning Table for: J. A. Jones Construction Company, Wainwright Yard, Panama City, Florida, March 31, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

166 "Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission Records, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
migrate -- all for unskilled positions. The report further predicted that 42 of the male in-migrants would bring two-member families and 124 would bring families with three or more members. One hundred African-American female workers were expected to accompany male in-migrants; 200 were expected to be unattached and 150 members of households with three members or more. The prevailing hourly wages for unskilled workers was $ .40 to $ .63 compared to a wage of $1.14 to $1.20 for skilled workers." A December, 1943, report noted, "Colored women are used extensively in the Wainwright Shipyard as sweepers." The following month, the Office of Community War Services reported, "The greatest demand at the shipyard is for colored laborers, chippers and caulkers, welders and tackers."

Interviews indicated African-American employees at the shipyard had such unskilled jobs as general maintenance and "crane hookers." The latter position involved hooking loads

167"Estimate of In-Migration into the Panama City, Florida, Labor Market Area During the Six Months Beginning September 1, 1943," War Manpower Commission Records, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

168"Monthly Field Operating Report, Northwest Florida Area, Panama City, Florida, December, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

onto the crane’s hook to be lifted.\textsuperscript{170}

**Racial Unrest**

The local community was segregated along racial lines. Generally, relations were stable and there were no racial problems. However, there were two notable occasions of racial unrest in the area. In September 4, 1943, an African-American serviceman killed a white man on the local bus.\textsuperscript{171} J. T. Welch, a twenty-eight year old Tyndall Field employee, was taking his wife to a Wainwright Shipyard dance. He requested two African-American passengers refrain from using profanity. As they exited the bus, one slashed Welch with a knife. Welch bled to death before medical assistance arrived.\textsuperscript{172} "The servicemen escaped from the bus, and the local residents reported that within a half-hour all Negro servicemen had disappeared from Panama City, presumably called back to their military stations to avoid a racial conflict."\textsuperscript{173} Two African-American servicemen were held by military authorities at Tyndall Field. However, witnesses failed to identify the


\textsuperscript{171}Bernadette Kuehn Loftin, "A Social History of the Mid-Gulf South (Panama City-Mobile) 1930-1950," (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern Mississippi, 1971), 86.

\textsuperscript{172}"J. T. Welch, 28, Bleeds to Death After Being Cut," Panama City News-Herald, 5 September 1943.

\textsuperscript{173}Bernadette Kuehn Loftin, "A Social History of the Mid-Gulf South (Panama City-Mobile) 1930-1950," (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern Mississippi, 1971), 86.
two suspects. An investigation of their movements at the time of the knifing indicated they could not have been the attackers. Major John M. Wilkins, Provost Marshall at Tyndall Field, announced the release of the two suspects. He offered a $100 reward for information leading to an arrest in the case. Lack of information led local authorities to assume the servicemen were not affiliated with Tyndall Field.174

Following the attack the Panama City Transit Company established a special bus for its "colored passengers" which ran every half-hour from Wainwright Shipyard to Panama City to Millville to Springfield and finally to Bay Harbor. This bus ran until 10:00 p.m. After that, African-American passengers rode the regular busses. The announcement received front page coverage in the Panama City News-Herald.175

The only recorded racial unrest at Wainwright Shipyard occurred September 14, 1944. The trouble began when the shortage of skilled workers led the management to temporarily use African-American employees for riveters, a skilled job that paid an hourly wage of $1.07. There were approximately fifteen such employees. White workers attacked and beat the provisional African-American workers. The management restored


175"Notice to Colored Bus Patrons," Panama City News-Herald, 16 September 1943.
order by threatening to close the plant if workers were not at
their posts within thirty minutes. However, many of the
African-American employees, fearing more violence, left for
the day. The shipyard appealed to these workers by the local
radio station to return to work. Most did.¹⁷⁶

A. C. Littleton, Sr. was the only Wainwright employee
interviewed who recalled the dispute. He remembered an
African-American worker running into his work area to avoid
trouble that day. He also stated that until that point,
African-Americans had been employed as "riveter buckers" only.
The "riveter bucker" worked with a riveter by holding a device
on the opposite side of the area being rivetted for the rivet
to flange out against. It was an unskilled job. The riveter
was a skilled position. An additional issue may also have
been the union's jurisdiction.¹⁷⁷

John Hope, Acting Regional Director of the Fair
Employment Practice Committee received a letter of complaint
from the Bay County Chapter of the National Association for
the Advancement of Colored People written September 14, 1944.
The letter reported, "Negroes are now being asked to report
back to their jobs providing they take jobs as unskilled

¹⁷⁶"Flareup Occurs at Wainwright," Panama City News-
Herald, 15 September 1944.

¹⁷⁷A. C. Littleton, Sr., interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24
Mr. Hope responded September 20, 1944, with a request for more complete information and complaint forms. Three employees filed their complaints with the Fair Employment Practice Committee. All three cited "refusal to upgrade" as the type of discrimination; one also cited "discriminatory wage differential" and "refusal to train." In his response dated September 26, 1944, Mr. E. W. Edwards, President of the Bay County Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), reported the incident was caused by "the hiring and training of Negroes as riveters and reamers. White workers had previously refused to do this same work at $1.20 per hour. The management opened a school for Negroes to take the trade, and two successfully passed the test, and were given a group of other Negroes to instruct in the same trade." This group, who were all members of the Boilermaker’s Union, were attacked by the whites.179

November 4, 1944, Witherspoon Dodge, newly appointed to the position of Regional Director for the Fair Employment Practices Committee, sent a letter to Leonard M. Brin instructing him to investigate the matter. Mr. Brin reported

178Letters, Memorandums, Reports of the Fair Employment Practice Committee, Record Group No 228 FEPC, J. A. Jones - Wainwright Yard 7-BR 506, B0162362 Box 4, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

179Letters, Memorandums, Reports of the Fair Employment Practice Committee, Record Group No 228 FEPC, J. A. Jones - Wainwright Yard 7-BR 506, B0162362 Box 4, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
to Witherspoon Dodge with a memorandum dated November 16, 1944. He was unable to contact anyone affiliated with or aware of a local chapter of the NAACP. He described the community as "vibrant with hostility towards Negroes." He did gather some information from a Wainwright employee he picked up as a hitchhiker. This individual said the shipyard had laid off white workers prior to the September 14 incident and that the white workers felt these employees should be called back rather than training African-Americans for these jobs. He went on to state the "Negroes... were driven off the property by white men. He says that he is now a riveter (since the incident), has no feelings against Negroes, and he seemed to think that the union might have had something to do with the disturbance." The hitchhiker also noted African-Americans were no longer being used as riveters and reamers nor were they receiving any training for these skills. Mr. Brin's report ended with a recommendation that the War Manpower Commission or the military conduct a full investigation.  

Regional Director Witherspoon Dodge forwarded Brin's report to Will Maslow, Director of Field Operations, November 23, 1944, with a recommendation that the matter be turned over to the Civil Liberties Division of the Department of Justice.

180 Letters, Memorandums, Reports of the Fair Employment Practice Committee, Record Group No 228 FEPC, J. A. Jones - Wainwright Yard 7-BR 506, B0162352 Box 4, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
Will Maslow responded November 27, 1944, that the Justice Department did not have jurisdiction since a state agency was not involved.\textsuperscript{111}

Dr. Witherspoon Dodge visited Panama City December 13, 1944. He was able to locate the NAACP officials and the three individuals who filed complaints with the Fair Employment Practices Committee. The report of the latter "greatly minimized the fury of the assault as alleged by the officials of NAACP -- reducing the number of attackers from 'thousands' to 'fully a hundred or more,' denying that the yard guards took any part in the assault or closed the gate in the face of those attacked, and modifying the seriousness of the injuries inflicted -- yet they stated it to be their belief that the fracas was engineered by the Boilermakers Union who 'objected to Negroes doing white men's work.'"\textsuperscript{112}

Dr. Dodge also discussed the case with Dan Bateman, the company's personnel manager. The company had established five training classes, two for African-Americans. However, there had been "difficulties with the A.F. of L. Unions in putting these men to work. First...was a dispute between the Machinists and Boilermakers Unions as to which union would

\textsuperscript{111}Letters, Memorandums, Reports of the Fair Employment Practice Committee, Record Group No 228 FEPC, J. A. Jones - Wainwright Yard 7-BR 506, B0162362 Box 4, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

\textsuperscript{112}Letters, Memorandums, Reports of the Fair Employment Practice Committee, Record Group No 228 FEPC, J. A. Jones - Wainwright Yard 7-BR 506, B0162362 Box 4, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
bore the holes for the rivets. This was finally settled in favor of the Boilermakers. He then definitely attributed the assault on the Negroes to members of the Boilermakers Union who resented the economic equality of Negro workers." Mr. Bateman continued, "[T]he utilization of skilled Negro labor in the shipyard had been completely destroyed by the incident, with the further abandonment of in-plant training for Negroes."**

March 10, 1945, Dr. Dodge received a memorandum from Clarence M. Mitchell, Associate Director of Field Operations notifying him that Hayes Beall, Fair Practice Examiner on the Central Office staff, would discuss the issue of the incident at Wainwright Shipyard while visiting the home office of the Jones Construction Company in Charlotte, North Carolina. However, by this time, the war was near its end and the shipyard faced closure. The issue was, in essence, dismissed.***

Although women were welcomed with reservation into skilled positions, African-Americans were not. They provided the common labor necessary for any industry and, thereby, supported the war effort. However, they were unable to take

**Letters, Memorandums, Reports of the Fair Employment Practice Committee, Record Group No 228 FEPC, J. A. Jones - Wainwright Yard 7-BR 506, B0162362 Box 4, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

***Letters, Memorandums, Reports of the Fair Employment Practice Committee, Record Group No 228 FEPC, J. A. Jones - Wainwright Yard 7-BR 506, B0162362 Box 4, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
advantage of the shortage of manpower to develop skills. The positions they filled were jobs with no future. Even those who had the opportunity to develop skills as riveters found the new technology of the welded ship replaced this as a major shipbuilding skill in the post-war era.**

The location of Wainwright Shipyard in Panama City did more than change the employment opportunities of the area. It tripled the local population, creating a serious housing shortage. A flurry of building occurred as the government and local developers sought to meet the challenge of housing the Wainwright workers and their families.

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CHAPTER 5
WAINWRIGHT SHIPYARD'S IMPACT ON HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Population Growth

The 1940 U.S. Census reported Bay County's population as 20,686. It increased to 24,948 by May, 1942, shortly before the opening of Wainwright Shipyard. Once the shipyard began operation, it was difficult to determine the population accurately. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the civilian population was 36,210 in March, 1943. However, the federal government issued 40,373 ration books in the county that month. By December 1, 1943, the War Department estimated the county's population at 55,000 based on the issuance of 45,677 Number 4 ration books that month. Approximately 12,000 service men were stationed in the area. The Florida State Chamber of Commerce estimated Bay County's population was nearly 60,000, including military personnel, in May, 1943. The Chamber estimated a 77.6% increase in Bay County's civilian population which had grown from 20,686 to 36,737 during the previous three years. The variation in the


2"Bay Population Nears 60,000," Panama City News-Herald, 3 May 1943.
estimates reflected the difficulties in counting a population constantly in flux as war workers moved into and out of the area. The turnover in military personnel assigned to the Tyndall Field Army Gunnery School, Coast Guard, and the Naval Section Base contributed to the discrepancies. Many of the estimates were based on the number of ration books issued in the community. The local Chamber of Commerce estimated a population of 55,000 by June, 1943, based on 22,000 applications filed for Ration Book Number 3. The estimate assumed there were 2.5 persons per book although the national average was 3.5 persons per book. The shortage of housing was the basis for the lower number.\(^3\)

A variety of statistics illustrate the phenomenal population growth's impact on the local community. Newspaper circulation rose from 2,881 in January, 1941, to 10,000 March, 1943. The newspaper built a sub-station building in St. Andrews at the corner of Fifteenth Street and Beck Avenue for its circulation department. Motor Vehicle Registrations increased from 2,056 cars and 824 trucks in 1940 to 5,743 cars and 1,049 trucks in 1942. Bank deposits increased from $1.6 million December, 1940 to $8.3 million March, 1943. The value of housing permits for privately constructed housing rose from $448,067 in 1940 to $1,179,858 in 1942. This figure did not include the value of the thousands of units built by the U.S.

\(^3\)"Bay Population Now Estimated to Be 55,000," *Panama City News-Herald*, 17 June 1943.
Maritime Commission or financed by the U.S. Government.

**Housing**

The housing shortage was immediately felt as war workers poured into the local community. The problem persisted until 1944. The U.S. District Court moved from Panama City to Marianna, Florida, in September, 1942, due to the "crowded conditions in Panama City and lack of facilities for caring for the large number of court attaches."

The War Manpower Commission’s U.S. Employment Service reported inadequate housing as the major cause for the high turnover rate for Wainwright Shipyard workers in its October, 1943, report. The report expected the housing construction underway to alleviate the problem within six to eight months. However, the report also expressed concern that the shipyard’s work force reduction might lead to a comparable reduction in the planned housing programs. The report predicting the result of such of a decision illustrated the seriousness of the problem for Wainwright Shipyard as follows: "turnover would remain heavy, because many workers, losing all hope of ever bringing their families in, would terminate. Others would still be cooped up in inadequate, crowded, and unhealthy places at exorbitant rentals and would continue the present

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high turnover rates." The War Manpower Commission regional office December, 1943, report reinforced its commitment to continued construction:

"The development of a community to care for 40,000 in-migrants, with all of the attendant necessary facilities, has been a parallel objective of the War Manpower Commission along with the recruitment of the needed workmen. Housing, transportation, schools, health and recreational programs have not been possible...at a speed commensurate with the need....It is the opinion of this office that turnover and absenteeism both can and will be reduced approximately one to two additional percent when current housing, community grocery centers, recreational program, and transportation additions have been accomplished. All of these factors contributing to turnover and absenteeism will almost be immediately made available to the public. Certainly, we anticipate no further delay longer than 60 days." The report reported, "A delay of four months in the release and completion and construction of 900 units was caused by the bankruptcy of the contractor having one group to build."

A variety of groups conducted surveys to determine local housing needs. The Panama City News-Herald announced the first survey by the Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce in September, 1942. The National Housing Agency requested this survey to determine: the occupancy rate of existing dwellings; the number of rental housing units available, including their conditions, number of rooms and

"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, Panama City, Florida, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

"Monthly Field Operating Report, Northwest Florida Area, Panama City, Florida, December, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
rent; the number of rooms available for rent in occupied dwellings; and the degree of overcrowding. The 1940 U.S. Census reported 6,303 dwellings in Bay County with a vacancy rate of 10.1 percent. This declined to 8.7 percent in April, 1941. The county had no vacancies by December, 1943. In January, 1944, the Office of Community War Services reported a two month waiting period for housing for war workers’ families. Often, workers lived in some form of bachelor residence until family housing became available. H. R. Moss, the manager of the Panama City U.S. Employment Service office, reported in July, 1943, "Men, and women too, were warned that quarters for single persons were available but not for families. The workers were urged to leave their families at home until they were able to find adequate lodgings for them. Federal authorities are still working on the housing situation here." Earl Boone remembered rooming houses with bunks. The only privacy afforded boarders was a curtain that covered the outside of the bunk railing. Some individuals were

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"Dwelling Unit Survey Starts in City Today," *Panama City News Herald*, 23 September 1942.


desperate enough to sleep on ships." According to Ruth Smeby, a neighbor converted the second story of his house into a dormitory type room and rented the beds in shifts. Ms. Smeby's parents rented space in their side yard to families in small trailers and one in a tent. Other shipyard workers commuted until they could locate permanent housing for themselves and their families. Renell Poston's father commuted from Lockhart, Alabama, until the family bought a house in June, 1944. The Salvation Army sought to build additions to their sleeping quarters to aid transients and new comers who found it impossible to locate sleeping accommodations. Though the agency had the necessary funds, it could not achieve the priority rating necessary to obtain building materials. The War Production Board argued the Federal Public Housing Authority had responsibility for housing. By January, 1944, the issue still had not been resolved.

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"Earl Boone, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 9 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida

"Ruth Smeby, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 25 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

"Renell Poston, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

The government used a variety of techniques to alleviate the housing problem. It first encouraged local residents to rent spare rooms and to add new rooms by remodelling. The government itself built a variety of dwelling units. The government also supported private housing construction. Finally, the government and private business brought such emergency housing as tents and trailers in to supplement housing needs.

The Bay County Chamber of Commerce began appeals to residents to register their extra rooms available for rent in April, 1942. Follow-up appeals were a regular item in the local newspaper. By June, 1942, the Chamber of Commerce reported it received three to five requests for housing daily. The Federal Housing Administration encouraged the private sector to build housing for war workers. Certain building materials were "frozen" -- unavailable for home construction. This was particularly true of metal materials, such as plumbing pipes and fixtures. Lumber was not limited. Those who built housing designated by the Federal Housing Administration for war workers were exempt from the freeze. Homeowners willing to add rooms to their houses for rental


"More Houses Needed Here," Panama City News-Herald, 8 June 1942.
purposes were eligible for $100 loan per room to purchase building materials. The Federal Housing Administration announcement did not mention an interest rate for such loans. Only housing built in areas within two miles of the Wainwright Shipyard were eligible for these defense housing incentives. M. M. Parrish, the state Federal Housing Administration representative, reported Panama City needed 500 additional homes within ninety days when he visited the area in May, 1942. The War Manpower Commission sent J. A. Hawkins as a special representative to study Panama City's housing needs as well as its labor and transportation needs in September, 1942.

Housing needs were still unmet. A Panama City News-Herald article reported rooms for individuals were available but housing for families was insufficient. The Chamber of Commerce noted the 4,000 shipyard workers were the source of most housing requests. The turnover rate of renters made maintenance of an updated list of rental units difficult. Consequently, the Chamber of Commerce requested those with rental units re-register in August, 1942. The Chamber's facilities were too small to accommodate this.

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17 "Public Urged to Add Rooms 'For Defense'," Panama City News-Herald, 7 May 1942.


19 "Rental Needs Are Outlined," Panama City News-Herald, 12 August 1942.
registration was moved to the Library.  

The Jimmy Daffin family home was near the Cove Hotel. "[N]ewcomers came constantly to them begging for a room to rent. One...couple rented a utility room in their garage and uncomplainingly installed a lavatory themselves in order to live there. Another...couple rented the Daffins' front bedroom and shared kitchen facilities." Opal Reaver located a room to rent through an introduction to Ms. Dan Adams by the Chamber of Commerce manager's wife. The introduction occurred just as Ms. Adams learned her babysitter would be unable to keep her two small children that evening. Ms. Reaver offered to babysit for her. Dr. and Ms. Adams rented part of their house to three females. Through this fortunate chain of events, Ms. Reaver became one of their renters. The house was located in the Cove section of Panama City. Other shipyard workers roomed with relatives. Mary Darr and her sister roomed with a third sister when they first arrived from Geneva, Alabama. Later, they roomed with a cousin who had

20"To Re-Register Housing Units in Panama City," Panama City News-Herald, 20 August 1942.


22Opal Reaver, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 25 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
obtained one of the housing units built for shipyard workers. Renell Poston roomed with her uncle’s family, sharing a bedroom with their small child.

The War Housing Center opened June 29, 1943, to coordinate housing needs in the area. Ms. Louis Jones Horne of Mobile was the manager of this new office whose task was to handle registration of available rooms. Within ten days Ms. Horn reported the office had more than one thousand applications for housing and only fifty vacancies listed. Her plea for additional listings noted the availability of assistance for those willing to remodel to add rooms to rent. Within three weeks, the center had located 121 dwelling units and 202 rooms. However, the supply still fell far behind the need. In the same three weeks, the center received requests for 327 units and 270 rooms. Ms. Horn estimated sixteen percent of bedrooms in Panama City were not in use based on the number of such rooms located by the United

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2Mary Darr, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 22 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

2Renell Poston, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

2"War Housing Center to Be Opened," Panama City News-Herald, 27 June 1943.

2"Housing Center Gets Hundreds of Applications," Panama City News-Herald, 30 June 1943.

2"Call Issued for Homeowners to List Rooms," Panama City News-Herald, 7 July 1943.
Service Organizations to house mothers visiting their sons for Mother's Day. Obviously, many homeowners willing to house mothers for a weekend were not prepared to rent rooms on a long-term basis to war workers. Following this report, forty homeowners registered rooms as participants in the campaign to "Share their Homes." Rent Controls

Tyndall military personnel complaints of high rent led the Office of Price Administration to appoint Mayor H. G. Fannin to chair a Rent Control Board in June, 1942. The board had the power to negotiate agreements between landlords and renters and to set rents when no agreement could be reached. The mayor appointed Captain Ammon McClellan (of Tyndall), W. F. Look, and B. F. Harris to the Rental Control Board. The management asked Wainwright Shipyard employees to report problems with profiteering within the community in January, 1943. Rental rates appeared to be the most common problem.

The Office of Price Administration listed Panama City as one of thirty-eight defense rental areas whose rents would be

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2"Housing Center Finds Dwelling Space for Many," Panama City News-Herald, 1 August 1943.

2"40 Respond to Campaign Plea to 'Share Home'," Panama City News-Herald, 14 September 1943.

3"Mayor to Name Local Rental Board Members," Panama City News-Herald, 18 June 1942. "Mayor Fannin Names Rental Control Board." Panama City News-Herald, 21 June 1942.

3"We Want to End Profiteering," The Wainwright Liberator, 16 January 1943.
frozen at March 1, 1942, levels. The policy became effective September 1. The rule also required landlords to register their rental property with the local rent control office by October 16. The Office of Price Administration assigned J. N. Johnson the acting director of the local rent control office. Judge A. M. Douglas became the permanent Rent Director for the Bay County Rental Control Area. The Office of Price Administration appointed William W. Morris as the rent inspector for Bay, Franklin, and Gulf counties effective December 1, 1942. A Panama City News-Herald article announced the registration period was September 15 through October 15. The article emphasized the purpose of the rent freeze was to help the war effort and to reduce inflation. By October 13, 350 landlords had listed their property with the Rent Control Office. A clarification of the rule noted rents could be adjusted higher than the March 1 level if:


34"Rent Listings Deadline Near," Panama City News-Herald, 9 October 1942.

35"Inspector of Rents Named for This Area," Panama City News-Herald, 27 November 1942.

36"Rent Control to Be Here for Duration of War Emergency," Panama City News-Herald, 13 September 1942.

1. major improvements were made.
2. arrangements for a possible rent increase were agreed to more that six months prior to March 1.
3. the landlord improved service or furnishings.
4. the original rent agreed to was between friends or family and was artificially low.
5. a long-term lease was expiring."

The following year, Judge A. M. Douglas reported persons renting rooms in their own homes could evict a renter if the situation did not work out. Authorities hoped this would encourage more people to offer their spare rooms for rent."

Panama City passed an ordinance requiring an occupational license for any businesses providing sleeping accommodations. The license fee varied, based on the number of people the building could accommodate, from a minimum of $15 for five to nine boarders to a maximum of $150 for housing more than eighty-five individuals. The ordinance also required a restaurant license if meals were served. Landlords were required to purchase the license(s) annually by October 1. The penalty for non-compliance was a $25 to $250 fine and/or 10 to 30 days in jail."
A variety of governmental agencies under the National Housing Agency were involved in promoting construction in the area. The Federal Public Housing Authority (FPHA) built and maintained public housing. The Federal Housing Administration assisted in private housing construction. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation supported private homeowners willing to carry out conversion or remodelling projects.

**Public Housing Projects**

Almost as soon as the shipyard began operation, construction of public housing for its workers began. August, 1942, the U.S. Maritime Commission announced its approval of the Federal Public Housing Authority's plans to construct 1500 housing units near the shipyard to minimize transportation needs for workers and their families. Wainwright's management assigned Mr. Flythe the task of operating a rental bureau to coordinate available housing for shipyard employees.

Throughout August, 1942, *The Wainwright Liberator* provided reports on the proposed housing. The housing program included dormitories, apartments, and houses. The dormitories consisted of single rooms. The first ones were for men only but later dormitories for women were built as

""Several Hundred More Houses Are Required in Area," *Panama City News-Herald*, 6 June 1943.

""Shipyard Housing Project Approved," *The Wainwright Liberator*, 1 August 1942.

well. The government rented these rooms for $5.00 per week, which included maid service.\textsuperscript{4} The apartment units, called "war apartments," were described as "self-contained apartments for couples with practically everything arranged in one room. They will be heated from a central plant and hot water will be supplied in the same way."\textsuperscript{4} Each "war apartment" had a hot plate but no kitchen. A cafeteria was planned to meet eating needs.\textsuperscript{4} The "war apartments" were furnished, except for linens for the two single beds, and rented for $8.00 per week.\textsuperscript{4} The government also built prefabricated houses made of cement and asbestos. These houses included a kitchen and two to three bedrooms. Some were built as "row houses," indicating two to five were joined together. Separate "detached" houses were also built.\textsuperscript{4}

As the construction of the first housing projects neared completion in November, 1942, The Wainwright Liberator published an article clarifying the priority for the various types of housing. The single dormitory rooms were available

\begin{quote}
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\begin{quote}
"Work Started on First Unit for Housing Project," The Wainwright Liberator, 5 September 1942.
\end{quote}

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\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
"Two 'Villages' to Be Erected at Early Date," Panama City News-Herald, 23 September 1942. "1,000 New Houses Added to Project," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 September 1942.
\end{quote}
for men only. The "war apartments" were for couples with no children. The houses were for couples with children. Each unit had utilities. Community houses, recreation centers, stores and other conveniences were included in the long-term plans.

Construction progress reports in September, 1942, noted one-half million feet of lumber was available and more was arriving. Building material was a scarce commodity. The amount the government channelled into the community indicated the seriousness of the local housing shortage. The work force involved 400 people at that point and 2,500 were expected to work on the housing project at its peak.

By mid-October, 1942, the U.S. Maritime Commission had approved contracts to build 2,500 housing units. Jones Construction Company received a contract to build one thousand dormitory units, 800 "war apartments" and 500 family housing units. An additional 200 housing units were built by individuals and private corporations under Federal Housing Act authority. By Christmas, 1942, The Wainwright Liberator

49"How Housing Units Will Be Allocated," The Wainwright Liberator, 7 November 1942.


51"Work on Housing Project Goes into Speed Construction," The Wainwright Liberator, 19 September 1942.

52"2,500 Dwellings Being Constructed for Ship Workers," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 October 1942.
reported 2,300 housing units were complete or nearly complete.\textsuperscript{53}

The national government had to provide housing for the increased civilian personnel at Tyndall Field as well as for the war industry workers. Representative Bob Sikes and Senator Claude Pepper announced a $2,000,000 appropriation for housing for Wainwright Shipyard and Tyndall Field civilian workers in April, 1943.\textsuperscript{54} A $247,000 contract to build housing units for Tyndall workers went to Sullivan, Long, and Hagerty of Bessemer, Alabama.\textsuperscript{55} However, Wainwright Shipyard workers received a large percentage of the housing. An April, 1943, housing contract appropriated 440 family units and 120 dormitory units for Wainwright employees. Tyndall Field workers received 140 family units. These were in addition to 400 previously approved housing units and 75 converted houses. Combined, they totaled 1,175 additional housing units. Of the 440 dwelling units for the shipyard workers 10% were efficiency apartments, 30% were one-bedroom units, 40% were two-bedroom units, and 20% were three bedroom units.\textsuperscript{56}

\textbf{Panama City News-Herald} headlines proclaimed "Two Million

\textsuperscript{53}"Many Now Occupy New Units and Others Are Ready," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 24 December 1942.

\textsuperscript{54}"Two Million Assigned for Housing Projects in This Defense Area," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 13 April 1943.


\textsuperscript{56}"Two Million Assigned for Housing Projects in This Defense Area," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 13 April 1943.
Dollar Housing Project Announced for Panama City" August 9, 1943. Congressman Bob Sikes' office reported the project included 500 family units for Wainwright Shipyard workers; 80 family units for Southern Kraft Company workers, and 60 family units for other workers associated with the war effort. The houses, completely financed by the federal government and sponsored by the Federal Public Housing Authority, cost $3,000 to $3,500 each. Additional dormitory rooms, 108 for women and 36 for men, were included in the project.  

A June, 1943, report indicated housing for the shipyard workers had priority over that for Tyndall Field workers. At that point, the two projects for Wainwright employees were 50% complete. Another was 35% complete and two projects were scheduled to open the next month. The Tyndall project was only 25% complete. A late August, 1943, news report predicted 1,030 housing units for Wainwright workers would be ready by the middle of September. At that point, there were plans for 1,005 housing units of various types. 

Ultimately, the Federal Public Housing Authority built five housing projects for Wainwright Shipyard employees. These were named: Wainwright Park, Maritime Housing Project

"Two Million Dollar Housing Project Announced for Panama City," Panama City News-Herald, 9 August 1943.

"Completion of Housing Units Expected Soon," Panama City News-Herald, 24 June 1943.

Number One; Maritime Housing Project Number Two, Drummond Park with an Extension; and Hillside Park.

Wainwright Park, the first housing project, was located across the street from the shipyard. It consisted of dormitories and "war apartments." The Federal Public Housing Authority awarded Jones Construction Company the contract to build the first housing units in this project. Ground was broken before the end of August, 1942. E. G. Overcash, the project manager for the shipyard’s construction, was project manager for the housing project construction as well. A. F. Pylant was the general superintendent. The initial plans called for 448 war apartments. By September 12, 696 units were under construction -- the 448 war apartments and 248 dormitory units. Initial reports expected these units to be ready by November 15. The Federal Public Housing Authority assigned A. H. Doty as the resident manager for the housing. As the Wainwright Park housing neared completion, a privately-owned barracks that housed fifty shipyard workers burned.

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60 "Housing Program May Be Expanded," The Wainwright Liberator, 12 September 1942.

61 "Housing Project Finally Launched," The Wainwright Liberator, 29 August 1942.


63 "Housing Program May Be Expanded," The Wainwright Liberator, 12 September 1942.

64 "Small House Units Ready November 15," The Wainwright Liberator, 17 October 1942.
They were allowed to move into the single rooms on an emergency basis. People began moving into the "war apartments" in November, 1942, as the individual units were completed. Though built for couples, some were occupied by two men. By Christmas, 1942, The Wainwright Liberator reported 2,300 housing units were complete or nearly complete. Only forty of the dormitory rooms were vacant. There were 275 occupied "war apartments" and 50 were due to be opened within the week. By spring, 1943, the first contract in the Wainwright Park had been completed. Construction of an additional 120 dormitory rooms was included in a contract awarded to the F. T. Newton Construction Company of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. The contract included housing units in another project. These rooms were divided equally between men and women. An August, 1943, progress report on Federal Public Housing Authority construction noted the 120 dormitory units (divided equally between men and women) at

"Housing Project Receives Workers When Homes Burn," The Wainwright Liberator, 14 November 1942.

"Maritime Houses Open to Workers," The Wainwright Liberator, 28 November 1942.


Wainwright Park were due for occupancy August 5. The Federal Public Housing Authority awarded A. Farnell Blair of Decatur, Georgia, the contract to build the 144 additional dormitory units in the Wainwright Park in the fall, 1943. This was included in the $955,771 project to build 500 housing units in the Drummond Park Extension. By November 30, 1943, the 448 war apartments were 99% complete. The 368 dormitory units were 99% complete. The last 144 dormitory units, that had only recently been contracted, were 8% complete. Mr. Zema Cowan and his wife lived in apartment housing provided by the shipyard. He appreciated the convenient location — he had a two block walk to his job at the shipyard. The couple continued to live there after he returned to work at a car dealership repair shop. His wife’s employment in the shipyard’s training school continued to qualify them for shipyard housing.

As the first group of "war apartments" neared completion, the U.S. Maritime Commission approved construction of an

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70 "Near 1,000 Will Get Trailer Accommodations," Panama City News-Herald, 1 August 1943.

71 "Immediate Start on Housing Units," Panama City News-Herald, 27 September 1943.


73 Zema A. Cowan, interview by Peggy D. Palt, 23 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
additional one thousand family housing units by the Jones Construction Company. These housing units were organized in two separate villages named Maritime Housing Project Number One and Maritime Housing Project Number Two. Maritime Housing Project Number One was located on property owned by the shipyard. This property was across the street from the shipyard along St. Andrew Bay. It is the current location of Gulf Coast Community College. Maritime Housing Project Number Two was located in the St. Andrews community near the grammar school, for the convenience of those with school age children. The Maritime Commission Project Number One, adjacent to the shipyard, contained family housing units only. As with all the projects, plans included building recreational buildings and stores so that each project would, in essence, become a self-contained village. Construction delays led to habitation of some of this housing before it was complete. Couples with children moved into the unfurnished houses before heat was installed. The rent on these houses ranged from $30 to $37.50 month, depending on the number of

"Two 'Villages' to Be Erected at Early Date," Panama City News-Herald, 23 September 1942. "1,000 New Houses Added to Project," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 September 1942. St. Andrew Area Map, Panama City Engineering Department, Panama City, Florida.


"Two 'Villages' to Be Erected at Early Date," Panama City News-Herald, 23 September 1942. "1,000 New Houses Added to Project," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 September 1942.
bedrooms. By early December, 1942, fifty houses in the Maritime Housing Project Number Two were occupied. Walter Seaman was the Maritime Housing Projects rental coordinator. Maritime Housing Projects were also managed by the Federal Public Housing Authority. R. L. Kraft was the rental agent for the 438 housing units in Maritime Project Number One. Mr. and Ms. C. B. Gapen were the rental agents for the 652 units comprising Maritime Project Number Two. These 1,000 units were complete by November 30, 1943.

In October, 1942, the U.S. Maritime Commission approved construction of 500 housing units. The Federal Public Housing Authority contracted with the Jones Construction Company to build these houses in the St. Andrews area known as Drummond-Ware Subdivision. Andrew, Yonge, and Hart, a Pensacola firm won the architectural contract. The $1,789,220 contract included cost plus a fixed fee of $50,000 for the Jones Construction Company. Construction began October 8 with

77“Family Dwellings Ready Middle of Next Week,” The Wainwright Liberator, 21 November 1942.

78“Maritime Houses Open to Workers,” The Wainwright Liberator, 28 November 1942.


completion scheduled for sixty days." Drummond Park's first project had 316 houses with one or two bedrooms and 134 houses with three bedrooms. The sixty day completion goal was not met as evidenced by an update in The Wainwright Liberator January, 1943. Drummond Park, a Federal Public Housing Authority project, was due to open soon with 450 housing units. These houses were provided with coal heating and cook stoves, hot water and ice boxes. The availability of coal was the reason for this heating source, rather than oil. The 450 units were completed by the end of February, 1943, and turned over to the Federal Public Housing Authority. John J. Turner was the manager and Ms. Genevieve Pelham was the assistant manager of this project, located 3600 feet from the shipyard. Renters had to make a $5 deposit to reserve a house. This deposit applied to the first month's rent which was $30 per month for a two-bedroom house and $32.50 for three bedrooms. The rent included furnished major appliances and electricity. The rental policy required renters to sub-lease

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**"Maritime Houses Open to Workers," The Wainwright Liberator, 28 November 1942.

unused bedrooms to shipyard workers. Ms. Darr and her sister roomed with a cousin and her husband who had a housing unit in this area.

The housing shortage continued despite the flurry of construction in 1942. The Wainwright Liberator reported in March, 1943, that the U.S. Maritime Commission had announced 1,800 new units might be added. By April the government had decided to build 1000 new units along the bay north of Drummond Park. This project, known as the Drummond Park Extension, planned for 985 row houses and detached houses with one to three bedrooms. The government designated 860 of these units for Wainwright Shipyard employees. Others were designated for Southern Kraft Corporation workers. The Federal Public Housing Authority was responsible for the 400

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"Housing to Have Recreation, Child Care and Stores," The Wainwright Liberator, 13 February 1943. "Drummond Park Housing Units to Be Opened," Panama City News-Herald, 14 February 1943.

Mary Darr, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 22 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

"1,800 New Units May Be Added to Our Housing," The Wainwright Liberator, 27 March 1943.


family dwellings north of Drummond Park. The Federal Public Housing Authority awarded the contract to build these family units to the F. T. Newton Construction Company of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. This contract included construction in Wainwright Park and Hillside Park. Its total value was $920,000. In July, 1943, The Wainwright Liberator reported that 400 units were under construction in the Drummond Park Extension and another 400 units were to be built. The Federal Public Housing Authority announced 160 of the 400 family units at Drummond Park would be ready August 12 with the remainder completed September 1. The Federal Public Housing Authority awarded a second contract, valued at $955,771, for 500 family units in the Drummond Park Extension to A. Farnell Blair of Decatur, Georgia. By November 30, 1943, the 400 units begun in the spring were 98 percent complete. The final stage of the extension was 34 percent complete. However, the 80 units reserved for Southern Kraft

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8"Stores, Houses Will Be Added at Early Date," The Wainwright Liberator, 24 April 1943.


1"1,900 New Dwelling Units Within 120 Days," The Wainwright Liberator, 31 July 1943.

2"Near 1,000 Will Get Trailer Accommodations," Panama City News-Herald, 1 August 1943.

3"Immediate Start on Housing Units," Panama City News-Herald, 27 September 1943.
Corporation workers were only 17 percent complete.94

The Federal Public Housing Authority built a housing project for African-American workers. This community, named Hillside Park, was located in the east St. Andrews area along Florida Avenue, less than half a mile from Highway 98.95 Hillside Park opened January 1, 1943. It had 48 single rooms, 48 war apartments and 50 family units.96 The 50 family units consisted of 34 two-bedroom houses and 16 three-bedroom houses.97 African-American workers had less housing designated for their use. They comprised nine percent of the Wainwright Shipyard work force in 1943 and up to fifteen percent in 1945. Less than seven percent of the government housing built for shipyard workers was designated for African-Americans.98 The rent on this housing was less because it was not located within walking distance of the shipyard like that

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97"Maritime Houses Open to Workers," The Wainwright Liberator, 28 November 1942.

for white workers. The 48 war apartments for the African-American housing project were included in the plans developed to build Wainwright Park in September, 1942. They were constructed by the Jones Construction Company. The F. T. Newton Construction Company of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, won a contract that included 40 additional housing units and a community building at Hillside Park in the spring, 1943. Six buildings providing forty dwelling units for workers at Hillside were scheduled for occupancy August 5, 1943. The final addition to Hillside Park was built by the F. T. Newton Construction Company of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. The contract included 40 houses and a community building. Twenty-five Hillside Park houses were completed in September, 1943. By November 30, 1943, the 48 war apartments were 99 percent complete. The first 50 houses were 95 percent complete; the second 40 were 99 percent complete; and the final 40, which had just been begun, were eight percent complete. Information on the dormitory units was not

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100"Work Started on First Unit for Housing Project," The Wainwright Liberator, 5 September 1942.

101"Near 1,000 Will Get Trailer Accommodations," Panama City News-Herald, 1 August 1943.


103"Negro Housing Project Opens," Panama City News-Herald, 23 September 1943.
available. \(^{104}\)

The monthly rent for the government housing, which included public utilities, was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Housing</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Non-White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>War Apartment - Furnished</td>
<td>$31.00</td>
<td>$27.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War Apartment - Unfurnished</td>
<td>27.50</td>
<td>24.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Bedroom - Unfurnished</td>
<td>29.50</td>
<td>26.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bedrooms - Unfurnished</td>
<td>32.50</td>
<td>29.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Bedrooms - Unfurnished</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>31.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Supervision of Public Housing**

The appropriate governmental authorities had to determine how to equitably distribute housing once it became available. As housing neared completion in the fall of 1942, workers were reminded to fill in applications for these housing units. The Federal Public Housing Authority's Housing Manager was responsible for receiving these application forms. \(^{105}\) Ashley H. Doty was the Housing Manager. Renters were required to sign a "Revocable Use Permit" which allowed eviction for rowdy


behavior after first receiving a warning.\textsuperscript{107}

Workers occupying housing without permission was a problem. The \textit{Wainwright Liberator} reported several people had been evicted for this reason in October, 1943. The eviction impacted on their ability to get permission to rent housing in the future.\textsuperscript{108}

Workers who ceased working for the shipyard continued to live in the public housing provided for war workers. The shipyard management helped solve this problem by providing the housing authorities with updated lists of terminated workers. With this information the housing supervisors could act quickly to evict renters no longer employed by Wainwright Shipyard. On the other hand, some renters moved without notifying the housing authorities, allowing others to move in without having to "wait their turn."\textsuperscript{109}

Residents often sold their furniture to other individuals as they moved from the area. The \textit{Wainwright Liberator} alerted workers these sales were subject to the Office of Price Administration ceiling prices. More specifically, the price controls applied to: "Mechanical refrigerators, washing

\textsuperscript{107}"Disorder to Mean Prompt Eviction," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 2 January 1943.


machines, gas ranges, vacuum cleaners, typewriters and bed springs when not sold with the bed."

William Owen Thomas became the company's housing manager in May, 1943. He and Wainwright Shipyard's general manager, Appen had worked together on other Jones Construction Company projects. "As the shipyard's housing manager, Thomas was responsible for locating housing for workers."

By April, 1944, James Beasley, the new coordinator of housing, could report that the completion of housing project construction insured adequate housing for Wainwright Shipyard employees. Anyone living further than fifteen miles from the shipyard was eligible for the local housing. Beasley's announcement encouraged workers to spread the word that housing was immediately available to any family or friends interested in shipyard employment. Simultaneously, he noted more than one family living in some shipyard housing was a violation of the federal government's housing policy. The heads of such families were encouraged to apply immediately for separate housing. This announcement claimed the housing shortage had been overcome.

"Used Furniture Under OPA Rule," The Wainwright Liberator, 22 July 1944.

"Wm. Owen Thomas Newly Appointed Housing Manager," The Wainwright Liberator, 15 May 1943.

"William Owen Thomas Housing Manager of Wainwright Shipyard," Panama City News-Herald, 17 May 1943.

"Housing Available for All," The Wainwright Liberator, 15 April 1944.
Enhancement of the Public Housing

Once the housing construction was underway, plans for support facilities began. A cafeteria was built near the public housing to provide meals for those living in units without kitchen facilities. The cafeteria opened in the spring, 1943, with seating for 350. It was operated by a restaurant manager and experienced dietitian. Arrangements were made to insure sufficient food supplies for its operation. Ms. Gladys Phillips was added to the Wainwright Park management staff February, 1943. She planned to develop recreational activities and tenant relations as quickly as possible.

Enhancement included such practical actions as ordering 1,100 garbage cans for the two Maritime Housing Projects. Garbage collections were scheduled on Mondays and Thursdays for Maritime Housing Project Number One and Tuesdays and Fridays for Maritime Housing Project Number Two. The Wainwright Liberator article reporting this also requested residents place their garbage cans out front on garbage days;

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115"Stores, Movies, Conveniences for Housing Project," The Wainwright Liberator, 13 March 1943.

116"Housing to Have Recreation, Child Care and Stores," The Wainwright Liberator, 13 February 1943.

the collectors could not go to the back for pick-up."

The federal government had to replace the ice boxes in the public housing with electric refrigerators in the summer of 1943. Refrigerators had not been available when the public housing was built. However, a heat wave had caused a scarcity of ice in the South. Government gave food shipments priority on the available ice. Ice had to be imported from Minneapolis. The resulting shipping costs made it impossible to sell it at the legal ceiling prices. Consequently, the Office of Price Administration had to approve charging actual cost for the ice. This was approximately $0.90 per 100 pounds. The arrival of refrigerators the government had declared as surplus alleviated the food storage problem. By the end of July, 595 refrigerators had been installed and 400 more were expected. Another project to make the public housing more attractive to renters was the sprigging of grass in Maritime Projects One and Two in July, 1943.

The housing project granted to the Newton Construction Company in May, 1943, included a community building as well as

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"Co-operate, Please!" The Wainwright Liberator, 31 July 1943.

"Electric Ice Boxes Ordered," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 July 1943.


child care facilities. The housing authorities opened the Drummond Park civic center with a formal dedication July 27, 1944. The new building included a lounge, library, and auditorium for "recreations, civic and religious activities." 

Private Housing

The appropriate government agencies promoted private housing construction in addition to the public housing. Restrictions accompanied the support to insure war workers received priority in housing allocation. The War Production Board provided construction materials for war housing. Builders could use only materials authorized by this agency in war housing. War workers had to rent such housing for four months before exercising an option to buy. John B. Blandford, Jr., National Housing Agency, and Donald M. Nelson, War Production Board, announced privately financed building and conversion for war workers housing had the same priority to obtain materials as government sponsored programs -- AA-4. The War Production Board was responsible for enforcing compliance with the regulations established by the National Housing Agency. The latter agency also developed housing


123 "Drummond Park Formally Opens New Civic Center," The Wainwright Liberator, 5 August 1944.

124 "War Housing Regulations Are Announced," Panama City News-Herald, 16 December 1942.
projects, with accessibility to the war industry they were to serve a major consideration.\textsuperscript{23}

Bay County's building inspector issued 399 permits for construction valued at $992,050.08 in 1941. By the end of 1942, Bay County had issued 660 permits for construction within Panama City valued at $1,179,858.56. The 1942 building permits included 494 for new dwellings valued at $996,198; 100 permits for dwelling repair valued at $37,745; 23 business building permits valued at $31,475 and 43 for business building repair valued at $114,440.56.\textsuperscript{26} These permits were for privately developed housing. The public housing built by the Federal Public Housing Authority did not require construction permits.\textsuperscript{27}

The Federal Housing Administration assisted construction by private developers. J. Will Brown announced plans to build fourteen units within ninety days February 21, 1943. Each two room apartments had one bedroom and a kitchen-living room combination. They were located in the west St. Andrews community on Lake Huntington.\textsuperscript{28}

The National Housing Agency approved 500 private housing

\textsuperscript{23}"Dwelling Units for Workers Hold Priority," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 20 December 1942.

\textsuperscript{26}"Construction Program Grows in Past Year," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 2 January 1943.

\textsuperscript{27}"New Building Permits Show Decided Rise," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 2 November 1942.

units by April, 1943. The majority of these units were located in Lynn Haven with the remainder in Panama City. Four hundred of the units were new units; 75 were developed from improvements of old dwellings; 25 were single room conversions in existing homes.129

H. L. Sudduth assisted a National War House Conversion Program to encourage property owners to convert buildings for housing rentals. Such projects were given priority status for necessary building materials.130

National Housing Agency representatives visited the area in May, 1943, to verify housing needs and to approve construction plans. Between September, 1942, and May, 1943, local housing units had doubled to 7,000.131 Nevertheless, Richard Mann, the National Housing Agency’s sub-regional representative from Mobile, reported several hundred more houses, in addition to those already planned, were needed for the war workers. He encouraged private conversion by reassuring all private homeowners interested in remodelling they could obtain the necessary supplies as well as renters. Mann also reported the government had no plans to build


130"Houses to Mushroom as Program Widens to Accommodate Hundreds," Panama City News-Herald, 11 April 1943.

131"Housing Needs to Be Checked by NHA Group," Panama City News-Herald, 10 May 1943.
additional housing because the area was reaching saturation. Finally, he noted, "A priority quota for private conversion of present dwellings for use by defense workers has been established."\textsuperscript{132}

J. A. Smith and L. E. Wilhite announced plans to build Bay Homes, a twenty-eight unit housing project, along Bonita Avenue in June, 1943. These privately financed homes were classified as Federal Housing Administration Title Six homes. Only war workers on the Federal Housing Administration's approved list could rent or purchase them. The homes included three bedrooms, had asbestos siding and came furnished with "electric refrigeration, oil heating and the latest cooking equipment."\textsuperscript{133}

The Federal Housing Administration also sponsored construction of the Old Orchard sub-division in June, 1943. Orchard Homes, Incorporated, was the contractor. A. D. Albritton was the president and P. G. Gay was the vice-president of this business. These twenty-five homes had five rooms including two bedrooms. The sub-division was located on the east edge of Watson Bayou, half a mile from Panama City.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{132}"Several Hundred More Houses Are Required in Area," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 6 June 1943.

\textsuperscript{133}"28 Homes to Be Built at Once," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 22 June 1943.

\textsuperscript{134}"Orchard Homes' to Be Completed within 90 Days," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 23 June 1943.
Earnest L. Whitler, the Federal Housing Administration's construction inspector, reported on the progress of the various housing projects under construction in the county in June, 1943. The twenty-four houses in the Bayview development at Oak and Palmetto Streets were scheduled for completion in eight weeks. Each of these houses, located on 140' by 50' lots, had two bedrooms, a stove, oil heater, and hot water heater. They were constructed with asbestos siding. Sudduth Homes began construction of ten houses in the Cove area that week. L. B. Ellinor, Jr. had almost completed 140 houses in the Oakland Terrace area. These projects, like the Old Orchard sub-division and the Bay Homes project, were constructed through the Federal Housing Administration and were only eligible to war workers. Renell Poston's family acquired one of these homes in what was known as the Lisenby Project in June, 1944. She remembered it had a concrete bathtub.

The War Production Board and National Housing Agency announced a relaxation of their rules regarding home purchases in an attempt to encourage more privately financed housing construction in July, 1943. Two-thirds of the houses were reserved for rental purposes but could be bought by a war

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136 Renell Poston, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
worker who had rented for two months. Previously, a war worker had to rent such housing for four months prior to purchase. The remaining one-third of the privately financed housing "built under priorities applied for after February 10" could be sold to war workers immediately.  

As of July 1, 1943, 3,000 housing units were complete; 850 were under construction; and 470 were scheduled for construction. In August, 1943, the National Housing Agency had approved 1,254 additional war housing units. This consisted of 220 privately financed homes, with 120 designated for African-Americans; 640 publicly financed temporary family units with 40 for African-Americans; 144 publicly financed temporary dormitory rooms, and trailer units. The federal government had built or supported the construction of 5,574 war housing accommodations for 15,000 people.

September, 1943, H. L. Sudduth, chair of the Panama City War Housing Committee announced, as part of a "Share Your Home" campaign, that 1,500 housing units were still needed. The need persisted despite the addition of 6,304 units built or planned. It simply was not enough to house the estimated

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137 "Home Ownership Ruling Relaxed for War Worker," Panama City News-Herald, 14 July 1943.

40,000 migrants to the area.  

August, 1943, the Army, Navy, War Production Board, and the U.S. Maritime Commission issued a joint letter alerting Panama City contractors they were required to use prefabricated materials in their construction. Panama City was one of fifty-five such designated areas. The government sought to reduce the use of labor in coastal area construction where labor was already made scarce by war construction such as that taking place at Wainwright Shipyard.

By May, 1944, The Wainwright Liberator reported housing was readily available for new workers moving into the city. The change to two nine-hour shifts may have reduced the need for workers and, consequently, for housing by this time.

Beach Housing

The beach area provided a readily available housing supply once the tourist season was over. The U.S. Maritime Commission announced in August, 1942, that workers could rent housing on the beach at reasonable, rather than summer, rates once existing leases were honored. Beach housing was not available to vacationers after this period. The Wainwright Liberator, 13 May 1944.

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139 "At Least 1,500 Housing Units Needed in City," Panama City News-Herald, 8 September 1943.

140 "Will Prefabricate Building Materials for Use in County," Panama City News-Herald, 17 August 1943.

141 "Many Workers Plan to Move into City," The Wainwright Liberator, 13 May 1944.

142 "Shipyard Housing Project Approved," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 August 1942.
Liberator published articles touting the desirability of beach housing including a story of a worker whose wife was unwilling to leave a beach cottage for a house in town when it became available. Its distance from the shipyard was the major disadvantage of beach housing. However, bus transportation was available. The lack of heating facilities was a problem with the beach cottages that had to be addressed. They had been built for summer habitation.

Traffic was disrupted April 16 to April 29, 1943, when a barge struck one of the pylons supporting the Hathaway Bridge. Boats were used to ferry workers back and forth while the repairs were made. Otherwise, it required a 35 to 40 mile detour to travel from the beach to Panama City. The State Road Department was in charge of the repair. Wainwright Shipyard assisted as much as possible. Buses brought workers to the western side of the bay where four passenger boats running every half hour ferried the workers to the shipyard.

143 "Fore and Aft," The Wainwright Liberator, 12 September 1942.


There were approximately eight hundred beach commuters. During the repair power cables were damaged, cutting off electricity for the beach area. Local authorities were concerned that electricity could not be restored since cable manufacturing for civilian use had been discontinued for the war. Wainwright Shipyard presented the necessary cable to the Gulf Power Corporation within two days. Telephone service to the beach area also suffered during the repair. However, it was repaired within twelve hours.

Judge A. M. Douglas, the area's Price Administrator, ruled in February, 1943, that rents on cottages, set at $50 to $60 per month could not be raised to the summer rates when the traditional tourist season began. (Summer tourist rates were $25 to $35 per week.) Renters could not be evicted. Only renters who moved in after May 1, 1943, could be charged the summer rate. The Office of Price Administration's national ruling exempting rent controls on cottages used strictly for tourism did not apply to local cottages rented year round to war workers. Only the few empty cottages were exempt from the

146"Hathaway Bridge Repair Work Begins," Panama City News-Herald, 21 April 1943.

147"No Power for Beach District," Panama City News-Herald, 22 April 1943. "Wainwright to Present Cable for West Bay," Panama City News-Herald, 23 April 1943.

148"Beach Residents Without Telephone Service," Panama City News-Herald, 28 April 1943.

149"Ceiling Clamped on Beach Cottages," The Wainwright Liberator, 6 February 1943.
local rent control. Grace Bellas had eight apartments on the beach. She had to rent them to shipyard workers for $50 per month. Her renters were families, rather than single workers. She had little turnover.

H. L. Sudduth developed a Federal Housing Administration project to build more than 100 cottages along the beach. Mr. Sudduth designed these one and two bedroom cottages to meet post-war tourist trade needs.

The Wainwright Liberator revealed plans to build 400 cottages on the beach in July, 1943. These privately constructed brick units, backed by the Federal Housing Administration, were built along an area several miles long between Long Beach and Florida Beach. The cottages cost $2,500 to $3,000 each to construct, for a total construction value of a million dollars. These units were arranged in groups of one to four.

Trailers and Tents

The sudden influx of shipyard workers necessitated use of

150 "Cottage Rents Not to Go Up," Panama City News-Herald, 23 April 1943.

151 Grace Bellas, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 18 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

152 "Housing Plans Would Improve Shortage Here," Panama City News-Herald, 7 April 1943.

153 "1,900 New Dwelling Units Within 120 Days," The Wainwright Liberator, 17 September 1943. "$1,000,000 War House Project at the Beaches," Panama City News-Herald, 17 September 1943.
emergency temporary shelter until permanent housing could be built. Trailers and tents were the most immediate sources. The city found it necessary to pass a new ordinance requiring operators of such camps to provide adequate health and sanitation facilities for these temporary living quarters in June, 1942.**

The government was unable to meet the housing needs with traditional facilities despite the housing construction. The Federal Public Housing Authority announced plans to build a camp for 250 trailers near the shipyard in March, 1943.** As this park neared completion the Panama City News-Herald reported there were 500 sites for trailers in Panama City but there were 1,500 trailers in the area. An additional 250 trailer sites met only half the need.** Private businesses also operated trailer parks. The management of "All States", a new park located a block north of "Little Dothan," within walking distance of the shipyard advertised openings April, 1943.** The Federal Public Housing Authority announced construction of a trailer park with sites for 2,350 trailers

**"New City Law for Trailers Here," Panama City News-Herald, 28 June 1942.


**"Approval for NHA Project Expected Soon," Panama City News-Herald, 11 April 1943.

**Advertisement, Panama City News-Herald, 22 April 1943.
in May, 1943. The government planned to locate this $90,000 trailer camp in an area near enough to Lynn Haven to make use of that community’s water system.

The Federal Public Housing Authority built another trailer park north of Drummond Park. This park was planned for privately owned trailers when it opened in July, 1943. However, the federal government decided to move 250 trailers it owned in Tampa, Florida, and Huntsville, Alabama, into the local community because the housing shortage was so critical. The lots placed trailers twenty-five feet apart. By August, 1943, the Federal Public Housing Authority had planned to build a second trailer park for 250 privately owned trailers near Drummond Park. The forty used trailers shipped in by the government from Tampa were not available for occupants until late August, 1943. August 23, 1943, 65 trailers were ready for renters and 185 arrived shortly afterwards.

The Federal Public Housing Authority awarded F. L. Bray

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158"Homes and Park for 2,350 Trailers Building to Start May 17 on 400," Panama City News-Herald, 9 May 1943.

159"Nearly $1,000,000 for Housing Here; Work Starts May 18," Panama City News-Herald, 16 May 1943.


162"345 Dwellings Completed for Ship Workers," Panama City News-Herald, 22 August 1943.
Construction Company of Mobile, Alabama, the contract to build the trailer park for 250 privately owned trailers. This park was located northwest of Wainwright Park. The contract was for $126,448. Late October, 1943, was the completion date for this project.103

The Federal Housing Administration operated Ware Trailer Park located on St. Andrew Bay for privately owned trailers. Rent was $12 per month. Located "just beyond the row of cottages for Maritime officials and General Superintendents in Maritime Project No. 1" the park had "carefully laid out plots, convenient to toilets and baths and an abundance of hot and cold water. There [were] laundries, equipped with every facility, including drying lines. There is a master kitchen. Lights also are included."104 Standard trailers rented for $27.00 per month. Expandable units rented for $31.50 per month.105

The housing shortage led to the use of tents. In June, Wainwright Shipyard announced the Army had given it permission to use a tent camp to house its workers. The tent camp had been for recreational use but was idle. The camp had

103 "Trailer Park to Be Constructed," Panama City News-Herald, 26 September 1943.

104 "Trailer Dwellers Find Ideal Home at Park on Bay," The Wainwright Liberator, 11 June 1943.

facilities to house 500 shipyard workers. It was located on Coastal Highway 98, west of Watson Bayou and east of Panama City, two blocks off Sixth Street on Cove Boulevard. Colonel C. H. Smith, U.S.A., retired, was in charge of the center.  

The significant population growth required more than shelter to meet its needs. The shipyard and the housing to support its work force required additional water lines and sewage treatment facilities. The existing lines were inadequate for the massive housing and there was concern about health problems. New residencies necessitated increased utility lines and additional energy source, in addition to the large amount of energy needed to operate the shipyard. Another concern was transportation for the shipyard workers. Finally, the new residents required increased communication services -- telephone and postal connections -- to maintain contact with their friends and family.

Infrastructure

Garbage

July, 1943, Panama City had three garbage collection trucks. The sanitation department operated them fifteen to seventeen hours per day in an attempt to collect the additional garbage generated by the Federal Public Housing Authority and U.S. Maritime Commission housing projects. It could not accomplish this task with its limited equipment.

According to a U.S. Public Health Service report, quoted by the Office of Community War Services, "Garbage is dumped on three open dumps, one in each of the three sections of the city. These dumps are near built-up sections and create rat and fly harborages. Investigation by the Public Health Service have indicated that the sanitary land field method of garbage disposal would be very practical." The Office of Community War Services recommended the Federal Works Agency approve Panama City's application for additional garbage disposal equipment. Panama City requested a bulldozer or earth moving machine and additional garbage trucks. The Office of Community War Services report stated seven trucks should be provided.

Water and Sewage

A Millville plant provided water for Panama City in 1942. (Tyndall Field and the Southern Kraft Paper Company had individual water systems.) The plant pumped one million gallons of water per day from four wells. It had a storage capacity of 300,000 gallons. This proved inadequate when the

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Wainwright Shipyard workers arrived in the community.\textsuperscript{169}

Congressman Bob Sikes' office announced in April, 1942, the reconsideration of a water/sewer works project once the decision to locate Wainwright Shipyard in Panama City had been made. Though previously ruled unnecessary, the Public Works Administration decided to restudy this matter. The project proposed $750,000 to extend sewers and $320,000 to extend water service.\textsuperscript{170} Representatives from the Federal Public Works Agency and the U.S. Public Health Service had to visit the area to determine whether the $300,000 requested for the project was necessary. President Roosevelt had approved a loan of $75,000 and a $60,000 grant. However, this was insufficient to meet the needs.\textsuperscript{171} By May, the Federal Public Works Agency had approved the grant and loan approved by President Roosevelt. However, the U.S. Public Health Service's report was required to decide on additional grant money necessary for this project.\textsuperscript{172} Panama City announced a request for $576,000 in grants and loans from the Federal Works Agency to fund the installation of additional pumps and


\textsuperscript{170}"City's Project on Waterworks Given Restudy," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 12 April 1942.


lines in Panama City and in the St. Andrews community. Congressman Bob Sikes' office announced a $224,000 grant to Panama City by the Federal Works Agency in August, 1942. The city used this to extend eight inch water mains and to construct a 500,000 gallon reservoir and a pumping station. The government awarded Jones Construction Company the contract to build the water system addition. Layne-Central Company contracted to drive the wells. The system included "deep wells, a big reservoir and water to supply the yard as well as the housing units." The city requested residents to use less water during the peak period, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. while construction was underway. The new pumps were not operational until the end of the year. The need to maintain adequate water pressure in the pipes during winter months was critical. The system was completed in February, 1943.

Panama City requested additional water supplies from the

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174 "$224,000 for Water System Is Given City," Panama City News-Herald, 24 August 1942.


177 "City Asks Use of Less Water," Panama City News-Herald, 12 November 1942.

178 "Added Waterworks Facilities to Be Ready in November," Panama City News-Herald, 3 August 1943.
Federal Works Agency within months after the first project was completed. The St. Andrews community was the area designated for the second addition to the water system. The existing system's production of 1.5 million gallons of water daily had proved inadequate for the shipyard and for the labor population that accompanied it.\footnote{City Asks New Water Supplies, "Panama City News-Herald, 18 April 1943.} Within a month, the Federal Works Agency allotted $429,450 to increase the water supply by two million gallons daily. The expansion was in Ward Four where Wainwright Shipyard was located.\footnote{New Waterworks for This Area, "Panama City News-Herald, 16 May 1943.} Construction began on the first of four wells in June, 1943. The wells were located 1000 feet apart. During the construction, residents were asked to use water in the late afternoon until the new system was in place.\footnote{Work Starts on Well Drilling in St. Andrew, "Panama City News-Herald, 20 June 1943.} The War Manpower Commission reported in October, 1943 that: "Application has been made for extensions and improvements to the city water system, which is operating at approximately its present capacity. Some of the newer sections of the city are served by only two-inch mains which do not provide sufficient pressure for satisfactory service and are totally inadequate
for fire protection." The Federal Work Agency built wells to supply an additional two million gallons of water daily. These facilities began production in November, 1943."

The Federal Works Agency also approved a $409,306 federal grant to improve the sewage system in the area where Wainwright Shipyard and its housing projects were located in August, 1943. Two previous requests from Panama City had been rejected because the area's needs were considered insufficient. The federal bureaucracy's attitude on this issue was reversed by the shipyard's location in the community.

The population continued to increase in "old" Panama City, Lynn Haven, and Millville. This necessitated an expansion of the Millville water plant. The government issued priorities in November, 1943, for materials to build a well, pump, and pipe for an additional water feeder main to serve the downtown Panama City area.

The Panama City water system had 3,000 connections in

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"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

"Added Waterworks Facilities to Be Ready in November," Panama City News-Herald, 3 August 1943.


1944. Water cost $1.50 for the initial 3,000 gallons. Each additional thousand gallons cost $ .35, up to 20,000. The next 20,000 gallons cost $ .30 each.**

Inadequate sewage was a serious problem in the Panama City area. Septic tanks and "privies" provided sewage service for residences prior to the war. The State Board of Health ruled St. Andrew Bay unfit for swimming or shellfishing because untreated sewage was discharged into it. The government's housing projects had small sewer systems. Treatment consists of septic tanks followed by absorption fields or 'so called' sand filters. Because of the congested nature of the housing developments these sewerage treatment plants are not functioning properly and sewage may be observed on the surface of the ground at almost all of the housing projects."** Health authorities feared an outbreak of typhoid or dysentery. The Federal Works Agency built a sewerage plant to provide for more adequate collection, treatment, and disposal of sewage in the public housing developments and Wainwright Shipyard. It was completed in the


Utilities

Panama City's electric meters increased from 3,619 in 1941 to 4,539 in 1942 and to 6,408 in 1943. Five of the meters included in the 1942 figure served the 3,000 housing units owned by the U.S. Maritime Commission. Alabama Power Company's hydro-electric plant generated the energy and sold it on a wholesale basis to the Commonwealth and Southern Company whose local plant was the Gulf Power Company. The company's minimum local rate was $1.00 per month for fifteen kilowatt hours. The rate per kilowatt hour declined on a progressive level from five cents per kilowatt hour for 16 to 35 kilowatt hour; to one cent per kilowatt hour for any over 700 kilowatt hour. The public housing's one meter per development helped minimize this utility bill. Those who paid their bill promptly received a discount.

Panama City's West Florida Gas Company serviced 2,700

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195"Panama City, Florida...," Panama City News-Herald, 24 March 1943.

customers. The butane gas was shipped by railroad from Oklahoma. The local rate per gallon declined from thirty cents for the first five gallons to twenty-five cents for the next twenty gallons and fifteen cents for all over twenty-five gallons. According to Mr. H. Mack Lewis, who owned the company, West Florida Gas Company grew from a small local firm to a major regional business because of Wainwright Shipyard. The company received priority to buy gas and the trucks necessary to deliver it. When the war ended, the company had equipment that companies in non-war industry areas had been unable to obtain. The company also had several hundred thousand dollars in the bank.

**Telephone Service**

The immigration of workers placed a major burden on Southern Bell’s local telephone system. Fred Bishop, the local manager, spoke to the Lion’s Club on this topic in August, 1942. The materials necessary for expanding the telephone facilities were unavailable because they were classified as wartime goods. Southern Bell announced that same month that the local telephone directory, normally issued

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193 H. Mack Lewis, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 4 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

194 "Heavy Strain Imposed Upon Phone Company," *Panama City News-Herald*, 7 August 1942.
in January, would be distributed three months earlier. The population increase had caused the existing directory to become obsolete. At that point, the community had twenty-three percent more phones than in January. The new phone book listed all phones in use by September 7, 1942.\textsuperscript{195} The company mailed out 2,250 new phone directories October 9, 1942.\textsuperscript{196} The following year the company distributed 3,000 telephone directories.\textsuperscript{197} The phone company requested consumers to decrease local and long-distance calls September, 1942, and established a goal of one-third reduction in local calls. Mr. Bishop, in announcing the request, noted local military and war production institutions needed greater access to the communication system.\textsuperscript{198} By October, 1942, Wainwright Shipyard had 125 new stations operating from its central switchboard.\textsuperscript{199} Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company requested people not make long distance Christmas calls in 1942.\textsuperscript{200} The company notified the public by a newspaper

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{195} "Phone Directory to Be Published at Earlier Date," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 30 August 1942.
\item \textsuperscript{196} "New Phone Books Are Mailed Today," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 9 October 1942.
\item \textsuperscript{197} "New Telephone Directory Here," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 30 September 1943.
\item \textsuperscript{198} "Public Asked to Cut Down on Phone Use," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 20 September 1942.
\item \textsuperscript{199} "New Phone Books Are Mailed Today," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 9 October 1942.
\item \textsuperscript{200} "Civilian Long Distance Calls Prove Hindrance to War Work," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 22 December 1942.
\end{footnotes}
advertisement in July, 1943, that operators would ask patrons
to limit their long distance calls to five minutes when the
lines were especially busy.291

The number of telephones increased from 1,534 in 1941 to
1,883 in 1942 and to 3,108 in 1943. This number was far below
the local need. The telephone service at the public housing
projects was deplorable. Drummond Park had one pay telephone
for 1,600 families. Wainwright Park had one telephone and a
telegraph station. Maritime Housing Project Number Two
residents could use the pay telephone only when the office
where it was located was open, which was infrequent since it
was not in constant use. The Hillside Project had no phone.
Residents often waited for hours to make long distance calls
where telephones were available. The Office of Community War
Services estimated eight to nine thousand individuals were
without the use of a telephone.292

Postal Service

Residents with limited access to telephones turned to the
U.S. Post Office to meet their communication needs. The local
postal business almost doubled from $51,963.89 in 1941 to
$89,927.52 in 1942.293 The U.S. Post Office established a

291Advertisement, Panama City News-Herald, 19 July 1943.

292"Supplement No. 1 to Report on Panama City, Florida,
(issued 7-30-42), January 15, 1944," Office of Community War
Services, Series 419, Carton 5, Florida State Archives,
Tallahassee, Florida.

293"Postoffice 1942 Business Nearly Doubled 1941 Total,"
Panama City News-Herald, 10 January 1943.
sub-station in the administration building at Wainwright Shipyard in February, 1943, to alleviate congestion at its Panama City and St. Andrews stations. This sub-station offered all the services of the main stations. The post office requested residents of Wainwright Park, Drummond Park, and Maritime Housing Projects One and Two to have their mail sent to the new sub-station. Ms. Katherine Gainer, St. Andrews station postmaster, announced the mail was received only once daily and was ready for distribution by eight o'clock each morning. She asked customers to check on their mail only once a day. The U.S. Post Office decided to build post offices in Wainwright Park and in Maritime Housing Project Number Two in the spring of 1943. The Panama City News-Herald announced Ms. Mattie Campbell agreed to build an 1800 square foot building on her property 635 feet north of the existing post office for a new post office in the St. Andrews community. The Post Office Department had asked the War Production Board to give priority to clearing the property for this building. In the interim, the Panama City main post office opened an additional window for parcel post and

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235 "St. Andrew Mail at P.O. 8 A.M.,” Panama City News-Herald, 14 March 1943.

236 "To Receive Bids for 2 Postoffices,” Panama City News-Herald, 16 March 1943.

employed three new clerks to meet the increased demand on postal service. Postal receipts continued to increase significantly. Stamp sales at the Panama City post office more than doubled from $5,423 in May, 1942 to $12,643 in May, 1943. The April and May, 1942, sales were $11,068; April and May, 1943, sales were $23,623. The postal employment almost doubled between 1942 and 1943, from 18 to 35 total employees, to meet the heavier volume of business.

The constant movement of war workers within the community created communication difficulties. The personnel department of Wainwright Shipyard requested employees to give them a permanent address as soon as they were able to establish a permanent residence. The personnel department had experienced difficulty locating individuals sought by family, friends, military personnel on furlough or when emergency situations arose.

Transportation

Wainwright Shipyard required adequate transportation for its workers. This necessitated additional roads and bus service.

208 "Additional Window for Parcel Post," Panama City News-Herald, 16 May 1943.

209 "Postal Receipts More Than Twice May, 1942, Total," Panama City News-Herald, 1 June 1943.

Road Construction

One two-lane road led to Wainwright Shipyard when it began operation. This created a major traffic jam when shifts changed. The Florida State Road Department announced plans to widen Fifteenth Street to four lanes from Wainwright Shipyard to the Cove area in June, 1943. The U.S. Bureau of Public Roads paid for this construction. The Panama City News-Herald reported the expansion neared completion in January, 1944.

The U.S. Maritime housing projects required streets, too. The Office of Community War Services reported plans to build streets in the housing projects to enable local busses to serve the residents. The Regional Federal Public Housing Authority Project Supervisor reported $30,000 had been appropriated for such construction. However, the asphalt road required warmer weather to build. Therefore, construction did not begin until spring, 1944. Roads were generally included in the public housing projects built later. When Drummond Park was built, plans included a new road to give

21"4-Lane Highway to Extend Along Fifteenth Street," Panama City News-Herald, 9 June 1943.


more direct access from this community into the shipyard's grounds.234

Paved roads were not necessarily included in privately constructed housing. The Panama City Clerk announced the city's policy regarding street paving. The city would finance one-third of the paving cost of any street. The owners were responsible for the remaining two-thirds cost. The money had to be paid "before priorities for materials can be secured or contracts let."235

Bus Service

The shipyard workers required mass transportation facilities. The U.S. Maritime Commission had to insure an adequate bus system. According to M. G. "Bubber" Nelson, Stedman Hobbe had a small bus system prior to the war. The U.S. Maritime Commission assisted him acquire additional busses to expand his operation to meet the war industry workers' needs.236 The Panama City Transit Company announced new service between Panama City and Lynn Haven, Wainwright Shipyard and Tyndall Field in May, 1942. Riders had to transfer busses in Panama City at Harrison Avenue and Sixth street to go to the shipyard or to Tyndall Field. The fares

234"Drummond Park Housing Units to Be Opened," Panama City News-Herald, February 14, 1943.

235"Paving Funds Must Be in By July 20," Panama City News-Herald, 18 July 1943.

236M. G. "Bubber" Nelson, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 30 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
declined from twenty-eight cents to twenty cents. Alaga Coach Lines, a long distance bus system, also served the Lynn Haven to Panama City route.\textsuperscript{27}

By June, 1942, the Panama City Transit Company had acquired four new busses and expected three additional ones within thirty days. The system operated under regulation of the Office of Defense Transportation in Panama City with Sidney Daffin as the chief administrator. The announcement reported defense workers had priority over shoppers and theater patrons in the use of the busses.\textsuperscript{28} In August, 1942, the company announced it had obtained five "Victory Busses." These were "described as 'Trailer Busses'...made from trucks formerly used in hauling automobiles overland."\textsuperscript{29}

The additional busses were inadequate to meet the increased demand. A March, 1943, news article described the problems with the transportation as the "chief detriment to the progress of the community."\textsuperscript{30} People needed transportation to the shipyard to work and to the business section to shop. In February, 1943, the Chamber of Commerce reported two alternatives to the transit problem -- additional

\textsuperscript{27} "New Bus Route Offers Service to Lynn Haven," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 15 May 1942.

\textsuperscript{28} "Facilities for Bus Travel to Be Increased," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 1 June 1942.

\textsuperscript{29} "Victory Busses Go into Service Here Next Week," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 12 August 1942.

\textsuperscript{30} "Better Travel Facilities to Be Considered," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 1 March 1943.
busses or staggered hours for more efficient use of the available busses. The Panama City Transit Company announced additional bus runs among Panama City, Lynn Haven, and Wainwright Shipyard in March, 1943. In April, 1943, the company announced new Saturday bus services. These routes between Panama City, Lynn Haven, and Callaway were scheduled for the convenience of shoppers at times when the shipyard shifts did not change.

In August, the bus company announced it expected ten additional busses in October. The company ordered them from the Yellow Truck and Coach Manufacturing Company in Pontiac, Michigan, once the War Production Board placed Panama City on the preferential list. The Office of Community War Services reported in January, 1944, that the delivery of these busses was not expected until March, 1944. The Office described the existing bus service as "always overcrowded and often have to leave many people waiting. This problem is

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21"Chamber of Commerce in Move to Solve Bay Transportation Problem," Panama City News-Herald, 15 February 1943.


23"New Saturday Bus Services," Panama City News-Herald, 16 April 1943.

24"Panama City Transit Co. Will Put on Ten More Big Buses in October," Panama City News-Herald, 29 August 1943.
frequently the cause of people being late for work. 

This report noted tickets cost ten cents each or twenty-eight tickets could be purchased for two dollars. By comparison, the thirteen mile taxi trip from Panama City to Tyndall Field cost $3.50. A taxi from downtown to Drummond Park cost $1.50.

August, 1942, The Wainwright Liberator announced plans for bus service to the beach. Wainwright Shipyard’s management made the arrangements with St. Andrews Bay Transportation Company officials. The service began August 16, 1942. The schedule included routes between Panama City, Wainwright Shipyard, Long Beach and Sunny Side Beach.

A brief article clarified the difference between local and long-distance bus lines in March, 1944. The Panama City Transit Company’s routes were “between the shipyard and Panama City; to the beaches as far as Sunnyside; and to Lynn Haven, Callaway and Tyndall Field....The long-haul busses, similar in appearance, are operated by Lee’s Coach Line and Coastal

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77"Bay Line Furnishes Full Transportation for Beach Dwellers," The Wainwright Liberator, 15 August 1942.
Stages. Bus service between the shipyard and the Drummond Park housing project began in June, 1944. This short trip cost only five cents.

Ruth Smeby rode the bus to work at Wainwright Shipyard. Initially, only small busses, referred to as "puddle jumpers," were available. Later, the community received the large busses that resembled a tractor. The trailer was attached to the cab similar to a flatbed truck. There was a communication link between the conductor, who collected the tickets in the back, and the driver. Mary Darr remembered the busses as always being crowded. Those who could participated in car pools.

Car Pools

The Wainwright Liberator published workers’ requests for car pools. Shipyard workers often arranged rides with co-workers within their department. Opal Reaver rode the bus until she met some people in her department who had a car pool and lived near her. They shared the expense. She described the arrangement as "a God-send, because...transportation was


229 "Five Cent Bus Fare to Drummond Park," The Wainwright Liberator, 27 May 1944.

230 Ruth Smeby, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 25 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

231 Mary Darr, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 22 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
terrible....[W]alking to town was about a mile to catch the bus." Renell Posten also rode the bus until a co-worker began picking her up. Like Ms. Reaver, she considered having a ride in a car a great blessing because the busses "were not exactly on time always...[and] you had to stand out in the weather."232

Millie Nauman paid two dollars a week to participate in a car pool that included at least six riders. She noted car pooling also helped with the parking problem at the shipyard.233 Earl Boone car pooled with Willie Redman for $1.25 a week. Mr. Redman picked up six riders in his pick-up truck.234 Mozelle Kasiah lived within walking distance of the shipyard. However, her supervisor often picked her up because she worked the night shift.235 Local employees' transportation arrangements were often cramped and uncomfortable, even for those fortunate enough to participate

232Opal Reaver, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 25 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

233Renell Poston, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

234Millie Nauman, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 2 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

235Earl Boone, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 9 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

236Mozelle Kasiah, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 23 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
in car pools. However, the shipyard employed many workers who faced a much more difficult long-distance commute each day.

Long Distance Commuters

Wainwright Shipyard attracted employees willing to travel long distances. The housing shortage was a contributing factor. Some who could not find housing for themselves and their families chose to commute. The Wainwright Liberator frequently highlighted this group of dedicated workers. Fifty employees commuted from Sampson, Alabama, 108 miles distance from Panama City. The article reported they rode in a homemade bus, reached the yard at 7:00 a.m. and returned home at 7:30 p.m. The shipyard's newspaper reported that Norene "Red" Henderson, a swing shift welder, travelled from Round Lake, Florida, a ninety-mile round trip. She had made this commute in excess of a year when the article was written.

Ms. May B. Watts, a Wainwright secretary, commuted from Chipley, Florida, sixty miles each way. She had not missed a day of work despite the distance and her age -- she was over fifty. A lengthy article on the long distance commuters described rebuilt trucks with seating built by amateur carpenters and open truck beds enclosed with lumber, burlap,

[Sources]

29 Fore and Aft," The Wainwright Liberator, 12 September 1942.


27 "Our Nomination for All-American," The Wainwright Liberator, 27 May 1944.
or whatever supplies were available. Some were emblazoned with such names as: "War Bond," "The Red Fox," and "Johnson's Defense Labor Line." They came from such Northwest Florida and Southern Alabama towns as: DeFuniak Springs, Bonifay, Vernon, Quincy, Blountstown, Carytown, Hartford, Geneva, and Enterprise. The riders suffered long, uncomfortable rides over rough roads. Those whose route crossed over bridges were sometimes late because the bridges were up to let barges pass. According to Earl Boone, one local resident put benches in the back of a ton-and-a-half truck he owned and hired a man to drive a group of workers back and forth from Geneva, Alabama. The driver's pay was exemption from the fee charged the other passengers.

The shipyard allowed Zema Cowan to return to the vehicle maintenance shop where he had previously worked. He was persuaded he would be more help to the war effort repairing trucks used to transport shipyard workers. Workers often left their trucks at the shop on the way to the shipyard. For trucks commuting workers long distances, the shop made every effort to complete the job before the workers' shift was over. The mechanics often had six hours to complete such major repairs as replacing an engine. According to Mr. Cowan, they

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241 Earl Boone, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 9 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
did whatever they had to do to complete the repair -- the truck had to be ready to transport the workers home.242

Despite the needs of the long distance commuters, the War Department rejected Bay County's request for a new bridge along Florida State Highway 10. According to the Chief of the U.S. Engineers, the area "the bridge serves is not a part of the strategic network of military highways and...the temporary bridge" is adequate. The rejection suggested the county request the Florida State Road Department build the bridge. The War Department assured the county there should be little trouble in getting priority for materials. Local authorities were dismayed because the bridge was on the route used by many shipyard workers commuting from Alabama and West Florida.243

Automobile Maintenance

Some workers were fortunate enough to own automobiles. Wainwright Shipyard's management admonished them to use their cars as little as possible because existing tires would be impossible to retread or replace.244

However, Wainwright employees were not as restricted by gasoline rationing as car owners who did not work in a war industry. Local rationing authorities announced in December,

242Zema Cowan, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 23 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

243"War Dept. Refuses Priority Help for W. Bay Creek Span," Panama City News-Herald, 30 June 1943.

244"Look Ahead," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 October 1942.
1942, that Wainwright workers were eligible for inclusion under the emergency gasoline clause. This classification allowed workers to buy gasoline by showing their identification badge. Other gasoline consumers were required to have a "T coupon" or an affidavit signed by a justice of the peace. By June, 1943, the policy had changed. Wainwright employees required gasoline coupons. Nevertheless, the shipyard arranged with the local War Price and Rationing Board and the Pensacola field Office of Price Administration to allow workers to apply for supplemental gasoline and tires through a transportation committee created by the shipyard. Supplemental rations required car pooling by the recipient.

The Wainwright Liberator carried workers' criticisms of drivers who failed to share their car. Ruby George Barnard was one such critic, stating, "And if anybody wants to know how many cars are NOT carrying workers to the Yard all they have to do is stand beside the road and try to get a ride. Even in the rain you won't be picked up. Car after car goes by with only the driver in it." In July, 1944, The Wainwright Liberator, carried a form for car owners to fill out in an attempt to set up an auto club. The lack of a


246 "Gas Ration Plan Worked Out for Shipyard People," Panama City News-Herald, 1 June 1943.

follow-up story indicates the idea failed.\textsuperscript{248} Despite governmental policies, the individual decided if he would share his car with others.

Workers who terminated employment had to surrender these Supplemental Gas Ration Coupons. They were considered government property obtained by the shipyard to assist workers in their transportation to a war related industry. The shipyard could withhold the last pay check for failure to surrender these coupons.\textsuperscript{249}

The increased population attracted to the community by shipyard employment required more than housing. As quickly as possible, migrants to the community made arrangements for their families to join them. Their children required educational facilities. The entrance of women into the work force in large numbers also necessitated day care facilities for pre-school children and after school programs for elementary age children. These additional families also increased the demand for medical services at a time when the war effort had taken many of the area’s physicians. The following chapter addresses the community’s efforts to meet the educational and medical requirements of these newcomers.

\textsuperscript{248}"Do You Need Riders?" \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 22 July 1944.

\textsuperscript{249}"Attention, Automobile Owners!" \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 21 August 1943.
Wainwright Shipyard attracted numerous workers to the Panama City community. Their families joined them as soon as family housing became available. This placed an additional burden on the community’s educational and medical facilities.

Child Care

Child Care Needs

The shipyard employed many women to meet the shortage of labor in the area. Those with children had to arrange child care. Many depended on relatives, friends and neighbors. Others, such as Fannie Mae Hutchison, hired African-American women to care for their children and their homes. Her method of locating a housekeeper was rather unusual. According to Ms. Hutchison:

"I walked down the railroad [next to her house]...they was forty-four paper mill paper houses down there. No floor in 'em. On the ground. I went by each one and knocked on the door and told 'em what I wanted and would you be interested? 'Nope.' And I got to the last house. There was a black woman awashing clothes on the side of the house, and I told her what I was looking for and how much I paid." She agreed to work for Ms. Hutchison beginning the following morning. However, when Ms. Hutchison returned from work the following evening, her housekeeper had not arrived. "I got my daddy and we drove down there and she said, 'I went down there but I didn’t ask
yo' name. So I didn't know whose house it was, if it was yo' house or not. So I wouldn't go in.' ...[W]hen she told me that, I said, 'Well, can you come in the morning?' 'Yeah.' I said, 'This is my daddy and he'll come pick ya up.' The next evening we come in and supper was all hot and ready for to eat on the table, the house was immaculate.'

Those who could not make such arrangements needed child care facilities. The Panama City News-Herald illustrated the need with a story of a couple who left their two children eight years old and less unsupervised while they worked the evening shift. The U.S. government and the community leadership quickly recognized the need. As early as December, 1942, the Bay County Defense Council created an advisory committee on child care. The committee, whose membership included Mr. Reuben Mapeladen of Wainwright Shipyard, was directed "to cooperate with a proposed program the Government may set up for day care of children in this defense area." The committee first arranged a survey to determine the number of children of war industry parents and the availability of child care facilities. The committee conducted the survey at defense industries, including Wainwright Shipyard, and through door-to-door canvassing. The Defense Council established the

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1 Fannie Mae Hutchison, interview by Peggy D. Felt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

2 "Tots Need Nursery Care When Parents Work Out," Panama City News-Herald, 5 February 1943.

3 "Day Nurseries for Children to Be Talked," Panama City News-Herald, 6 December 1942.
availability of Work Projects Administration financial assistance through April 30, 1943. However, the nurseries, once established, were expected to become self-supporting.

The media announced the opening of a day care center at the Drummond Park Housing Project March, 1943. It operated 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. seven days a week. Children two to six years old were eligible for enrollment in this program. The center served two meals per day and had an isolation room for ill children. The nursery was part of the U.S. government's Child Protection Program. The operation of the Drummond Park Nursery was interrupted in late April because Work Projects Administration funds were exhausted and Lanham Act funds were not yet available. The Panama City News-Herald published a child care need survey for its readers to complete April 30, 1943. The accompanying article announced plans to re-open the nursery with the explanation, "Lack of cooperation and interest was the initial cause for the closing of the school at Drummond Park." The survey results reported a need for twelve child care centers for the area and eight in the St.


"Park Nursery School Closed," Panama City News-Herald, 27 April 1943.

Andrews area. These estimates were based on an average enrollment of thirty students per center. The Florida Department of Education assisted with the application for Lanham Act Funds, which ultimately funded nine nursery schools. The application, filed April, 1943, received Presidential approval June 7, 1943. Ms. Robin Wood became the supervisor of the program July 12, 1943. State College for Women and Florida A and M offered courses to train nursery school teachers May 1 - 15, 1943.

**Government Action**

Congressman Bob Sikes' office announced a $35,441 allocation from Lanham Act funds in June, 1943, to pay for seven nurseries for 420 pre-schoolers. The grant included funds for four recreational centers for 550 school age children. The appropriation funded these programs from June 1 to November 30, 1943. The Federal Public Housing Agency also became involved in this issue. The agency sent a


Supplement No. 1 to Report on Panama City, Florida, (issued 7-30-42), January 15, 1944, Office of Community War Services, Series 419, Carton 5, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.

"12 Child Care Centers to Be Located Here," *Panama City News-Herald*, 23 March 1943.

representative from its regional office in Atlanta, Georgia, to meet with appropriate local groups in June, 1943. August 16, 1943, the Drummond Park nursery center, operating with Lanham Act funds, re-opened in the Drummond Park Community Center. Children were eligible if their mothers worked in war industries. Children of non-working mothers were eligible on a space available basis in such cases as fathers working the night shift or those in cramped housing facilities, such as trailers. Registration occurred at the St. Andrews School. Parents paid $3.00 weekly for food costs; Lanham Act funds paid remaining operating expenses. A Parent-Teacher Association chapter formed immediately.

Child Care Facilities

By August, 1943, several nursery facilities were operating in the housing projects for Wainwright Shipyard employees. Wainwright Shipyard employees were encouraged to register their children with Ms. Robin Wood, the Supervisor for Nursery Schools in Bay County. The registration occurred in the shipyard cafeteria's private dining room at 7:45-8:30 a.m. the first week in September, 1943. As nursery schools

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"Nursery Schools in Housing Projects Fill Vital Need," The Wainwright Shipyard Liberator, 28 August 1943.
reached their maximum quota, plans were made to open new ones.  

The Drummond Park nursery school had 45 students and a staff of three teachers, a dietician, a nurse, a cook and a maid. An additional building was under construction with space for 50 children. A nursery school opened in the Maritime Housing Project Two August 23, 1943. A third nursery school opened in the home of Ms. Reeves until a Federal Housing Agency house was located as a permanent facility. A child care facility operating twenty-four hours a day opened in the Maritime Housing Project One in November, 1943. The announcement noted children could be left all day or part of a day as well as all night. Dr. Barfield was available to treat any health problems. In her November 20, 1943, "Nursery School Notes," Ms. Wood listed nine child care facilities available to shipyard employees, their hours, and locations. These included nursery schools previously noted as well as ones in: Oakland Heights, Cove, Lynn Haven, and Springfield. For the first time, two nurseries for African-American children were listed: Hillside and Panama City Colored Nursery Schools. Most opened between 7:00 and 8:00

15"Registrations for Nursery School Being Accepted," Panama City News-Herald, 28 July 1943.

16"Nursery Schools in Housing Projects Fill Vital Need," The Wainwright Shipyard Liberator, 28 August 1943.

Proper Child Care

The discovery of an unattended nine-month-old girl in the Drummond Park Housing Project July, 1943, indicated the community's need for additional child care facilities for non-working mothers. Neighbors notified Ms. Gladys Phillips, the Federal Public Housing Authority's supervisor for the project, of the crying child. The father had traveled to Mobile; the mother was in court. Ms. Phillips took the child to the Wainwright Shipyard Infirmary for overnight observation, then to her home until the father was located.19

The local community and its media gave attention to proper child care. The Wainwright Liberator carried a regular article written by Ms. Wood called "Nursery School Notes." The Bay County Nursery Schools sponsored a program Tuesday evenings to provide an update on nursery school programs and enrollment. WDLP, the local radio station, broadcast a program on Fridays, at 7:05 p.m. in which Ms. Wood provided information on proper child care.20

Ms. Wood announced plans November, 1943, to open after school day care centers for children six to fourteen years old.

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20"Nursery School Notes," The Wainwright Liberator, 4 September 1943.
for a weekly fee of $1.00. Such facilities did not offer meals. The Office of Community War Services agreed with Ms. Wood’s recommendation regarding child care for school age children in its January, 1944, report. A project for before and after school care began operation in 1944. St. Andrews School, Cove School, Panama City Public School and Drummond Park School provided the facilities for these four centers. The nursery schools and child care centers changed their hours to accommodate shift changes at Wainwright Shipyard in May, 1944. The new hours extended from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Public Schools

School Enrollment

The Wainwright Shipyard workers’ children also created a serious overcrowding problem in the public school system. Wainwright Shipyard asked its workers to notify Reuben Mapelsden in the personnel office of the number of school-aged children they had. The shipyard also sought input on school bus transportation needs. The shipyard collected such data to assist the local school officials determine the school and bus


23"Excellent Child Care Available for Little Folks of Ship Workers," The Wainwright Liberator, 13 May 1944.
facilities needed.  

Bay High School held registration for its students August 24 - 25, 1942, 8:30 to 12:00 and 1:30 to 5:00 to determine the demand. The school notified students who wished to work to register Monday, August 31, 1942, to schedule morning or afternoon classes. Otherwise, students had classes scheduled all day. The school required students to have their parents' approval to work. Bay High School announced it did not plan to have half days sessions despite rumors to that effect. The Bay High School student enrollment of 997 September, 1942, exceeded the previous spring's 758 enrollment by thirty-one percent. This student population consisted of 166 seniors, 189 juniors, 289 sophomores, and 353 freshmen. The school had no additional rooms and only one additional teacher to accommodate this student growth. Bay High School announced it did not plan to have half days sessions despite rumors to that effect. 

Management representatives of local industries encouraged high school students to work instead of participating in athletic programs due to the area's labor shortage. However, the Central Labor Union of Panama City encouraged students to stay in school and participate in the athletic programs. "Forsake Games for War Work, Youths Urged," Panama City News-Herald, 2 October 1942. "Labor Unions OK Athletics for Students," Panama City News-Herald, 8 October 1942.


"Bay High Will Accept Pupils for Two Days," Panama City News-Herald, 23 August 1942.

employed thirty-four teachers in 1942; seventeen were new to the system. The school added an extra period to the daily schedule to accommodate the additional students in the classrooms available.

Bay High School held its 1943 registration August 27 - 28. The students scheduled five classes, each lasting one hour and ten minutes. The school discouraged students from working and allowed those who did to reduce their schedules by only one class. Working also required: parental permission, an employer statement that the student was essential, and maintenance of satisfactory grades.

Bay High students numbered 1,137 in September, 1943, fourteen percent greater than the previous year's enrollment.

The elementary schools faced even more overcrowding as workers and their children continued to move into the community. Tuesday, March 2, 1943, St. Andrews [Elementary] School Principal Hugh Brock requested parents wait until the following Monday to enroll new pupils. The ten room school built for 400 students had "possibly 1,140 pupils including 100 new ones who enrolled yesterday,"

The following month,

29 "997 Students Are Enrolled at Bay High," Panama City News-Herald, 20 September 1942.

30 "Newcomers to Bay High Required to Enroll Aug. 27-28," Panama City News-Herald, 22 August 1943.

31 "1,137 Bay High Pupils Register," Panama City News-Herald, 9 September 1943.

32 "No More Pupils in Week, Plea," Panama City News-Herald, 2 March 1943.
St. Andrews School reported an enrollment of 1,300 students. The school changed to double shifts: 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The schedule change allowed use of the cafeteria for classrooms. The school also used classrooms at the St. Andrew Baptist Church across the street. Finally, the school used a four-room building at the Drummond Park housing project (a mile away) for classes in the morning. The school’s faculty almost tripled from twelve to thirty-five teachers.  

With grammar school enrollment expected to exceed 5,500 students in 1943 – 1944, the school board rented eight apartments in Drummond Park for Wainwright Shipyard area students. The Drummond Park location was designated a branch campus of the St. Andrews School. The system was overwhelmed by the 1943 enrollment when classes began September 10. Seven hundred of St. Andrews School’s 1,725 students were sent home until temporary facilities were completed. The Drummond Park Annex opened in late September, 1943, and had 960 students. The school, housed in two eight-room apartment units in the Drummond Park housing project, used double shifts to meet the demands of the

33"St. Andrew School Enrolls 1,300; Each State in Union Represented," Panama City News-Herald, 30 April 1943.

34"Grammar School Pupils to Number More Than 5500," Panama City News-Herald, 31 August 1943.

35"700 Pupils Return to Their Homes in St. Andrew Area," Panama City News-Herald, 13 September 1943.
students from Maritime Housing Project One, Wainwright Park, and Drummond Park.\textsuperscript{36}

School enrollments fluctuated greatly during each school year; the September enrollments grew each year. School Superintendent Merritt Brown reported the county's school system had 7,000 students during the 1942 - 1943 academic year.\textsuperscript{37} The system expected 6,500 students to return to school September 10, 1943, as the new academic year began.\textsuperscript{38} Bay County schools began 1943 with 6,637. The following year, enrollments climbed by eighteen percent to 7,815. In 1945, the student population increased to 7,997, only two percent.\textsuperscript{39}

School Additions

The Bay County School system did not wait until the students arrived to begin making arrangements for more classrooms. A Federal Works Agency's $2.5 million program for classroom construction in the southeast included twenty rooms for Bay County.\textsuperscript{40} When the 1942 school year began, Bay County had twenty-five additional classrooms. Ten were in the

\textsuperscript{36}"Drummond Park Annex to St. Andrew Public School Opens Tuesday Morning," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 26 September 1943.

\textsuperscript{37}"Looks to Relief of Overcrowding in County Schools," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 24 June 1943.

\textsuperscript{38}"6,500 Children to Return to School Friday, Sept. 10th," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 4 August 1943.


\textsuperscript{40}"County to Get More Schools," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 28 August 1942.
Millville area; seven were in the Cove area; and eight were in the St. Andrews area. The Panama City News-Herald reported May 8, 1942, Federal Works Agency approval of two grants totalling $48,000 for additions to Bay High School. Bay High School had a seven room addition built by the Albritton-Williams Construction Company at a cost of $27,975. The U.S. Government contracted the construction of the wood frame building then gave it to the Bay County School Board.

These additions did not meet the demand. The situation was particularly critical in the elementary schools. In January, 1943, the School Board filed an application with the Federal Works Agency for a new twenty-room elementary school to eliminate the overcrowding of St. Andrews School. That school consisted of ten rooms built to accommodate 350 students but had enrolled 900. An additional twenty-five students enrolled each Monday and ten enrolled on Tuesdays through Fridays. The Federal Works Agency had approved the request but a priority status from the War Production Board was necessary to obtain the building materials.

February, 1943, Bay County School Superintendent Merritt Brown announced

41"New Additions to Bay Schools Ready for Use," Panama City News-Herald, 2 September 1942.


43"New School at St. Andrew Is in Prospect," Panama City News-Herald, 17 January 1943.

44"New School at St. Andrew Is in Prospect," Panama City News-Herald, 17 January 1943.
Florida Department of Education support of his request for thirty-eight additional classrooms for the community. This request repeated the need for a new elementary school for the St. Andrews area. Superintendent Brown also sought an additional two-rooms for St. Andrews School and fourteen additional rooms for the two African-American schools. The school board announced bids for the two-room addition to the St. Andrews School in April, 1943. The Federal Works Agency began a $30,000 addition to Rosenwald School in August, 1943. The additional six rooms were to accommodate 240 students. Also, construction of a $6,000 two-room school for African-American students began in August, 1943. Congressman Bob Sikes' office announced the War Manpower Board Non-Industrial Building Review Committee approval of a $197,000 grant to build the twenty-two room school in Drummond Park in August, 1943.

Parents' frustration with the classroom shortage was vocalized in The Wainwright Liberator frequently as the 1943 school year began. The Jones Company donated desks and seats to the new Drummond Park School in September, 1943. The

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*"St. Andrew School to Get Addition," Panama City News-Herald, 21 March 1943.

*"$30,000 Addition to Rosenwald High School," Panama City News-Herald, 3 August 1943.

*"Sikes Reports School Approval," Panama City News-Herald, 18 August 1943."
company's announcement of this gift included a criticism of the community leaders stating, "[W]ith this assistance the public authorities may be able to adequately relieve the similar situations existing elsewhere in the Shipyard area, so that the children of workers may obtain the education facilities to which they are entitled as citizens and taxpayers of Greater Panama City and Bay County." An article written by one of the shipyard employees was more blunt in its criticism of the inadequate school facilities. He stated, "As this is written parents of hundreds of school-age children are wondering, if and when, they'll get them into a school. As we understand it, the thing has bogged down in a maze of alphabetical agencies with priorities involved and it all seems to stem from poor planning," adding that a community enjoying the shipyard's $750,000 weekly payrolls should supply adequate schools for the population the jobs bring. Two months later the same author wrote, "[I]t's bad to hear that many children in the St. Andrews area are still not in school due to overcrowded conditions and a state of apathy among Bay County leaders who could do something about it."

"Jones Co. Donates Desks and Seats to Public School," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 September 1943.

"Dick Thompson, "Off the Board," The Wainwright Liberator, 25 September 1943.

"Dick Thompson, "Off the Board," The Wainwright Liberator, 27 November 1943.
A January, 1944, Office of Community War Services report summarized the educational facilities available. Bay County had seventeen schools for white students consisting of 119 classrooms capable of seating 3,570 students. The seven African-American schools had seventeen classrooms with seating for 510 students. The 1942 - 1943 enrollment of 6,132 had placed the ratio of enrollment to capacity at 150%. This degree of overcrowding justified governmental approval of additional classrooms. Four projects were under construction to add thirty-two rooms to elementary schools -- twenty-four for white students, eight for African-American students. The new classrooms increased seating to 2,910 in the white schools. With additions the African-American schools could accommodate 630. According to the report, through the use of double sessions, the existing facilities and approved projects would be sufficient to meet the war needs accommodating 4,400 white students and 950 African-American students. The report also updated the progress of projects funded by Lanham Act Project monies as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Rooms/Students</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Millville Grammar School</td>
<td>6-room addition</td>
<td></td>
<td>completed 10-29-42</td>
<td>$37,668.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parker School</td>
<td>8-room addition</td>
<td></td>
<td>completed 7-6-42</td>
<td>$55,560.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cove School</td>
<td>7-room addition</td>
<td></td>
<td>completed 9-1-42</td>
<td>$51,265.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Andrews School</td>
<td>2-room addition</td>
<td></td>
<td>completed 11-6-43</td>
<td>$10,700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenwald School</td>
<td>6-room addition</td>
<td></td>
<td>(elementary/high school)</td>
<td>$38,325.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(95% complete 1-8-44)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drummond Park School</td>
<td>22-room school</td>
<td></td>
<td>(31% complete 1-11-44)</td>
<td>$197,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New School</td>
<td>2-room school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$10,028.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(African-American)
[99% complete 1-8-44]
Bay High School addition $38,907.00
(complete 4-19-43)\(^2\)

The area surrounding Wainwright Shipyard had two elementary schools when the school year began September 8, 1944. St. Andrews Grammar School had twelve classrooms. The school held double sessions for the first and second grade students. The first session began at 9:00 a.m. and ended at 1:00 p.m. The second session began at noon and ended at 3:45 p.m. The school scheduled physical education for the noon to 1:00 p.m. hour for both sessions. Classes operated from 9:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. for grades three through eight. Students in the first and second grades living in Maritime Housing Project Two were assigned to St. Andrews Grammar School. Drummond Park Grammar School opened with twenty-five classrooms. Students living in Maritime Housing Project One and Wainwright Park were zoned to attend Drummond Park Grammar School, as were students in grades four through eight who lived in Maritime Housing Project Two and all students living on the beach. It held double sessions for grades one through three. The schools planned classes for the higher grades all day.\(^3\) Enrollment in the elementary schools was much higher than

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expected. Drummond Park reported 1,550 students and Saint Andrew registered 800 students. Both had to change schedules to double sessions for all grades. The schedule was changed to 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for the first session and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. for the second session. *

School Transportation

The community also had to arrange school transportation for students. The delays in transporting students to school necessitated changing the schools' opening time from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in October, 1942. ** In December, 1942, the Federal Works Agency reported presidential approval of a $77,250 Lanham Act grant to assist the county in meeting its teacher and transportation needs. ** The county arranged pupil transportation using Transit Company Busses in September, 1943, because of the shortage of school busses. At that point, the county was unable to increase its eleven school bus fleet. * The county employed eighteen bus drivers to transport the approximately 1,200 to 1,500 students who lived more than two miles from school. The manpower shortage led to

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** "County School Time Changed," Panama City News-Herald, 11 October 1942.

** "Federal Funds to Aid County in School Work," Panama City News-Herald, 17 December 1942.

the hiring of two female bus drivers. The county school board continued the arrangements with Mr. Hobbs' Panama City Transit Company to provide bus transportation for students in the housing projects at a cost of five cents per trip the following school year.

School Teachers

The county experienced a shortage of teachers as well as classrooms. Bay High School limited its athletic program in 1942-1943 because it had no athletic director. The principal announced the need for a minimum of five additional high school teachers in mid-August, 1942, with the school year's opening imminent. The Wainwright Liberator requested employees' wives qualified to teach to contact the shipyard's personnel office or the principal of Bay High School in November, 1942. Principal W. M. Harrison of the Panama Grammar School made a public appeal for substitute teachers in October, 1942; he had none listed for the year.

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58"1,200 to 1,500 School Children to Be Transported to Classes by Bus," Panama City News-Herald, 7 September 1943.


60"Bay High Will Accept Pupils for Two Days," Panama City News-Herald, 23 August 1942.

61"County Needs Teachers for Coming Season," Panama City News-Herald, 16 August 1942.


63"Need Teachers as Substitutes," Panama City News-Herald, 7 October 1942.
administrators repeated the appeal on a county wide basis the following February, 1943. Three principals and several teachers announced plans to work at Wainwright Shipyard for the summer as the school year drew to a close in 1943. School Superintendent Merritt Brown reported difficulty in recruiting teachers for the 1943 - 1944 school year. The schools could not compete with war work salaries. Teachers received a ten percent salary increase that year. Recruiters also faced difficulties in locating housing for new teachers. Less than a month before the school year began Bay High School still sought seven teachers -- two each for history and English and one each for math, science and commercial education. Because the situation was so desperate, the school board reduced qualifications and arranged for emergency teaching certificates. Bay High School began classes in 1943 with thirty-six teachers; fifty percent were new. The school expected one thousand students. The actual

"Teachers Needed for Substitute Work in County," Panama City News-Herald, 10 February 1943.


"Looks to Relief of Overcrowding in County Schools," Panama City News-Herald, 24 June 1943.

"6,500 Children to Return to School Friday, Sept. 10th," Panama City News-Herald, 4 August 1943.

"Seven Teachers Are Needed for Bay High Work," Panama City News-Herald, 17 August 1943.

"Many New Faces to Be Seen on School Faculty," Panama City News-Herald, 27 August 1943.
enrollment was 1,137 students. Bay County High School had a new principal, J. T. Kelly, and a new coach, Homer McCoy when it opened in 1944. The elementary schools also requested additional teachers. This was particularly true as the Drummond Park annex to the St. Andrews Grammar School grew.

The wartime situation increased the difficulty of teaching and increased the workload. Patti Culbreath taught fifth and sixth grade classes during the war. Her major problems were overcrowded classes and the frequent turnover of students and teachers. Her classes averaged thirty-five students. She felt the students behaved much like students prior to the war years and came to her classes with a similar educational background. In addition to teaching, the faculty "helped register young men for the draft, distributed ration books, and supported war bond, paper and scrap drives. The Panama and Cove Grammar schools successfully promoted the purchase of a $150,000 bomber from bonds and stamps." Calvin Washington, an African-American, left his principal's

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70"1,137 Bay High Pupils Register," Panama City News-Herald, 9 September 1943.

71"Schools Open September 8," The Wainwright Liberator, 12 August 1944.


position in Quincy, Florida, which paid him $65 monthly, to return to Panama City to work at the shipyard. In 1944, he became the Rosenwald High School principal. The school taught grades one through twelve. As principal, his major problems were the shortage of qualified teachers and the overcrowded classrooms. The county paid African-American teachers $453 per year; white teachers' salaries averaged $963. African-American staff, like white faculty members, were attracted to the higher salaries of the local war industries.

The increased student population required several accommodations by the Bay County school system. The educator's workload was increased by such emergency measures as double shifts. The overcrowded classes and difficulty of enrolling their children caused concern among parents. School shortages, coupled with the housing shortages, may have contributed to the turnover of workers at Wainwright Shipyard. Nevertheless, the school system continued its operation and obtained two additional schools with twenty-four classrooms and thirty-six classroom additions to existing schools financed by Lanham Act funds. Though it did not meet peacetime educational standards, the Bay County educational system was stabilized by 1944.

**Health Care**

The local community faced a variety of health concerns

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following the opening of the Wainwright Shipyard. The increase in the population strained the existing health care facilities. Additionally, the military draft caused a shortage of physicians. The density of the population and related sanitation problems raised concerns about outbreaks of epidemics.

Bay County Health Department

Dr. J. O. Barfield was the director of the Bay County Health Department which was funded by the city, county, state and federal governments.\(^7\) It was located in a 1,100 square foot converted house and consisted of six rooms.\(^6\) Dr. Barfield raised the issue of expanding this facility as early as July, 1942, to meet the growing community's needs.\(^7\) The department's personnel increased from six in 1940 to fourteen in 1944. Its budget increased from $20,150 in 1940 - 1941 to $28,340 in 1943 - 1944. It routinely conducted programs in: venereal disease, maternal and child hygiene, dental care for indigent children and expectant mothers, school health, community sanitation, tuberculosis control, commercial disease control and immunization and parasite control. It supervised

\(^7\)"Health Unit's Expansion to Be Discussed," *Panama City News-Herald*, 13 July 1942.


\(^7\)"Health Unit's Expansion to Be Discussed," *Panama City News-Herald*, 13 July 1942.
nine registered mid-wives. Annually, the State Health Department provided a mobile x-ray unit and dentist for use by the county's health department. The clinic sent tuberculosis patients to a Marianna facility for treatment. The U.S. Public Health Service recommended construction of a new 6,000 square foot health clinic to alleviate the serious overcrowding of the existing clinic in July, 1943. The Federal Works Administration arranged construction of the $63,000 new center in 1944.

**Venereal Disease**

The health department spent a large portion of its resources combating venereal diseases. Laboratory tests for syphilis and gonorrhea increased 238 percent, from 2,225 in 1940 to 7,522 in 1942. A State Appropriation for Venereal Disease Control and the U.S. Public Health Service Venereal Disease allocation provided twelve percent of the department's $28,340 budget in 1943 - 1944. The department designated five

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7^Edna Hays, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 10 September 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.


percent of the budget, $1,500, for venereal disease drugs. The health department held clinics for venereal disease four days weekly. (Well baby clinics and pre-natal clinics were held twice a month.) The county sent some women to the Waukulla Springs Detention Home for venereal disease treatment. In its January, 1944, report, the Office of Community War Services noted venereal disease infection among military personnel had declined. "However, there seems to be increasing evidence that the shipyard workers are a frequent source of infection for military and civilian (including shipyard workers) personnel." The day this report was issued The Wainwright Liberator announced the shipyard's agreement to work with the Florida State Health Department in a campaign to deal with venereal diseases, emphasizing the importance of good health to war productivity. Syphilis was the first priority in the campaign against venereal disease; gonorrhea was second. According to the article, "A squad of experts from Tyndall field and the Board of Health will be in charge of the work in the shipyard area." A brief follow-up article in February, 1944, noted the location of a blood test station at the shopping center for the convenience of workers.

 supplementary notes:


needing testing."

Physicians

The city also faced a shortage of physicians. By August, 1942, three local doctors had been drafted by the military. Local civic clubs asked for legislative assistance to stop the trend. National authorities' use of 1940 census data, which did not reflect the war industry's population increase, was a contributing factor to the problem. The community expressed its concerns to Colonel G. S. Osincup, the president of the Florida's American Medical Association, when he visited the area in February, 1943. Following this meeting, Colonel Osincup announced plans to allot four additional doctors to the community, increasing the total number of physicians to eleven. He also stressed the Wainwright Shipyard physicians were available to treat the community's population, as well as the shipyard workers. Local medical personnel and Colonel Osincup arranged access to the area's hospitals, which were private doctors' clinics, for the new physicians. The Panama City News-Herald reflected the degree of concern by reporting this development under a headline of: "Health Protection Assured Here." In 1944, the community had seven physicians.

64"V.D. Blood Tests," The Wainwright Liberator, 5 February 1944.

65"City Menaced by Shortage of Practicing Physicians: An Editorial," Panama City News-Herald, 17 August 1942.

66"To Work Out Plans for Adequate Medical Care and Sanitation Safety," Panama City News-Herald, 16 February 1943. "Hospitals to Be Opened for Newcomers," Panama City News-
Wainwright Shipyard employed four. They pursued private practices when they were not on duty at the shipyard. The community had one doctor per 7,000 people. The government standard during the war was one doctor per 3,000 people. Nevertheless, the community was unable to acquire additional physicians.*

The Wainwright Liberator reported in July, 1943, the shipyard had four physicians on call to treat workers injured or taken ill while at work. Also, workers were instructed to call the first aid station if they had a medical emergency and a private physician was unavailable. The station could locate one of the four physicians assigned to the shipyard. The doctors were listed along with the area of the community they served primarily:

- Dr. J. C. Ellis - St. Andrews
- Dr. J. E. Kerr - Beach Drive
- Dr. E. Myers - U.S. Maritime Commission Housing Project One
- Dr. C. W. Shackelford - U.S. Maritime Commission Housing Project Two. (Dr. Shackelford was the First Aid Hospital Medical Director.)**

Hospital Facilities

The Wainwright Liberator announced U.S. Public Health

Herald, 25 February 1943.


**"Medical Service," The Wainwright Liberator, 3 July 1943. "Notes from First Aid," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 April 1944.
Service plans to build a twelve bed infirmary and clinic at the shipyard in March, 1943.  The infirmary was actually a joint effort by the U.S. Public Health Service and the Federal Public Housing Authority. In July, 1944, its medical staff included two registered nurses, four nurses aides, and two doctors. The infirmary was available to shipyard employees and their families. Priority for use was, in order: dormitory residents, Federal Public Housing Authority housing residents, and employees who lived out of town. Services included weekly clinics for venereal disease, immunizations, weekly well baby clinics, and testing children for "hookworm" for referral to the Bay County Health Department. The clinic averaged 1,108 consultations and the infirmary averaged fifty-two patients May to June, 1944.

Ms. Edna Hays supervised the Wainwright Infirmary for three years. She worked in the local health department's venereal disease clinic prior to assuming this position. The New Orleans' regional office of the U.S. Public Health Service employed Ms. Hays and the five nurses who staffed the infirmary. The U.S. Public Health Service arranged similar hospitals for shipyard workers in Pascagoula, Mississippi, and Brunswick, Georgia. Ms. Hays' contract had an expiration date of six months after the close of the war. The shortage of

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"Stores, Movies, Conveniences for Housing Project," The Wainwright Liberator, 13 March 1943.

"Big Infirmary Operated for Yard Folk," The Wainwright Liberator, 29 July 1944.
nurses made it difficult to acquire the necessary staff. However, there was little turnover within the staff once it was established. Two of the registered nurses were wives of shipyard employees. The staff’s fringe benefits included sick leave (one day per month), health insurance, and paid vacation (one week the first year; two after that). However, the nurses could use only two or three vacation days at a time due to the shortage of staff.9

The infirmary operated twenty-four hours a day. It dealt with a mixture of injured and ill patients. Ms. Hays’ most memorable experiences included caring for a patient with both legs broken. He remained at the infirmary until he could walk to the nearby cafeteria. She delivered a baby at the Drummond Park housing project. The patient’s obstetrician was in surgery and other doctors were unavailable. Maternity cases were normally handled in one of Panama City’s medical facilities. The most common injury Ms. Hays remembered was eye injuries to welders who forgot to wear their goggles. Burned eyes or eyes with foreign objects was the typical result. Though workers seldom lost their sight, physicians in Pensacola or New Orleans sometimes provided initial treatment. Women did not have as many injuries as the men according to Ms. Hays. This may have been because they were more cautious or because men were doing much of the heavy work where

9Edna Hays, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 10 September 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
Injuries were more likely to occur. In addition to operating the infirmary, the nurses conducted clinics throughout the housing projects. These were mostly preventive in nature — immunizations and well baby check-ups. The four doctors employed by the shipyard had private practices during their off duty hours in the one-room apartments across from the shipyard and the infirmary.

The community did not have a public hospital. There were three small privately owned doctors' hospitals. Drs. J. M. Nixon and Powell Adams owned the Panama City Hospital, with fifteen beds. Dr. O. S. Fraser's Clinic had seven beds, primarily for maternity cases. The largest, Dr. A. H. Lisenby's hospital, contained thirty-one beds and was capable of adding fourteen. It had a closed staff policy, i.e., only a few doctors could admit patients, which led to a low occupancy rate. The community's fifty-three hospital beds were supplemented by the twelve bed Wainwright Infirmary, a thirty-three bed hospital ward at Tyndall Field, and six hospital beds for civilians at the Navy Section Base. Nevertheless, the total fell below the 150 beds needed in September, 1943, following War Production Board's guidelines recommending "four beds per thousand for the built-up war

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92 Edna Hays, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 10 September 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

93 Edna Hays, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 10 September 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
area...[and]...two beds per thousand for the surrounding area." The Wainwright Liberator alerted workers to expect a questionnaire in their December, 1943, paychecks regarding the maternity needs of its workers. The government required the information to insure adequate clinics and hospital beds. The community sought U.S. Public Health Service's recommendation for a new hospital. The service refused based on the low occupancy rate of existing facilities.

In addition to obtaining additional physicians and an infirmary for Bay County, Wainwright Shipyard shared special medical resources it acquired with the community. In June, 1943, Wainwright Shipyard purchased a medical device known as an "H and H Inhalator" for use by the company's fire department and by the community. The nearest one was in Pensacola. The device was reported as "invaluable in accidents involving drowning, electric shock, gas fumes, or others where artificial respiration is indicated."

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"Seek Data About Care of Mothers," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 December 1943.


Preventive Medicine

Ms. Hays noted the medical community feared epidemics. The dense population, sub-standard sanitation and sewage treatment, and inadequate medical facilities created a setting for a disaster if an outbreak occurred. Fortunately, this nightmare never materialized. The medical community, with the cooperation of community leaders, took action to prevent such a disaster by conducting immunization programs against communicable diseases. The Bay County Board of Public Instruction requested that parents have their children immunized against smallpox and diphtheria as the 1942 school year began. The request applied to all first graders and students in the second through the eighth grade who were new to the school system. Dr. Barfield, of the Bay County Health Department, announced the crowded schools and housing required proof of immunization against smallpox and diphtheria for all students new to the school system as the school year began in 1943. Smallpox, diphtheria and typhoid vaccinations were given at the Drummond Park Auditorium Tuesday, August 28, 1943, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and at the Wainwright Park Infirmary 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays.

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99Edna Hays, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 10 September 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.


100"Must Inoculate School Children Against Disease," Panama City News-Herald, 5 August 1943.
and Fridays. Children were inoculated for all three. Adults were encouraged to receive smallpox and typhoid vaccinations.\footnote{\text_quotesingle\text_quotesingle}\footnote{\text_quotesingle\text_quotesingle}\footnote{\text_quotesingle\text_quotesingle}

A national annual campaign for funds to combat infantile paralysis occurred in January, 1943, near President Franklin D. Roosevelt's birthday. The shipyard's report on the fund raising drive noted that half of the money collected locally would remain in the community due to concern that the congested housing conditions might lead to a local outbreak of the disease.\footnote{\text_quotesingle\text_quotesingle}\footnote{\text_quotesingle\text_quotesingle}

The Wainwright Infirmary and Bay County Health Department cooperated in providing typhoid vaccinations for Wainwright Shipyard employees and their families in July, 1943. The health department provided the serum for 35,000. The infirmary gave the vaccinations at the Wainwright Park Auditorium from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. each Tuesday and Thursday.\footnote{\text_quotesingle\text_quotesingle} Three thousand were vaccinated the first week of the program. The infirmary scheduled an additional time, 3:00 to 4:30 p.m., for the convenience of the swing shift

\footnote{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}New Hours Announced for Vaccination and Vital Inoculation,\textquoteright The Wainwright Liberator, 28 August 1943.

\footnote{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}Every Employee Urged to Combat Dread Paralysis,\textquoteright The Wainwright Liberator, 23 January 1943.

\footnote{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}To Protect 35,000 Against Typhoid by Vaccination,\textquoteright Panama City News-Herald, 11 July 1943. \textquoteright Anti-Typhoid Serum Free for Workers,\textquoteright The Wainwright Liberator, 17 July 1943.
workers. 104

The local waters were another potential source of disease. As spring, 1943, approached, Dr. J. O. Barfield, director of the Bay County Health Department, warned residents not to swim in St. Andrew’s Bay. The population increase caused pollution from the inadequate sewerage systems to drain into the bay. However, the report noted the open Gulf was safe for swimming.108 The pollution of St. Andrew Bay was not new. The state health agency had ruled it too polluted for bathing following its 1939 test. The wartime population growth simply increased the problem.106

The dense population caused by Wainwright Shipyard’s location in Bay County created problems of overcrowded schools and overburdened medical facilities. Nevertheless, the community met the educational and health needs of its citizens. Community leaders had to use emergency methods to provide services that did not always meet pre-war standards. Wainwright Shipyard’s presence not only brought additional population. It also brought the federal funds and equipment priorities to provide the additional school rooms, new public


health center and hospital facilities, and personnel so desperately needed.

**Government Services**

Local government agencies experienced an increased workload providing services to the population explosion caused by the presence of Wainwright Shipyard. When possible, services were provided at the shipyard to take pressure off the local governmental offices and minimize the wait for individuals.

**Marriages**

Marriages increased dramatically. The issuance of thirty-three licenses between October 1 and October 10, 1942, was a record high.\(^{107}\) The marriage rate continued to increase. The highest rate was 1943, when 1,098 marriages occurred. The Court House issued the licenses and appropriate personnel performed many of the ceremonies. The office had to record each license once the marriage occurred. Marriages declined to 223 following the war’s end and Wainwright Shipyard’s closing.\(^{108}\)

\(^{107}\)“Marriage Licenses Hit Record High,” *Panama City News-Herald*, 11 October 1942.

\(^{108}\)Marriage License Records, 1941-1946, Bay County Clerk of the Circuit Court Office, Panama City, Florida.
The significant increase in marriages is indicated by the following chart.

| TABLE 5 BAY COUNTY MARRIAGES 1941 - 1946
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vehicle Tags and Drivers' Licenses

Florida required employees in the state to have a valid Florida driver's license. The Wainwright Liberator informed shipyard employees of this law in September, 1942. All Florida licenses expired October 1, 1942. Licenses could be purchased at the County Judge's office or at the shipyard's police department office for those with valid out-of-state licenses. Others had to take the driver's examination.\(^{10}\) The State Highway Patrol began giving these examinations at night October 9, 1942, for the convenience of day workers. The Patrol scheduled examinations 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

\(^{10}\)Marriage License Records, 1941-1946, Bay County Clerk of the Circuit Court Office, Panama City, Florida.

\(^{10}\)Lieut. Reid Clifton, "Workers Should Get Drivers Licenses," The Wainwright Liberator, 12 September 1942.
weekdays and 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. Fridays.’”

The state also required new residents to purchase Florida vehicle tags. Tags valid for half a year were available. The sale of new tags for 1943 began December 1, 1942. Alva Thomas, state license tag inspector, announced that office was sending in more personnel to Bay County to “assist in the campaign against persons who accept employment in Florida and fail to purchase license tags as required by law.” The Tax Collector, located at the Bay County Court House, sold the tags. Purchase required a 1942 registration card and the title certificate. In December, 1940, approximately 4,500 tags were issued. This increased to approximately 7,000 the following year.” The Tax Collector’s office was overwhelmed by those purchasing vehicle tags. Consequently, A. G. Appelberg, Tax Collector, extended the deadline for those paying their property tax early to qualify for the four percent discount.”

Automobile tags were sold at the Wainwright Shipyard’s police station for the convenience of their workers in 1943. The tag fee was the same as it had been in 1932. The station

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“1943 Tags Go on Sale Here December 1st,” Panama City News-Herald, 29 November 1942.

required cash in the correct amount, a 1942 tag receipt, and a title certificate or bill of sale. January 15, was the deadline for purchasing the tag. The shipyard continued this service in following years which benefitted its workers and relieved pressure on the local Tax Collector’s office.

Voting

Wainwright Shipyard encouraged its employees to participate in the electoral process. An individual had to reside in the state one year and in Bay county six months to register to vote. There was no poll tax. The Supervisor of Elections office registered voters approximately ten weeks in the spring of election years. Primary elections occurred in May. Registration was re-opened prior to the general election in November. J. B. Mashburn, Supervisor of Elections, extended his office’s hours during the final days of registration. In April, 1944, the office remained open Tuesday and Friday evenings from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. That fall, Wainwright workers could register at the Wainwright


117 “Get Ready to Vote,” The Wainwright Liberator, 29 January 1944.

118 “Voters Urged to Register for Election,” The Wainwright Liberator, 9 September 1944.

119 “Register Before April 16 - Vote,” The Wainwright Liberator, 8 April 1944.
Super Market between the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Though the residency requirements disqualified some Wainwright Shipyard employees, many did register to vote. The following is a summary of voter registration records for 1942, 1944, and 1946.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 6</th>
<th>BAY COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION¹²¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRECINCT</td>
<td>1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Panama City</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-St. Andrews</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Millville</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Bay Harbor</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Parker</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Dook</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Wetappo</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-Lynn Haven</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Majette</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-Bay Head</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-Youngstown</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-Fountain</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹²⁰"Voters Urged to Register for Election," The Wainwright Liberator, 9 September 1944.

¹²¹Precinct Voter Registration Records, 1942-1946, Bay County Supervisor of Elections Office, Panama City, Florida. Records for Precincts 8, 9, 10, 19, and 20 were missing. A few of the precinct books had missing pages. The numbers given are as accurate as possible.
### TABLE 6 - continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRECINCT</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1944</th>
<th>1946</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reg*</td>
<td>Free+</td>
<td>Reg*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-Econfina</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-Southport</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-Merial</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-Pine Log</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-Panama City</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-Allanton</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-Calloway</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-Sunnyside</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-Panama City</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-Panama City</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-Millville</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-Springfield</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-Highland City</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-St. Andrews</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32-Little Dothan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-Wainwright Park</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34-St. Andrews</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-St. Andrews</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-Country Club</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37-Long Beach</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>6,495</td>
<td>1,283</td>
<td>6,385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Registered Voters  + Freeholders (Property Owners)

Wainwright Shipyard began operation in 1942. New residents did not meet the residency requirement necessary to register prior to the 1942 election.

The following table reflects the voter turn-out during
TABLE 7
BAY COUNTY VOTER PARTICIPATION²²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>PRIMARY</th>
<th>RUN-OFF PRIMARY</th>
<th>ELECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>7,477</td>
<td>7,536</td>
<td>3,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>3,940</td>
<td>2,359</td>
<td>935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>8,091</td>
<td>7,526</td>
<td>7,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>6,196</td>
<td>4,106</td>
<td>1,874</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Democratic Party dominated state and local politics. The primary elections decided most elections at these levels. Consequently, general election turn-out was typically much lower than that for primary elections. Presidential elections in 1940 and 1944 encouraged greater voter participation than the "off-year" elections in 1942 and 1946. A noticeable difference in the 1944 election was the high turn-out in the general election. The 1944 primary turn-out was not significantly higher than that in 1940. However, the general election was more than twice that of 1940. Apparently, new residents voted in the general election at a higher rate than local residents. The number of voters declined noticeably in the 1946 election, following the close of Wainwright Shipyard.

²²Certificates of the Board of County Canvassers, 1940-1946 Elections, Bay County Supervisor of Elections Office, Panama City, Florida. The data reflects the highest number of votes cast for any one position. Records stating the number of voters were not available.
Ration Books

Most ration books were distributed at the elementary schools in Bay County. The Wainwright Liberator announced in February, 1943, that shipyard workers could receive their Ration Book 2 at designated locations throughout the shipyard. The management made arrangements to distribute application blanks for Ration Book 3 to employees from the administration building. These blanks were mailed to Jacksonville, Florida, and the ration books were mailed back to the shipyard for distribution.

Fire Protection

The community required an increase in its police and fire protection to accommodate its larger population. A War Manpower Commission U.S. Employment Service report emphasized the increased fire danger brought about by the community’s growth near the Wainwright Shipyard.

"The city has been successful in obtaining a new fire engine, but to date has not been able to obtain approval for a new building in the section of town near the shipyard to house it. At present a firetruck has to travel six miles, crossing six railroad tracks, and making eight right angle turns along very busy streets to reach a fire near the shipyard. Near the time when shifts change at the yard it would be almost impossible to reach a fire


in that section before it became uncontrollable."

The city increased its fire department from three full-time and twenty-two volunteer fire fighters in 1941 to eight full-time and twenty-two volunteer fire fighters in 1944. Three fire trucks were located at the City Hall. A fourth fire truck was stationed in the St. Andrews community. Wainwright Shipyard’s fire trucks, provided by the U.S. Maritime Commission, were available to supplement the city’s equipment in an emergency. The city leaders felt a crucial need for additional fire fighting equipment. The dramatic increase in housing, mainly of wood frame construction, as well as the density of the population, made this very important. A lengthy correspondence ensued between C. E. Swank, the City Manager and Commander of the Bay County Defense Council; Mr. Murchison, Regional Director of the Office of Civilian Defense; and Mr. George L. Burr, Jr., Executive Secretary of the State Defense Council. Mr. Swank argued the location of the shipyard, the military installations, oil terminals, and a paper mill made the community vulnerable to bombings or, at least, sabotage. Ultimately, the community received funding under the Public

125"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.

Safety Lanham Act Projects to purchase an additional fire fighting pumper truck and to construct a fire station in the St. Andrews community.\textsuperscript{127}

\textbf{Police Protection}

The Panama City Police Department had four officers in 1941. Two members were added in 1942. The department increased to eight officers in March, 1943. Two months later, the department advertised for four additional personnel. The salary was $160 per month. By January, 1944, the staff had eleven members. The city's police force was assisted by the military police from Tyndall Field.\textsuperscript{128}

The community needed the additional police personnel to handle the increased crime rate reflected in the following table.


Drunkenness was the most prevalent misdemeanor increasing from seventeen percent of the total in 1941 to fifty-five percent in 1945. The second most common misdemeanor was assault and battery, which ranged from ten percent in 1942 to six percent in 1944. Reckless driving accounted for seven to nine percent of the misdemeanor convictions during the war years. Petit larceny was the fourth most frequent misdemeanor charge, ranging from four to six percent of the total. Mary Derr remembered having all their clothes stolen from their

\[\text{TABLE 8} \]

\[\text{BAY COUNTY CRIME RATE}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>MISDEMEANORS</th>
<th>FELONIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>1,664</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>2,228</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>2,163</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>2,025</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[\text{Criminal Docket - Misdemeanor Charges, 1941-1945, Bay County Clerk of the Circuit Court Office, Panama City, Florida. Criminal Progress Docket - Felony Department, 1941-1945, Bay County Clerk of the Circuit Court Office, Panama City, Florida.}\]
clothes line one evening."

Felony convictions covered a wide variety of crimes. During this period the greatest number were property crimes -- burglary, breaking and entering, grand larceny, and uttering a forged instrument. Aggravated assault was the one violent crime that increased markedly from one in 1943 to eleven in 1945."

Wainwright Shipyard security personnel policed the shipyard and the war housing projects. In May, 1943, they arrested one of three escapees from the Bay County Jail. Six Wainwright employees were arrested after attacking a Wainwright police officer attempting to "quell a free-for-all at the Glen." Panama City police arrested Hubert Maddox, an 18-year-old Wainwright employee, for his attempt to rob Cogburn Jewelers in January, 1943.

The crime rate was significant. However, considering the

Mary Darr, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 22 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

Criminal Docket - Misdemeanor Charges, 1941-1945, Bay County Clerk of the Circuit Court Office, Panama City, Florida. Criminal Progress Docket - Felony Department, 1941-1945, Bay County Clerk of the Circuit Court Office, Panama City, Florida.


"Shipyard Officer Struck Over Head," Panama City News-Herald, 26 July 1943.

large influx of people and the transient nature of many, the increase in crime was not surprising.

Though educational and medical services were critical, the people had other needs to meet. Food, clothing, and the stores to hold sufficient inventories were necessary to meet the increased shopping demand. The community had to provide leisure activities for the war workers, many separated from their families.
CHAPTER 7

SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT

Shopping

The population increase generated by the opening of the Wainwright Shipyard immediately impacted on shopping facilities and supplies. The community experienced price increases and shortages of such critical items as milk, meat, and ice.

Price Levels

A November, 1942, survey of local grocery store prices found most foods necessary for the traditional Thanksgiving meal were comparable to 1941 prices, with the exception of fresh fruits and the citron necessary for fruitcakes.Less than a year later, the situation had changed. The Wainwright Liberator published an article in June, 1943, urging workers to demand to see the price ceilings of goods when shopping. Merchants were required by law to post these. If no price ceiling was posted or if prices exceeded the price ceiling, the management encouraged employees to turn in receipts to the shipyard administration. It would forward them to the Office

1"Price of Food in Panama City Found Not So High After All," Panama City News-Herald, 27 November, 1942.
of Price Administration for action.\(^2\) Dick Thompson, offered a new version of a popular tune in his October, 1943, "Off the Board" article in The Wainwright Liberator reflecting workers' dissatisfaction with local price levels: "Shave and a haircut -- 2 bucks."\(^3\) A month later, an article appeared lauding an unnamed shipfitter's wife who forced a grocery store manager to sell her a three pound cabbage at the listed price ceiling of $.15 rather than the store price of $.23. The shipyard encouraged others to follow suit with the observation that with such shopping awareness "the profiteering we complain of could not exist."\(^4\)

An October, 1943, War Manpower Commission report summarized the problem shoppers had:

"Food distribution and rationing problems have not changed. There are still frequent shortages of various items, making it necessary to shop from store to store to get groceries. Many items available in other communities are seldom found in Panama City. Shopping difficulties cause absenteeism particularly among women workers."\(^5\)

**Eating Establishments**

A problem with unsanitary conditions in local restaurants

\(^2\)"Look at the Ceiling," The Wainwright Liberator, 19 June 1943.

\(^3\)Dick Thompson, "Off the Board," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 October 1943.

\(^4\)"To Buy a Cabbage," The Wainwright Liberator, 20 November 1943.

\(^5\)"Labor Market Developments Report, Panama City Area, October 15, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.
developed in the summer, 1943. This prompted a meeting of representatives from the Florida State Hotel Commissioner (responsible for licensing such establishments), the city’s War Manpower Commission, Naval Section Base, Coast Guard, U.S. Army and State Board of Health. The State Hotel Commissioner sent N. T. Holland to inspect eating establishments with the City Health Investigation Committee. The inspection found sanitation problems were common and issued warnings. Eight establishments were closed. They were allowed to reopen when they met the commission’s standards. Businesses risked loss of their licenses and permanent closure if they failed to comply with health standards. The state commission also appointed an inspector to conduct follow-up inspections of industrial war areas such as Panama City. The Office of Community War Service indicated the sanitation problem had been solved in its October, 1943, report: "Eating facilities are adequate, although the quality of food served is low and the prices are high, except at plant cafeterias which are reasonable in price and serve good food."

The Wainwright Liberator published a complaint that an
unnamed restaurant charged $.65 for a meal of meat, two
vegetables and bread with no butter, dessert, salad, or drink
while another restaurant served a complete meal for $.50. The
article urged the Office of Price Administration to do
something about this price gouging. In 1940, the same
complete meal sold for $.25 at Jimmy Daffin's drug store.

Dick Thompson criticized the local merchants again in
1944. This time the complaint reflected the $18 cost of a
clock. His complaint continued with: "Good old Panama City!
We'll also remember this as a place where you could buy
Shakespeare for 19 cents, but a second-rate bottle of beer
costs 30 cents. Must be more people like second-rate beer
than first-rate Shakespeare." His criticism basically held
the key to the problem. Everyday goods needed by average
workers were made scarce by the relatively sudden increase in
the number of people in the community. Even with price
ceilings, the economic laws of supply and demand still
operated. Scarce commodities were higher priced than in a
normal peacetime economy -- when they were available.

Shortages

Milk. Milk was one of the first major commodities whose

"Ruby G. Barnard, "Plumbing Shop Gossip," The Wainwright
Liberator, 22 April 1944.

9 Bernadette Kuehn Loftin, "A Social History of the Mid-
Gulf South (Panama City-Mobile) 1930-1950," (Ph.D. diss.,
University of Southern Mississippi, 1971), 78.

10 Dick Thompson, "Off the Board," The Wainwright
Liberator, 3 June 1944."
shortage created a significant problem for the community. The problem and its solution became the focus of several articles in The Wainwright Liberator and the Panama City News-Herald January through March, 1943. Bay County Agricultural agent John Hentz, guest speaker at a Kiwanis Club meeting, explained part of the milk shortage resulted from dairy workers leaving the farms for "more lucrative war industry positions." In addition, the area was not conducive to dairy farming. Feed had to be shipped in and the cost was prohibitive. Many of the local dairy farmers had only one cow. The seriousness of the problem was illustrated by the Panama City News-Herald headline for February 24, 1943: "Enough Food Guaranteed County." The accompanying article reported a meeting between the State Supervisor of the Food Distribution Administration and the local Chamber of Commerce Food Industries Committee. The meeting resulted in the adjustment of future food allotments to per capita consumption and the immediate shipment of three hundred cases of canned milk. By March 3, the milk had not arrived. The Panama City News-Herald published correspondence between the Chamber of Commerce and


13"Enough Food Guaranteed County," Panama City News-Herald, 24 February 1943.
Pet, Borden and Carnation Companies. Each company was reported to have shipped a carload of milk to the area. However, the Borden Company reported it could not supply this amount. The Pet and Carnation Companies reported they were trying to make the arrangements necessary to ship the required amount of milk. The article included a telegram sent to D. F. Stilling, Evaporated Milk Association in Chicago, by J. M. Williams, State Supervisor of Food Distribution Administration, indicating Mr. Williams thought the three hundred cases of milk had arrived. However, Mr. Williams requested that each of the three milk companies send a carload of milk to the area stating, "due to increase in population from 12,000 to 50,000 due to war and industrial activities this quantity is not sufficient for more than two days....Situation very critical." Two days later, the newspaper reported the arrival of 1,025 cases of milk from Armour and Company. Appropriate authorities obtained additional shipments noting, "[T]he carload received is only a 'drop in the bucket' compared to the actual shortage existing and many mothers are almost frantic at their inability to procure canned milk for their babies."

March 10, the Panama City News-Herald reported arrangements by Wainwright Shipyard to have two carloads,


sixteen thousand quarts of milk, shipped weekly for its workers. The milk came in paper cartons to avoid the need to return bottles. The first shipment was due Friday, March 12. The Wainwright Liberator reported on the milk shipments in greater detail. The initial schedule provided for eight thousand quarts of milk on Tuesdays and Fridays with arrangements to increase the shipments if this amount proved insufficient. The Dairy Fresh Creameries of Minneapolis provided the milk. The company also supplied Tyndall Field.

The milk, from Holstein cows, "though not as rich as Jersey milk...is more highly recommended for children as well as adults because it is easier to digest and contains the essentials to make up for the deficiency in diet made necessary through rationing." Dr. John M. Scott, chief of the Dairy Division of the Florida State Board of Health, had to approve the shipments. Authorities approved milk sales to the shipyard. However, the U.S. Public Health Service and the Florida Health Department did not approve the sale of this milk in town because the Minnesota grade "A" milk did not meet Florida's grade "A" standards for milk. The Panama City

16"2 Carloads of Milk to Be Shipped Here Weekly for Shipyard," Panama City News-Herald, 10 March 1943.


18"Supplement No. 1 to Report on Panama City, Florida, (issued 7-30-42), January 15, 1944," Office of Community War Services, Series 419, Carton 5, Florida State Archives,
News-Herald reported the arrival of the first carload of fresh milk in its March 15, 1943, edition. The report noted the shipyard’s milk supply took pressure off the local stores.\(^9\)

The shipments increased from two per week to three (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays), beginning April, 1943.\(^{10}\) The announcement that the shipyard would have to sell its milk for $.18 per quart (instead of the $.17 it had been charging) to comply with a law governing the minimum prices accompanied the additional shipments.\(^{21}\) The milk shipments increased from seven hundred cases each to one thousand cases in May, 1943.\(^{22}\)

By January, 1944, the weekly milk shipments had increased to four carloads of over nine thousand quarts each. Mr. H. T. Suddoth, the supervisor of the shipyard’s milk station, reported that 133 refrigerator cars delivered 1,248,492 quarts of milk between March and December, 1943. The shipyard milk station occasionally had to limit the amount of milk a worker could buy at one time, typically to four quarts.\(^{23}\)

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\(^9\)"First Carload of Fresh Milk Arrives Here," Panama City News-Herald, 15 March 1943.

\(^{10}\)"Ample Fresh Milk," The Wainwright Liberator, 27 March 1943.

\(^{21}\)"The Price of Milk," The Wainwright Liberator, 3 April 1943.

\(^{22}\)"Company Arranges for Adequate Ice and Milk," The Wainwright Liberator, 22 May 1943.

\(^{23}\)"Life of a Milk Man at Wainwright Yard," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 January 1944.
Problems with adequate milk shipments for the community continued. The Panama City News-Herald reported in May, 1943, the milk company had assured a reporter that adequate supplies of milk would be available within forty-five days. The report also discouraged hoarding canned milk, noting it spoiled easily in warm weather. A June, 1943, newspaper article warned residents of the risk of illness from uninspected milk.

A dispute between the Office of Price Administration and local dairymen caused further disruption of the community’s milk supply the summer of 1943. Although the Office of Price Administration allowed local milk prices to increase to nineteen cents per quart for home deliveries, local dairymen argued this was not sufficient to cover their increased costs. In August, 1943, the Office of Price Administration filed injunctions against dairymen in Panama City, Pensacola and Gainesville for selling their milk at the State Milk Commission’s minimum rate which differed two cents from the Office of Price Administration price ceiling. The Office of Price Administration price ceilings per quart were: fifteen cents wholesale, seventeen cents retail, and eighteen cents

24"Milk Supply Outlook Good," Panama City News-Herald, 10 May 1943.


26"Milkmen Assert $.01 Quart Raise Is Not Enough," Panama City News-Herald, 16 July 1943.
for home delivery sales. In the hearing in Jacksonville, Florida, the judge ruled the dairymen had to honor the prices set by the Office of Price Administration. The dairymen responded by refusing to sell wholesale to stores and only offered home delivery.\(^2\) Though this dispute affected area residents, Wainwright Shipyard employees continued to obtain their milk from the shipments arranged by their employer.

Meat. Meat was a second food item subject to shortages. Meat rations of two pounds per person per week began March 29, 1943.\(^2\) The Office of Price Administration ruled that one and three-fourths pounds of meat per person weekly was what it considered the allowed amount.\(^2\) The Panama City News-Herald reported a survey of local grocery stores revealed their meat supplies were very limited or non-existent in March, 1943.\(^3\) A week later, the newspaper reported fifty thousand pounds of beef and pork had been shipped to the area to supplement the community’s regular shipments.\(^3\) Due to transportation


\(^3\)“50,000 Pounds of Meat Received,” Panama City News-Herald, 21 March 1943.

\(^2\)“Promise Aid in Fight for Foods,” Panama City News-Herald, 12 March 1943.

\(^3\)“Practically No Meat in Area Since Saturday,” Panama City News-Herald, 16 March 1943.

\(^3\)“50,000 Pounds of Meat Received,” Panama City News-Herald, 21 March 1943.
problems, the first shipment had only ten thousand pounds, with the remainder shipped later.\textsuperscript{32} As with other communities, the Bay County area had to adjust to limited, rationed supplies of meat for the duration of the war. The local Chamber of Commerce also took action to deal with similar scarcities of canned goods.\textsuperscript{33}

\textbf{Ice.} Many of the emergency wartime houses built in Panama City were furnished with ice boxes. This created a significant demand for ice. The summer of 1943 brought with it a shortage of ice. Estimates of the shortage ranged from sixty to ninety tons daily.\textsuperscript{34} The Chamber of Commerce, as it sought additional ice for the community, noted the shortage was caused by the population increase and more trucking of fruits and vegetables by refrigerated cars.\textsuperscript{35}

Pasco Gainer reported an inability to purchase ice after waiting in a line that stretched across the street from the ice house several mornings from 4:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. "He finally located a friendly iceman who sold him...ice in an


\textsuperscript{33}"Move to Block Canned Goods Scarcity Here," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 13 April 1943.

\textsuperscript{34}"Supplement No. 1 to Report on Panama City, Florida, (issued 7-30-42), January 15, 1944," Office of Community War Services, Series 419, Carton 5, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.

The ice shortage became so critical that some resorted to organizing themselves into teams of two, blocking an ice truck making deliveries and demanding the driver sell them ice before moving.7

In May, 1943, the Office of Price Administration increased the local price ceilings to make it affordable for businesses to truck ice into the community.38 City officials arranged to have a minimum of two carloads of ice weekly shipped into the area.39 The Wainwright Liberator reported the shortage was caused by the limited production capabilities of local plants and the difficulty of delivery. The shipyard had plans underway to have the local supply supplemented by another nearby plant.40 These arrangements were inadequate. Consequently, the company arranged for the daily shipment of a carload of ice beginning May 21, 1943.41 Before the month expired, ice shipments increased to two carloads per day,


40"Price Ceiling on Ice Raised by OPA Order," Panama City News-Herald, 6 May 1943.

41"Shortage of Ice Is Faced by City," Panama City News-Herald, 12 May 1943.


43"Company Arranges for Adequate Ice and Milk," The Wainwright Liberator, 22 May 1943.
necessitating the construction of an ice storage house between Maritime Housing Project One and Wainwright Park. The storage house was open twenty-four hours a day. By June, 1943, Wainwright Shipyard had three to four carloads of ice shipped daily, some from as far away as Minnesota. The ice shortage was a nationwide problem that was simply worse in the hot South. Since the shipyard itself required two carloads, it announced it could not sell its ice to the general public.

By July, 1943, the community’s ice shortage was eliminated with the announcement by L. E. Lokey of Lokey-McNair Ice and Cold Storage Company that they had located adequate ice supplies. Some suppliers were as distant as Kansas City.

Miscellaneous. The media reported shortages of other items. The Wainwright Liberator urged workers to return their soft drink bottles in order for the companies to continue to supply soft drinks to the shipyard. The shipyard’s newspaper published suggestions for improvised Christmas decorations using peanut characters, paper chains, and popcorn chains to meet the scarcity of traditional Christmas decorations.

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"Ice for All Now Assured," The Wainwright Liberator, 29 May 1943.


"Sufficient Ice Now Available for Consumers," Panama City News-Herald, 1 July 1943.

"Return the Bottles," The Wainwright Liberator, 27 March 1943.
decorations in 1944." To avoid a shortage of heating sources, the Office of Price Administration approved requests by the Chamber of Commerce and Florida fuel oil dealers to lift the quota on fuel oil and kerosene that had been set at fifty percent of January, 1942, sales. However, gas heating was available only to those with a doctor's statement that the individual could not tolerate the smell of the fuel oil used in kerosene heaters.

**Governmental Action**

Several local, state and national agencies were involved in resolving the community’s various shortages. The Chamber of Commerce established a Food Industries Committee to meet with representatives of the Office of Price Administration and the Food Distribution Administration to seek increases in food allotments for the area. Merchants were allowed ninety percent of the supplies they received in 1941. However, a February, 1943, news article reported the local population had "increased at least 450 per cent, according to Chamber of Commerce statistics." When the Chamber of Commerce

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Ruth Smeby, interview by Peggy D. Felt, 25 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

"Seek More Food for Bay County," *Panama City News-Herald*, 21 February 1943.
addressed the meat shortage, the existing quota allowed only a pound of meat weekly per individual. The Chamber of Commerce urged area representatives, Senators Claude Pepper and C. O. Andrews, and Representative Bob Sikes, to lobby the appropriate bureaucracies, especially the Food Distribution Administration, to change all quotas for the area. The Administration's quotas were based on 1941 population statistics, made obsolete by the war industry located in the area. The Congressmen quickly responded with reports they were interacting with the Office of Price Administration, of which the Food Distribution Administration was a part, to alleviate the shortage problems. The Chamber of Commerce sent the Congressmen additional information on the community's serious food and work clothes shortages and reinforced its request by citing a War Manpower Commission report that Panama City's labor shortage was aggravated by the shortage of necessities. The newspaper published a telegram from Congressman Sikes reporting he had received "assurance from OPA that machinery will be put in motion to relieve this serious situation as quickly as possible." 

Frank V. Lanham, 

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30"Meat Shortage Grows Serious," Panama City News-Herald, 10 March 1943.


32"Promise Aid in Fight for Foods," Panama City News-Herald, 12 March 1943.

33"OPA Starts Action to Relieve Shortages Here," Panama City News-Herald, 14 March 1943.
regional director of the Food Distribution Administration, met with the Chamber of Commerce Food Industries Committee in March, 1943, to assure them he would submit the problem to Washington, D.C. for action. The Panama City News-Herald reported that, according to a reliable source, the community’s shortage problems were primarily caused by bureaucrats disbelief that the population had increased from 11,610 in 1940 to 50,000 in 1943 until they began receiving Chamber of Commerce data verifying the community’s growth. By June, 1943, the problem was resolved. Henry C. Ball, Special Utilization Consultant in the War Manpower Commission’s Atlanta office surveyed food supplies and reported they were adequate. The report of his survey quoted a population increase from 16,000 in 1940 to approximately 57,000 in 1943.

Business Hours and Attitudes

The population increase caused crowdedness in the stores and banks. The lack of private transportation made frequent shopping necessary. Renell Poston explained the need for this as follows:

“Well, ...to buy groceries, you had to go all the

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"Will Present Meat Shortage Need of City," Panama City News-Herald, 18 March 1943.

"Food Supplies Expected to Arrive Soon; Buyers Must Be Ready to Share," Panama City News-Herald, 19 March 1943.

way into town....So, we would go in two and three times a week...and get maybe a couple of bags each...because you had to take them back on the bus....When you got off the bus, you'd have to walk up to the house which was three blocks."

The work schedules at the shipyard made shopping during stores' normal operating hours difficult. The merchants closed Wednesday afternoons. H. V. Appen, Wainwright Shipyard's general manager, requested local businesses extend their operating hours to accommodate the approximately 14,800 shipyard workers in an address to the Rotary Club. He expected such cooperation to reduce absenteeism at the shipyard. Women employees, particularly, failed to report for work on Saturdays in order to do their weekly shopping and cleaning. Merchants responded to the request by remaining open in the evenings. Their purpose was to reduce the Saturday congestion. The congestion led Police Chief George McCall to reduce parking time along Harrison Avenue from one hour to thirty minutes beginning August, 1943. An article in The Wainwright Liberator reported merchants' disappointment

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57Renell Poston, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

58Nelle Messer, "Fabricated from Scrap," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 December 1943.


60"Saturday Night Buying Causes Congestion," The Wainwright Liberator, 3 July 1943.

61"30-Minute Parking Time Limit Aug. 1 for Harrison Avenue," Panama City News-Herald, 12 July 1943.
with the small numbers who took advantage of the later hours and plans to discontinue the practice if more customers did not appear during these evening hours. However, the December, 1943, Monthly Field Operating Report of the War Manpower Commission noted stores and banks remained open until 9:00 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.  

The *Panama City News-Herald* and *The Wainwright Liberator* announced Commercial Bank's decision to remain open 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Fridays, payday for the shipyard employees, in November, 1942. The area's second bank, Bay National, followed Commercial Bank's lead by opening 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Saturdays. These additional operating hours were called "Victory" hours. Commercial Bank announced plans to move to larger quarters in the old First National Bank Building. The bank made the announcement in December, 1942, but delayed the move until the following spring to allow the Red Cross, which occupied the building, to find another location. The bank's employees had tripled and its deposit exceeded six million

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"Monthly Field Operating Report for Northwest Florida Area, Panama City, Florida, for December, 1943," War Manpower Commission, National Archives - Southeast Region, East Point, Georgia.


dollars when the move occurred in May, 1943. The new, larger location offered additional safe deposit boxes — a fact emphasized by a large newspaper advertisement. Mr. M. G. "Bubber" Nelson remembered the Commercial Bank lobby was packed on the afternoons of the shipyard's weekly payday.

The following table illustrates local banks' increased demand for currency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>DEPOSITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>$2,850,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>4,010,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>10,972,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>16,545,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>15,930,739</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior to the bank's move, the lines extended out of the bank and down the street. The bank arranged weekly shipments of cash from the Federal Reserve Bank and correspondent banks to


"M. G. "Bubber" Nelson, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 30 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

"Bank Deposits Nearly $16,000,000," *Panama City News-Herald*, 2 January 1946.
meet the demand.*

Service businesses quickly adjusted their schedules to accommodate those of the workers. The area's beauty shops ran a collective advertisement in the Panama City News-Herald announcing extended hours of operation from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The existence of only three laundry and dry cleaning establishments was a significant problem. They were unable to clean clothing within a reasonable time although they operated at capacity.

Shipyard workers expressed some discontent with the local stores and their attitudes. Apparently, the crowds and congestion led clerks to be less than pleasant to the masses of customers they had to serve. An October, 1943, article in The Wainwright Liberator noted the improvement of service following a "courtesy campaign" conducted by the Panama City merchants. Opal Reaver, a newcomer to the community, recalled the clerks saved the best of the limited clothing available for the area's native population. She travelled to

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*M. G. "Bubber" Nelson, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 30 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.


72Dick Thompson, "Off the Board," The Wainwright Liberator, 23 October 1943.
Dothan, Alabama, to find a satisfactory selection of clothing.\textsuperscript{73} A shipyard worker criticized the local "dime store" for selling products made in Japan after hearing about a little boy throwing away a whistle when he realized it was made in Japan.\textsuperscript{74} The U.S. Maritime Commission and Jones Construction Company acted to resolve the shopping problems of the shipyard work force.

\textbf{Wainwright Shopping Center}

The construction of a shopping center across the street from the shipyard alleviated the congestion the Wainwright Shipyard employees caused in the community's stores. This shopping center also addressed the transportation problem. According to an Office of Community War Services report: "One of the chief problems, as far as the defense workers who live in the FPHA projects are concerned, is that of transportation to the stores. The stores carrying adequate supplies are located in Panama City and in many sections of the housing project there are no bus routes."\textsuperscript{75} The \textit{Wainwright Liberator} published articles on the progress of the shopping center's construction and occupancy.

\textsuperscript{73}Opal Reaver, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 25 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

\textsuperscript{74}Ruby G. Barnard, "Plumbing Shop Gossip," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 18 December 1943.

\textsuperscript{75}"Supplement No. 1 to Report on Panama City, Florida, (issued 7-30-42), January 15, 1944," Office of Community War Services, Series 419, Carton 5, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
Jones Construction Company began the process with the request that its architects and draftsmen submit drawings for a shopping center to be built at Wainwright Park. L. E. Ransom, a Wainwright Shipyard employee, submitted the design selected. The Federal Public Housing Administration granted F. T. Newton Construction Company the $63,999 contract and sixty days to build the center. Robert T. Shiver was the job's supervisor. The local newspaper reported the U.S. Maritime Commission approved project included a "department store, grocery store, meat market, barber shop, beauty shop and other 'structures'" which would create "something like a little city in the Wainwright Shipyard area." The one-story L-shaped building was 149 feet long on one side and 128 feet on the other.

The U.S. Maritime Commission negotiated the lease of the store space to private businesses which were expected to operate "on the least possible margin of profit." The commission initially awarded the supermarket/general store

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76"L. E. Ransom Design for Shopping Center Wins J. A. Jones Award," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 May 1943.

77"Shopping Center Work Starts Soon," Panama City News-Herald, 30 August 1943.

78"Wainwright Area to Have Its Own Business District," Panama City News-Herald, 4 June 1943.

79"Working on Shopping Center Building Begun," The Wainwright Liberator, 24 July 1943.

80"Working on Shopping Center Building Begun," The Wainwright Liberator, 24 July 1943.
lease to Poole and Daffin, a team who had been in business for twenty years and operated a similar store in Chattahoochee. However, due to internal reorganization, Poole and Daffin withdrew from consideration. The Pylant Brothers firm of Purvis, Mississippi, which had operated since 1890, received the lease. This store carried food, work clothes, and household goods. The general store opened in January, 1944. It separated rationed goods from other areas to allow quicker check-out for those purchasing non-rationed items. The large meat section was capable of storing five tons of meat and poultry and sold over three thousand pounds of meat the first Saturday it operated. Wainwright Shipyard’s Labor-Management Committee was satisfied when it compared the super-store’s prices with those of the downtown merchants even though the super-store had to sell some items at a price a cent or two higher than chain stores because some of its suppliers were intermediate "jobbers" rather than the producers. Initially, the store operated from 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. to noon Thursday, and 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday. In March, it expanded its hours to 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through

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"Shopping Center Open," The Wainwright Liberator, 15 January 1944.
Thursday and 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday.*

Homer Brinkley of Tallahassee obtained the barber/beauty shop lease. He had such shops on Army bases. The Wainwright Yard Barber Shop and Beauty Parlor opened December 17, 1943, with two union barbers who were joined by three additional barbers in January. It maintained operating hours convenient for workers on all three shifts. In January it sought applications for beauticians.*

J. M. McElvey, a Lynn Haven pharmacist, managed the drug store. It carried drugs, cosmetics, cigarettes, tobacco, and candy, and housed "an up-to-date soda fountain and sandwich counter."** Its hours were 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Saturday, and 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Sunday.** The Panama City Post Office opened a sub-station in the Wainwright Park Shopping Center in May, 1944. The drug store also housed a telegraph office.


"Shopping Center Open," The Wainwright Liberator, 15 January 1944.


"New Sub-Postoffice for Shopping Center," The Wainwright Liberator, 13 May 1944.
A shipwright of eighteen months left that position to open the Wainwright Shoe Repair Shop in the center along with his father and uncle in April, 1944. The milk depot moved from the shipyard to the shopping center. The convenience and plenteous parking spaces were emphasized in reports on the shopping center's progress.

Despite the additions, governmental agencies reported local prices for clothing and general merchandise were often higher than in other communities. Also, according to an Office of Community War Services report: "The quality of the merchandise offered is often poor."

**Entertainment**

The population increase also stressed the recreational facilities of the community. Shipyard employees worked hard, long hours. Nevertheless, they and their families needed activities to fill their leisure hours if the shipyard was to minimize its turnover and the community was to limit the social problems caused by the sudden influx of people.

The Wainwright Shipyard management encouraged the development of recreational activities and aided the effort.

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88"Wainwright Shoe Repair Shop Opens in Shopping Center," *The Wainwright Liberator*, 22 April 1944.

89"Plan Early Opening of Stores." *The Wainwright Liberator*, 9 October 1943.

The Wainwright Liberator published an article illustrating the management's attitude: "Realizing that long work weeks and crowded living conditions make it necessary to improvise means for its war workers to get the relaxation they need, the Management of the Yard has been and is doing its utmost to promote employee recreational activities." Their employees responded with a multitude of varied activities to satisfy their leisure time needs.

Recreational Facilities

Prior to the war, Panama City had a small city park and a two-acre waterfront park. Professional and semi-professional teams used the community's baseball park, located three miles from the downtown area. Each elementary school had a small playground attached. The City Armory, used for recreational activities prior to the war, housed the ration board and the County Defense Council during the war. The beaches provided entertainment for warm weather months. However, St. Andrew Bay, polluted by sewage, was closed to swimming by the health department. Therefore, swimmers had to travel to the Gulf beaches, a prohibitive distance with wartime's limited transportation. Boating from the city pier and fishing from the Panama City Beach pier provided

entertainment for many.\textsuperscript{2}

Commercial recreational facilities were limited as well. The city had two commercial theaters with a combined seating capacity of 1,800, an eleven-lane bowling alley, three pool halls, and the Panama City Golf Club's nine-hole course.\textsuperscript{3}

Recreational facilities for the African-American population was even more limited. A listing noted: 150 seats in the theater, a four-acre playground at the Rosenwald School, a small community building at the Hillside Housing Project, two pool halls, and fourteen "juke joints."\textsuperscript{3}

Obviously, these limited facilities were inadequate to serve the wartime population. Governmental agencies acted to increase the recreational facilities in the community. The presence of the military installations, Tyndall Field and Coast Guard, as well as the shipbuilding industry gave the area priority in this.

United Service Organizations Club. Lanham Act funds financed the construction of a two story building for the


United Service Organizations. It cost $64,980 and was completed as of January 30, 1942. The building consisted of “a large lounge, reading room, snack bar, auditorium, kitchen, showers, porch and necessary auxiliary rooms. The auditorium is used for frequent dances, badminton, table tennis, and other games.” The United Service Organizations Club invited Wainwright Shipyard employees to their various activities which included such entertainment as a piano concert by Earnest Salmon of Tyndall Field May, 1943.

The United Service Organizations employed an industrial recreation worker to organize women’s clubs and activities. The Wainwright Active Service Patriots Club formed in October, 1943, was one of many such organizations. This club planned such activities as dancing lessons and charm lessons for its members, single women who worked at the shipyard. Participation in a dance at the Tyndall Field Post Recreation Hall December 30, 1943, was the group’s first outing. The United Service Organizations provided bus transportation from

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*“Public Invited to USO Musicale, Sunday P.M.,” The Wainwright Liberator, 1 May 1943.


*Yvonne Bressler, “WASP Club Meets,” The Wainwright Liberator, 2 October 1943.
its facility to Tyndall Field. The club held monthly business meetings at the Dixie Sherman Hotel.

The United Service Organizations and Young Men's Christian Association operated a separate facility for African-American servicemen.

Parks. The Wainwright Liberator and the Panama City News-Herald reported plans to construct two playgrounds in the community in September, 1943. The Chamber of Commerce Recreation Planning Committee, assisted by the Federal Works Agency and the War Manpower Commission, developed plans for a ten-acre playground for whites and a five-acre playground for African-Americans. Lanham Act funds, available for recreational projects for workers in congested war areas such as Panama City, financed the parks' construction. However, maintenance was the city's responsibility. The proposal estimated this cost at $13,700 annually. Colonel R. L. McKenzie sold the city the ten-acres, located between the Panama City and St. Andrews communities at Franklin and Auburn streets near the Panama City Defense Homes development.

99 Edna Tilghman, "Buzzes from the WASPs," The Wainwright Liberator, 15 January 1944.


101 "Two Playgrounds, Costing $50,000 Proposed to the City Commission," Panama City-News-Herald, 12 September 1943. This park is currently known as Oakland Terrace Park and continues to be Panama City's largest recreational park.
The Wainwright Liberator published a picture of the War Manpower Commission Field Superintendent with representatives from the War Manpower Commission's Planning Division of Atlanta, Panama City Chamber of Commerce, Wainwright Shipyard's Boxing and Men's Athletics, and the local War Manpower Commission. The accompanying article reported these groups and officials of Wainwright Shipyard, Federal Public Housing Authority and Panama City had worked for months to develop the project. The plans included "field houses, a large building for dancing and athletic contests, soft ball diamond, tennis courts and almost every kind of outdoor game." The park's construction cost was $63,700. The United Service Organizations employed an individual to supervise its activities.

Theaters. The U.S. government encouraged the development and expansion of commercial recreational facilities. The Office of Community War Services assisted the Martin Theater owner when he ran afoul of the War Production Board regulations while building two additional theaters in the area. According to the report:

"The construction had been interrupted because some regulations of the War Production Board were violated and the WPB suspended the jobs and forbade the opening of the theaters. The seats and most of the equipment to operate the two theaters were

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102 "Planning Big Sport Program for Shipyard," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 September 1943.

already on hand. The President of the Martin Theaters and his attorneys had made several trips to Washington in an effort to clear the problem. The CWS Liaison Officer discussed this problem with the Regional WPB officials; however, they were unable to take any further action pending the settlement of the case against Mr. Martin for the alleged violating of the WPB regulations. At the time of the visit of the Liaison Officer to Panama City on December 8, 1943, the case had been settled and the company was in the process of completing the theaters for use."104

The additional theaters opened in 1944. One was in the Springfield community and the other at Panama City Beach.105 Theater admission, which included the federal tax, was $ .25 for balcony seats, $ .35 for orchestra seats, and $ .09 for children.106

The shipyard employees requested local commercial businesses to adjust their hours to accommodate the entertainment needs of the various shifts. The Ritz Theater advertised the showing of a "Special Midweek Late Show" 11:00 p.m. Wednesdays for the convenience of the shipyard workers.107 However, the "swing shift" employees requested they begin their shows thirty minutes earlier to allow them to


107Advertisement, Panama City News-Herald, 17 May 1943.
see the entire offering before having to get ready for work stating, "We haven't seen a news reel since we came here...six months ago....[T]hat's a long time to be in ignorance." The theater honored the request.

Mass Media

The shipyard's management took several actions to develop a sense of community among its work force. It developed its own weekly newspaper, The Wainwright Liberator. Initially, it sold for a nickel a copy but soon became free of charge. The shipyard employed an editor and limited staff to produce the newspaper. However, most of the columns were written, on a volunteer basis, by the workers throughout the shipyard. The newspaper was printed in Tallahassee. The newspaper grew from four pages in 1942 to twelve pages in 1944. In February, 1945, it decreased to eight pages following a survey about its usefulness. The editor requested columnists limit their articles to three hundred words each to allow maximum coverage of the various departments.

This newspaper provided a method of communicating pertinent information to workers about everything from job


110 "Columnists Note," The Wainwright Liberator, 4 November 1944.

111 "To Our Reporters," The Wainwright Liberator, 24 February 1945.
safety to housing availability. However, it also assisted in organizing interest groups and notifying workers of leisure activities. The Wainwright Liberator was a key communication link within the shipyard. Each department had the opportunity to include a column. Some did on a regular basis; others did so occasionally. The columns sought to develop a better understanding of the departments by introducing their personnel. Through the department columns the company explained the department responsibilities, how others could help a department improve its performance, and department problems and limitations. Frequently, the regular reporters provided what amounted to a gossip column reporting on such events as engagements, marriages, births, vacations, sickness and deaths. The shipyard newspaper brought the war closer to the workers by reporting on their relatives serving in the military. A list of some of the regular columns reflects the variety of departments necessary to build ships: UnionMelt Highlights; Burning Sensations, Platten Patter, Welding Accounting, Accounting Department, Mold Loft Shavings, Copper Shop Activities, Mail Rumors, Payroll Briefs, Drips from the Wet Dock, Fabricated from Scrap, Down Stairs in Administration, Shrinking Department, Marine Plumbers, Warehouse No. One, and Purchasing Department. The Wainwright Liberator published several letters from military personnel, especially former Wainwright employees, requesting copies of the newspaper. The paper included jokes and cartoons to bring
humor to the lives of the Wainwright Shipyard employees.

The shipyard persuaded the local radio station, WDLP to change its news broadcast beginning time from 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. to accommodate the workers.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{Musical Groups}

The Wainwright Yard Choral Club organized shortly after the shipyard opened. The group had thirty-seven members at its first performance during the shipyard's 1942 Labor Day celebrations. Reuben Mapelsden and Al Pesses were credited with organizing the group. Mr. Pesses, a chorale member and former Army bandmaster, wrote \textit{The General Wainwright March}, a musical tune often played over the shipyard's public address system.\textsuperscript{13} Mr. Pesses also organized a dance orchestra and a brass band. The band and chorale regularly participated in launching ceremonies. The orchestra became the "Wainwright Shipbuilders."\textsuperscript{14} The Wainwright Band performed for the community. In March, 1943, it gave a one-hour concert in downtown Panama City as part of the Red Cross War Fund

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12}"News for All of Us," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 20 February 1943.
\end{itemize}
Mr. Pesses left Wainwright Shipyard to work at the Ingalls Shipbuilding Company in Pascagoula in August, 1943. He was replaced as bandmaster by Cy Delman. The band's role in the community was sufficient to warrant an article on this personnel change in the local newspaper. In addition to the band and chorus, an informal group of singers held daily song sessions during their lunch hour in the mold loft.

Dances

Dances were a major form of entertainment throughout the war years. Various groups sponsored dances and often offered war bonds as door prizes. For novices to the dance floor, the United Service Organizations offered classes in ballroom dancing (waltz, foxtrot, rhumba and la conga) at the Wainwright Park Auditorium Tuesdays and Fridays from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in October, 1943. The United Service Organizations held dance classes at its Harrison Avenue location the following year. These Thursday evening classes met from 8:00 to 9:00 and included lessons in congo, rhumba, swing and grave.

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115 "Wainwright Band Concert to Be Held in Downtown Area Saturday," Panama City News-Herald, 26 March 1943.

116 "Pesses Quits as Yard Bandmaster," Panama City News-Herald, 29 August 1943.

117 "Singers Hold Session at Mold Loft," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 December 1944.


foxtrot, waltz, and the jitter-bug. In October, 1942, The Wainwright Liberator reported the Wainwright Orchestra's availability to provide music for dances. Dances held in the Wainwright Shipyard's cafeteria every other Saturday cost fifty cents per person. Tickets were sold at the reception desk in the administration building. Sandwiches and soft drinks were served. Entertainment included floor shows and amateur acts, in addition to the dance music provided by the Wainwright Orchestra. By December, 1942, attendance at the dances had declined. The management requested the departments in the shipyard sponsor the dances to provide variety. The machine shop and timekeepers were two of the first groups to accept this challenge. The administration sponsored the January 16, 1943, dance. Selecting "Miss Wainwright" from among the individuals nominated by the various shipyard departments was

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126 "Yard Employees Are Invited to Dancing Classes," The Wainwright Liberator, 14 October 1944.

127 "Shipyards Workers Stage First Dance," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 October 1942.


the entertainment for that evening. The administration gave the winner, Pat Hurt, a silver bracelet engraved "Miss Wainwright - 1943." Ms. Hurt held a secretarial position at the shipyard; her father worked as a draftsman. The company crowned Ms. Hurt at the next dance, January 30, 1943. This ball, held at the Wainwright Park Auditorium, climaxed a week long Polio Fund Campaign.

The shipyard community dances moved to the Wainwright Park Auditorium in 1943 when seven day operation of the shipyard made it impossible to use its cafeteria for Saturday night dances. The dances also became fund raisers for a variety of programs in 1943. A hillbilly theme dance, with entertainment by "Heavy Hammond and his Florida Playboys," held in March, 1943, earned money for games and other activities for the children. The purchasing department hosted an April dance to earn money for baseball uniforms and


125"Pat Hurt Named 'Miss Wainwright'," Panama City News-Herald, 24 January 1943.


127"Revival of Cafeteria Dances Starts Tonight," The Wainwright Liberator, 12 February 1944.

equipment. In October, 1943, the shipyard began to host dances at the Wainwright Park Auditorium for the "swing shift" personnel. These dances were held from 1:00 a.m. to 3:30 a.m. The first was a major success. Most employees dressed up for the occasion even though notified they could wear their work clothes if they chose.

The Labor-Management Committee sponsored a series of weekly dances at the Bay High Gym in January, 1944. The profits were designated to fund other entertainment activities. War bonds were given as prizes during the dances. The dances moved back to the Wainwright Shipyard Cafeteria in February, 1944, when the shipyard ceased Sunday operations. The dances began at 9:30 p.m. and lasted until 2:00 a.m. Cy Delman and the Wainwright Orchestra provided the music.

In May, 1944, the shipyard's Labor-Management Committee arranged to lease the Casino on the beach for the weekly dances. The dances began an hour earlier in this cooler

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129"Benefit Dance for Our Baseball Club," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 April 1943.


132"Revival of Cafeteria Dances Starts Tonight," The Wainwright Liberator, 12 February 1944.
location. The Casino remained open days and evenings for the employees throughout the summer. Dances, with music provided by the Wainwright Orchestra, occurred a minimum of four evenings each week. Only soft drinks were served. Profits were designated for the needy. The Central Labor Unions and the Labor-Management Committee co-sponsored a Labor Day Dance that included a circus aerialist performance and war bond prizes. The Casino had two dances to celebrate the completion of the Seventh War Bond Drive in 1945 — a Saturday evening dance to accommodate the day shift and a Sunday afternoon dance to accommodate the "swing shift" workers.

Dancing's popularity caused development of commercial dancing facilities. The various hotels, beach businesses, yacht club, and local "juke joints" offered this recreation. The Marie Hotel used the Rainbow Room as a meeting place for young people where no liquor was served. The Rainbow Room featured a dance orchestra several nights weekly. Various groups reserved it for parties.

133 "Transfer Dances to the Beach," The Wainwright Liberator, 13 May 1944.
134 "Panama Beach Casino Becomes Our Club," The Wainwright Liberator, 27 May 1944.
135 "Circus Aerialist Tops Program at Labor Dance," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 September 1944.
136 "Bond Rally and Dance," The Wainwright Liberator, 30 June 1945.
137 "Supplement No. 1 to Report on Panama City, Florida, (issued 7-30-42), January 15, 1944," Office of Community War Services, Series 419, Carton 5, Florida State Archives,
Sports

The various departments within the shipyard often formed sports teams to compete among themselves, with community teams, military teams, or teams of other shipyards. In October, 1942, shipyard departments organized bowling teams.138 A bowling league with twelve teams resulted by the end of November. The league bowled on Tuesdays. The shipyard newspaper frequently reported the teams' scores.139

In 1942, the Wainwright Shipyard formed a basketball team to compete with community teams in a city league.140 The Bay High School athletic program received the proceeds from the city league games. The Wainwright team advanced to the league semi-finals but lost to the Coca-Cola team.141 The community league resumed its program in 1943. Its eight teams included two each for Wainwright Shipyard, Tyndall Field, and the Coast Guard and one each for the Coca-Cola Company and Bay High School. The league scheduled its games at 7:00 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays in the Bay County High

Tallahassee, Florida.


School gym. Admission was thirty cents for adults and ten cents for children.¹⁴²

The Wainwright teams also competed with other shipyard teams. Wainwright Shipyard's Marine Electric basketball team defeated the Southeastern Shipyard team in Savannah, Georgia, and then the Brunswick (Georgia) Shipyard team March, 1944. The competition merited the attendance of Mr. and Ms. James A. Jones, Jr.¹⁴³

In addition to the basketball teams participating in the city league, a shipyard basketball league formed. The Wainwright Liberator instructed interested parties to contact the company's public relations office. In October, 1943, it had five teams representing various departments within the organization.¹⁴⁴

Wainwright Shipyard personnel also participated in a variety of baseball leagues. The United Service Organizations formed a baseball league with teams from Wainwright Shipyard, Tyndall Field, the Coast Guard and the community's "Panama City Pelicans." The shipyard fielded two teams -- the "Wainwright Shipbuilders," day shift employees, and the "Wainwright Yarders," swing shift workers. The teams played


¹⁴³"Our Team Brings Homes the Bacon," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 March 1944.

¹⁴⁴"Yard Basket Ball League Is Formed," The Wainwright Liberator, 16 October 1943.
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons. Wainwright’s two teams practiced daily (except Sundays) at Pelican Park. The Wainwright Shipbuilders practiced at 5:30 p.m.; the Wainwright Yarders practiced at 11:00 a.m. May 9, 1943, the Panama City News-Herald reported Wainwright Shipyard’s participation in the newly formed Southern Shipyards Baseball League in addition to the city’s league. In 1944 the city baseball league resumed play. It scheduled its games for Sunday afternoons at 2:00 at Pelican Park. Again, Wainwright Shipyard fielded two teams -- the Boilermakers and the Pipefitters.

African-American employees had a separate league that encompassed a larger geographical area. The Wainwright Liberator reported games between the Wainwright Colored Baseball Team and the Gulf Coast Sluggers of Port St. Joe and the Bonifay Black Dots. The teams played at Pelican Park on Sunday afternoons.

Four teams formed the Wainwright Park Softball


146"Baseball Benefit Dance Last Week Big Success," The Wainwright Liberator, 17 April 1943.


148"Local Baseball League Formed," The Wainwright Liberator, 27 May 1944.

Association in 1943. The teams played at 5:30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays on the newly constructed Wainwright Park Diamond. This league grew to eight teams by July and Thursday games were added to the schedule. The shipyard had an internal softball league in 1945 with four teams competing on a weekly basis.

In the fall, 1942, American Legion Post Number 66 sponsored boxing matches. The matches took place in the Bay High School gym on Saturday evenings. General admission was eighty-five cents; ringside seats were $1.10. Leo Bailey, a Wainwright Shipyard employee, promoted the matches between Wainwright Shipyard and Tyndall Field personnel. He offered classes in boxing to develop a larger pool of boxers. The Saturday fights often featured a match between groups of African-American males from Wainwright Shipyard as the closing event.

The shipyard’s management became more involved in the boxing program the following year. The Wainwright Liberator published an article August, 1943, inviting those interested

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1945 "Shipfitters Lose; Engineers Win in City Softball Tilts," The Wainwright Liberator, 5 May 1945.

in forming a club to sponsor professional and semi-professional boxing and wrestling matches to attend an organizational meeting. The article reported the shipyard administration would provide a boxing-ring and "hoped that matches can be arranged with Brunswick and other shipyards." A February, 1944, article featured a picture of W. D. (Dumpy) Davenport, a Wainwright welder, suited up for the Golden Glove elimination contest in Pensacola, Florida. Boxing matches between Wainwright Shipyard personnel and Tyndall Field personnel occurred in March, 1944. The matches were held at the Wainwright Auditorium until March, 1945, when they moved to the Drummond Park Community Center, a more convenient location. The profits from the fights financed additional entertainment programs for the housing projects. Boxing matches were part of the Seventh War Loan Drive in June, 1945. The men held a noon day boxing match at the shipyard as a fund raiser for the war loan drive. Two women boxers held a match as well. The Wainwright Liberator published a picture of the two combatants captioned, "Miss

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155 "Boxing Show to Be Repeated," The Wainwright Liberator, 25 March 1944.

156 "Boxing Show Tuesday at Drummond Park," The Wainwright Liberator, 3 March 1945.

Irene Faircloth, 122 1/2 pounds, and Miss Evelyn Burke, 110 pounds, putting on a boxing match for the Swing Shift Bond Rally.\textsuperscript{159}

The community’s coastal location provided a natural entertainment facility. Many new residents were not familiar with the dangers of the gulf’s currents. Consequently, Wainwright Shipyard offered lifeguard training for those interested in volunteering for beach duty.\textsuperscript{159} Woodrow W. Nealey, Safety inspector, provided the training.\textsuperscript{160} The number of volunteers increased from three in June to twelve by August, 1943.\textsuperscript{161}

The National Housing Agency and the Federal Public Housing Authority supported nautical activities by providing the materials necessary to make use of the local waterways. July, 1943, the two agencies issued a joint announcement that they had applied for the building materials necessary to build a pier in the Watson Bayou Area for the Cove Garden area tenants to use for recreational purposes. The pier was forty feet long, four feet wide and extended to water at the five


\textsuperscript{159}"Want Life Guards for Beach Duty," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 25 June 1943.

\textsuperscript{160}"Trio Volunteers for Guard Duty in Beach Area," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 28 June 1943.

feet depth. In August, 1943, the Wainwright Recreation Association sponsored the creation of the Wainwright Yacht Club. The announcement included the information that the J. A. Jones Construction Company could provide supplies to build a twenty-foot boat for those interested parties who did not have one. The club planned to "have boat races, fishing contests, and picnics." Any Wainwright Shipyard employee was eligible to join the Wainwright Yacht Club. The membership fee was ten dollars; monthly dues were one dollar. Jesse Cogburn and William Pope of the St. Andrew's Yacht Club sponsored the Wainwright Club which was requested to join the Gulf Coast Yachting Association. It met regularly at the Wainwright Park Auditorium. By October, 1943, this club was sufficiently organized to hold a boat ride and fish fry for its members and their guests. The party left from the Bayview Park at 10:00 a.m.

The following spring Wainwright workers formed a fishing

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162 "To Build Pier Watson Bayou Area," Panama City News-Herald, 2 July 1943.

163 "Wainwright Yacht Club Is Formed," Panama City News-Herald, 13 August 1943.

164 "Boating Fans Form Own Club," The Wainwright Liberator, 14 August 1943.

165 C. F. Metcalf, "Wainwright Yacht Club," The Wainwright Liberator, 4 September 1943.

166 "Yacht Club Outing Staged for Sunday," The Wainwright Liberator, 30 October 1943.
The Coast Guard provided the passes necessary to go out in the water. The passes were available at the Wainwright Shipyard personnel building Thursday mornings in addition to the Coast Guard headquarters Monday through Fridays.168

Golfers were one of the last sporting groups to organize. In 1945 Wainwright Shipyard held a spring golf tournament, open to all golfers.169 The success of this tournament led to consideration of another in the fall. However, by fall, 1945, the shipyard and the wartime population it brought to the community were preparing for closure following the war’s completion.170

Theatrical/Musical Groups

The community formed a theatrical group in 1942 to perform plays in the local theater and to broadcast their work over the local radio station, WDLP. Irving Gold was an organizer of the group. The group sought performers from Tyndall Field, Wainwright Shipyard, and the local community. The group’s proceeds were donated to the United Service

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167 "We Form a Fishing Club," The Wainwright Liberator, 1 April 1944.

168 "Coast Guard Passes," The Wainwright Liberator, 15 April 1944.


A group named the "Wainwright Theater Guild" organized the following summer. Bea Stone was the director. Its theatrical productions included variety shows consisting of individual acts and vaudeville skits in 1943, "Down Panama Way" in 1944, "Follies of '44" in spring, 1944, "The Night of January Sixteenth" (a courtroom drama) in 1944, and "Nothing but the Truth" in 1945.

Housing Project Community Centers

Community buildings were included in the Wainwright Park, Drummond Park and Hillside housing projects. They provided a location for a variety of recreational activities for the Wainwright Shipyard employees and their families. Wainwright Park Housing Project had "an auditorium, two game rooms, a meeting room, office, a lounge and a cafeteria. The Federal

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Housing Authority provides a director of activities. Both Wainwright Park and Drummond Park Housing Projects had projectors used to show films twice a week to supplement the film offerings of the two commercial theaters.

The housing project residents organized groups to plan activities. A temporary recreational group planned the "First Community Fun Night" at the Drummond Park Community Center for the housing project tenants and their friends April 15, 1943. A later report on this activity noted 240 attended and suggested that the tenant organization become a permanent body. Residents of the four housing projects formed the Wainwright Recreation Association in April, 1943. This group organized a variety of activities, including baseball, softball, tennis, gym activities, and boating outings. Its plans included the development of a variety of auxiliary groups for all ages. A number of groups did develop.


176"Fun Night Plans Are Made Public," Panama City News-Herald, 14 April 1943.

177"Drummond Park Residents Enjoy Delightful Party," Panama City News-Herald, 19 April 1943.

The Wainwright Park Auditorium announced the opening of a game room furnished with a variety of board games in March, 1943. The Tenant Organization of Wainwright Park sponsored a Square Dance at their Auditorium in March, 1943, to earn additional monies for its "recreation fund."[179]

The Wainwright Recreational Association Auxiliary organized to be "in charge of health and sanitation projects and religious and recreational activities...."[The group also planned to form] "a hospitality group...to welcome new tenants."[180] This latter objective was very important considering the turnover rate of workers to the area. In June, this group held a "Tacky Party" at the Wainwright Park Auditorium to earn money to establish a branch of the Panama City Library in the Wainwright Park area.[181]

In July, 1943, Mrs. Gladys Phillips organized the Wainwright Yard Mothers' Club for mothers of nursery-age children. Such an organization provided an opportunity for new mothers, separated from their families, to share information, seek advice, and provide a support group.[182]

A Women's Community Club also formed and met each

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180 "Women to Form Recreation Unit," Panama City News-Herald, 25 April 1943.

181 "Tacky Party at the Wainwright Community Building Tuesday Night," Panama City News-Herald, 3 June 1943.

Thursday. An article encouraging membership in the club reported:

"We have a grand time and plan a lot of good things to make your life during this war-time a more pleasant thing. We want to form a garden club to beautify the houses and neighborhoods where we live...Our home is wherever we are, so let's make this one a joy to look back on. You and your children will want to remember it as an experience of growth and work well done and pleasures of living a good life in a fine little town."

The members of this group opened a Gift Shop December 2, 1944, to sell items made by its members on consignment. The shop opened Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. to accommodate workers on the second shift.

The men had a Men's Civic Club that met Mondays at 8:00 p.m. This club promoted "welfare of your community—playgrounds for your children—beautification of both projects and other worthwhile civic improvements...".

The Maritime Housing Project No. 2 Civic Association formed in 1945. The organization, which met monthly, sought to improve housing conditions in cooperation with the Federal Public Housing Authority. It planned three socials each month...

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14Mrs. Fred Barnard, "Women's Community Club Doins'," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 December 1944.

15"Civic Club," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 February 1943.
and a weekly movie at the Marine Pipefitters Hall.\footnote{186}

The Wainwright Civic Club sponsored Bingo games Monday nights and dances Saturday nights in 1945.\footnote{187} These civic clubs organized a variety of activities for the residents of the housing projects.\footnote{188}

A report of activities of the Drummond Park Civic Club in February, 1945, included: Sunday School and church services, Women’s Missionary Society meetings, Sunbeam Band (for children four to nine years old), Junior Auxiliary (for girls nine to thirteen years old), Intermediate Auxiliary (for girls thirteen to seventeen years old), and a weekly quilting party. The group planned to hold instruction in boxing and baseball for the boys in the "Drumtreen" building in March. The group sought to organize a Boys Club for those aged seven to fourteen and to arrange basketball games for the "Drumtreens" and the Youth Club.\footnote{189}

Youth Programs

The Wainwright Liberator announced a meeting in March, 1943, in the Wainwright Yard Band Room for adults interested in organizing Boy Scout and Cub Scout troops. The Jones

\footnote{186}Harmony Marks Organization of No. 2 Project’s Civic Club,” The Wainwright Liberator, 17 February 1945.

\footnote{187}Civic Club,” The Wainwright Liberator, 17 February 1945.

\footnote{188}Billie Kay Seibold, “Drummond Park News and Activities,” The Wainwright Liberator, 17 February 1945.

Construction Company hoped to have a minimum of one troop at each of the housing projects. The meeting included the district scout commissioner. During the organizational stage, the troop met Friday nights at the Drummond Park Community Center, beginning April, 1943. Wainwright Shipyard's management lent two of its major administrators to the efforts to organize a Boy Scout troop — Reuben Mapelsden, Personnel Director, and H. M. Seamen, Director of Contractual Relations. Mr. Mapelsden was the troop committee chair at the June, 1943, rally to organize the troop; Mr. Seamen agreed to be the scoutmaster. The first troop meeting, sponsored by Wainwright Park, had twenty attend. The Marine Pipefitters' union announced plans to sponsor a troop at U.S. Maritime Housing Project Two. However, only one Wainwright troop formed.

The troop was officially instituted June 16, 1943, with fourteen members. Wainwright Shipyard encouraged its

193 "Boy Scout Meetings Every Friday Night - Drummond Park," The Wainwright Liberator, 24 April 1943.
194 "Boy Scout Rally Next Wednesday, Drummond Park," The Wainwright Liberator, 5 June 1943.
195 "New Scout Troop at Drummond Park," Panama City News-Herald, 11 June 1943.
employees to get their sons involved in the scouting program. The troop began with two special activities. Wainwright Shipyard Boy Scout Troop Number 44 received its charter at a special investiture service held at the Drummond Park Auditorium in August, 1943. Ten of the troop's member received their "Tenderfoot" badges at the troop's meeting of "the Court of Honor" held in the Panama City City Hall a few days later. The troop assisted in the distribution of The Wainwright Liberator as one of its projects beginning in September, 1943.

The following year The Wainwright Liberator issued a plea for new scoutmasters to replace those who had moved from the area. The plea noted the "Troop is rapidly disintegrating." February, 1945, The Wainwright Liberator announced a district-wide training session for those interested in becoming scoutmasters. The search was successful as indicated by a May, 1945, report on the programs

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155 "Wainwright Yard Boy Scout Troop Formed; Meets on Wednesday," The Wainwright Liberator, 19 June 1943.


158 "Scoutmasters Wanted," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 November 1944.

planned by assistant scoutmaster E. T. Torrence.  

**Summer Activities.** A variety of groups planned summer activities for the children living in the housing projects. The *Wainwright Liberator* gave prominent coverage to the schedule of such programs. The Wainwright Labor Management Committee sponsored a program to take children to the beach from 9:00 to 11:30 Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at no charge. The Red Cross provided lifeguards and swimming lessons. By July, 1944, the scheduled trips to the beach, open to children eight to eighteen years old, had changed to Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. The trip included three chaperons, a play leader and a swimming instructor. The bus fare cost ten cents.

Additional activities included: Vacation Bible School, Hobby Club, Kiddie Program, free movies, Girls Club, playground activities, indoor games, and story telling. The Panama City Recreation Department sponsored a Youth Club for youths aged fourteen to twenty years. The Recreation Department also hosted a social each Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the Bay Community building for the Youth Club members and

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young people who were not members of another youth club. The Drummond Park Civic Club sponsored the "Drumtreens", a club for young people fourteen to twenty years old. This group held a social for its members and those not associated with another youth group each Friday at 8:00 p.m. at the "Drumtreen Building."^204

Religious Activities

Religious activity flourished in the community and within the various Wainwright housing projects. The Wainwright Liberator announced a community gospel sing at the Wainwright Park Auditorium for those interested in participating. The group scheduled its sing for the third Sunday of each month at 7:45 p.m.^205

A non-denominational Bible class began meeting at the Community Room of the Wainwright Park Auditorium in March, 1943. The class met 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. each Sunday. A. J. Carager presided and Rev. David B. Halstead of the fabrication shop led the singing.^206 Fifty individuals

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206"Community Sing at Wainwright Park Auditorium Sunday," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 September 1942.

207"Bible Class Sunday," The Wainwright Liberator, 13 March 1943.
attended the first meeting. The group grew to sixty members before the month ended and considered organization of a community singing group to accompany the Wainwright Shipbuilders band in their concerts. The Gospel Singers sang at the launching of the "Dwight L. Moody" June 28, 1943. The Wainwright Liberator announced this group's goal to build a church in September, 1943. A box for donations was located in the shipyard. The group planned to call it Missionary Baptist Church though it was to continue as a non-denominational body. They planned to build "on the triangle between old and new Highway 98."

The Bay County Ministerial Association began sponsoring religious services Sunday afternoons at 2:30 in the Wainwright Park Auditorium in April, 1943. Reverend Frank Dearing, rector of the St. Andrews Episcopal Church, led the first of these non-denominational services.

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207"Bible Class Enrolls Large Membership," The Wainwright Liberator, 27 March 1943.

208"Workers Sing as the 'Dwight L. Moody' Is Launched," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 July 1943.


210"Wainwright Park Service Planned," Panama City News-Herald, 14 April 1943.

Non-denominational Sunday School classes for children began in the Drummond Park project during the summer, 1943. This group recruited ten teachers to conduct a survey to determine the number of children who would attend and the church affiliation of their families. They also planned fund raising activities to purchase a piano.\textsuperscript{214} By July, 1943, the Drummond Park Sunday School, which met at 10:00 a.m. Sundays at the Drummond Park Community Building, had set a goal of 250 members.\textsuperscript{215}

The Drummond Park Missionary Circle formed from the membership of the Drummond Park Sunday School. The circle was sponsored by the First Baptist Church and met Monday evenings at 8:00 in the Drummond Park home of its vice-president, Ms. Fred Whitted.\textsuperscript{216}

In July, 1943, the Society section of the Panama City News-Herald reported the Drummond Park Civic Club had organized the Missionary Union, Girl’s Auxiliary for children three to eight, and a Sunbeam Sunday School Class for that community.\textsuperscript{217}

Roman Catholic members approached Housing Manager Ashley

\textsuperscript{214}“Sunday School for Drummond Tots Will Be Available,” Panama City News-Herald, 28 July 1943.

\textsuperscript{215}“Sunday School at Drummond Park Seek Members,” Panama City News-Herald, 16 July 1943.

\textsuperscript{216}“Missionary Circle Is Organized at Drummond Park,” Panama City News-Herald, 16 July 1943.

\textsuperscript{217}“Drummond Park Civic Club Holds Meeting,” Panama City News-Herald, 18 July 1943.
H. Doty in May, 1943, expressing interest in a Catholic service in the housing project. Mr. Doty contacted the Bishop who assigned Father Joseph Baker to this task. Father Baker arranged a weekly Mass at the Wainwright Park Community Building beginning May 16, 1943, at 7:00 a.m. The following month Father Baker announced workers could attend the 7:00 a.m. Sunday Mass in their work clothes. Initial attendance was low because many were not aware of the service. Father Baker informed his congregation that when attendance increased the church would "consider plans to build a church and school in St. Andrews." Father Baker began a second weekly Mass at Wainwright Park Community Center in February, 1944. The Masses were held at 7:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. each Sunday. St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church developed from this Wainwright group. The church was built in 1945 and held its first service December. Some of its building materials came from Wainwright Shipyard as did some of its volunteer labor.

Beach residents organized a Sunday School service at the


220 "Catholic Service," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 February 1944.

221 Joan Redmon, Secretary, St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Panama City, Florida, telephone conversation with Peggy D. Pelt, 20 January 1994.
Open Air Theater located between Panama City Beach and Long Beach. This group met at 11:00 a.m. each Sunday beginning in July, 1943.222

Local churches also invited the new residents to attend their churches. St. Andrew Baptist Church youth visited residents in Maritime Housing Project Two to welcome them to the community and to invite them to church in March, 1943.223 The First Methodist Church invited Wainwright Shipyard employees and their families to their Christmas performance of "The Little Lord Jesus" in December, 1943.224 Members of the First Methodist Church's Women's Society for Christian Service sponsored a circle at the Wainwright Park Community Center in March, 1944. This group, open to all denominations, met monthly for "social, education, and entertaining" purposes.225 The First Methodist Church also invited shipyard workers and their families to attend their Easter performance of "The Crucifixion" in April, 1944. Roy deLano, who worked in the shipyard's marine electrical department, directed the

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222"Sunday School for Beach Residents, Both Young and Old," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 July 1943.

223"Baptist Group Makes Visits to New Homes," Panama City News-Herald, 2 March 1943.

224"Christmas Oratorio at 7 Sunday Night," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 December 1943.

225"Project Women Form Church Service Circle," The Wainwright Liberator, 4 March 1944.
There were spontaneous religious services in the shipyard as well as organized services in the housing projects. The Wainwright Liberator published a picture of T. C. Newton conducting a service in the fabrication shop. The caption indicated lunch time religious services were common throughout the shipyard. Fannie Mae Hutchison was another of the shipyard's lunchtime preachers. She felt called to use her lunch break to preach instead of nap. She estimated she sometimes had five hundred workers listening to her message.

Veterans of Foreign War Legion Post

The Wainwright Liberator announced a group's interest in forming a Legion Post in the shipyard in October, 1942. Al Pesses was the organizer for interested parties to contact. Veterans of Foreign Wars Wainwright Post 2185 was officially established Sunday, June 27, 1943, at the Drummond Park auditorium. Approximately six hundred shipyard workers were

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226 "Sacred Oratorio to Be Presented Here on Easter," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 April 1944.

227 "Wainwrighters Are Religious Folk," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 June 1944.

228 Fannie Mae Hutchison, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.

229 "Service Men on Guard," The Wainwright Liberator, 10 October 1942.
eligible for membership. The group moved its regular meetings to the Laborer's Hall, located above Schneider's Department Store in downtown Panama City in August, 1943. December, 1943, The Wainwright Liberator carried an announcement that the Veterans of Foreign Wars would meet Monday at the Maritime Pipefitters Hall in Maritime Housing Project Two.

**Miscellaneous Entertainment**

Wainwright Shipyard's various shifts and departments arranged individual entertainment activities. The swing shift held a banquet in March, 1944, at Mattie's Tavern, a supper club in the St. Andrews area, where they selected Ms. C. H. Patterson "Miss Swing Shift" from among the workers' nominations for the Swing Shift Pin Up Girl. Ms. Patterson was married to a welder leaderman. The hull planning department held an informal buffet supper at the Panama City Country Club in September, 1942. The marriage of Phoebe Plyler and Paul Fay provided the surprise entertainment for

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230 "Foreign War Vets to Institute Yard Post Sunday Night," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 June 1943.


232 "Veterans of Foreign Wars Meet Monday," The Wainwright Liberator, 18 December 1943. VFW Post 2185 continues to exist.

the evening.\textsuperscript{24} The size, organization, and schedule of the shipyard encouraged the various groups to develop their individual social outings in addition to the variety of activities for everyone. The electrical engineers planned a party at the Panama City Country Club in August, 1942, to allow the workers to become acquainted socially. The evening's activities included "boating, swimming, chip and putt, and dancing," [as well as] "a delicious chicken supper."\textsuperscript{25} The engineering draftsmen Ms. Opal Reaver worked with gave a bridal shower in her honor on the roof of the Dixie Sherman Hotel.\textsuperscript{26}

With the support of the shipyard management, appropriate governmental agencies, and the local community, entertainment was provided for the new residents to the community. Although, various local groups invited the shipyard employees and their families to participate in their activities, many of the activities were planned by the shipyard for its employees and their families. The distance separating the shipyard community from the Panama City community, though not great by modern standards was sufficient, given the lack of automobiles


\textsuperscript{25} "Electrical Engineers Stage Get Together," \textit{The Wainwright Liberator}, 22 August 1942.

\textsuperscript{26} Opal Reaver, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 25 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
and crowded public transportation, to separate these groups to some degree. Therefore, it was more efficient for the Wainwright Shipyard community to organize its own shopping facilities and entertainment activities. This also reduced the pressure on the overburdened Panama City facilities.
EPILOGUE

The small Panama City community adjusted to the wartime emergency. This was not easy. The lifestyle changed to the faster pace of an industrial community. Ms. Earl Boone remembered getting dizzy watching the workers at shift change when she went to pick up her husband. She had never seen so many people hurrying to get somewhere before.

The local population was totally inadequate in numbers and skills to staff a firm as large as the Wainwright Shipyard. Local residents who could took advantage of the training the shipyard offered and worked there throughout most of the war. The labor was hard but the pay was excellent, especially compared to local standards. When the war was over, many residents were left with skills and experiences they would never have had otherwise.

Still, the community required workers from outside the Panama City area to adequately operate the shipyard. The pay offered by the shipyard drew workers from all over the United States -- especially the southeast. Prior to the war, the people knew each other and the lifestyle was slow paced. The opening of the shipyard brought a large number of strangers to this quiet little town. Residents commented they had to accustom themselves to not recognizing everyone when they went
to town.

Those who came in contact with the migrants were amazed at the variety of backgrounds and experiences they brought with them. The natives and the migrants did not interact a great deal off the job. The shipyard and its housing were separated from the established communities which discouraged interaction after work. Once the shipyard housing and shopping facilities were in place, the shipyard workers had their own community. Although the two groups were not totally segregated, they were separate. On the other hand, many who moved here to work at the shipyard remained in the community after it ceased operation.

The problems caused by the population growth were mainly due to the suddenness of the influx of shipyard workers. The people arrived before adequate facilities to serve them were in place. The community spent 1942 and 1943 attempting to catch up with a population that continued to grow and shift. Initially, housing was crowded or unavailable. It remained insufficient to provide local housing for all the workers despite the massive government building projects and the private developments the government assisted. Many commuted long distances daily or on their days off. Nevertheless, the housing expansions and residents’ willingness to share their extra rooms were sufficient for the community to meet the basic shelter needs of the migrants.

Once housing was built and the shipyard workers’ families...
arrived, the community's other facilities became inadequate. New schools and additions to existing schools had to be built. Even with additional classrooms, families had to adjust to different school shifts as they had to adjust to different work shifts at the shipyard. Nevertheless, the school board made necessary arrangements to educate the children. Then, the community had to solve shortages of medical personnel. The shipyard arranged for its own infirmary and medical personnel which supplemented the local supply of physicians.

Shortages of food appeared soon after the population explosion. After dealing with shortages of individual products, like milk and meat, local officials discovered the "culprit" aggravating this problem was the regional governmental officials' failure to realize the population had indeed tripled. Once they were convinced the population growth merited the amount of foodstuffs requested the problem was resolved. Shortages continued, as they did in all communities, but they were no longer of a critical nature.

A significant aid to the community was the willingness of local representatives of U.S. governmental agencies to work with community leaders to solve the problems associated with the shipyard population. The community did not receive everything it wanted, but it received enough to satisfy the needs of the population. This was largely due to the cooperative attitude of U.S. officials. Of course, they needed a community environment to attract and retain the
workers needed for the wartime Liberty Ship production.

The people who lived here during this period remembered feeling, "There's a war; we have to do and tolerate what we must to win it." Therefore, they were willing to tolerate the crowdedness and the inevitable wait in lines wherever they went.

Most residents interviewed remembered the "Wainwright years" with fondness and pride. They were proud of the way the small community overcame the problems the war brought and coped with the inconveniences. They expressed pride in the community's contribution to the war effort -- Liberty Ships built here. They remembered the "high" salaries they earned at the shipyard. They also recalled the simplicity of the life during the war years that seemed so complex at the time. They remembered amusing things people did to adjust to the strange world of an industrial city.

The women, especially, were proud of their contribution to the war effort. Shipyard employment was the first experience working outside the home for many. Those who had done a "man's job" of welding felt a great satisfaction in their accomplishment. Surprisingly, there was no bitterness when the work with its "masculine pay rate" was gone.

The shipyard's closing caused mixed emotions. Residents were glad the war was over. They looked forward to a return to a calmer lifestyle. They also eagerly awaited the elimination of rationing and crowded conditions. Yet, they
were concerned about the impact of the shipyard's closure on the local economy and were reluctant to lose the employment it had offered so many. Local officials endeavored to maintain the shipyard's operation after the war.

Shipyard Closure

Community leaders turned their attention to the post-war future of Wainwright Shipyard as early as 1943. The Chamber of Commerce visualized the shipyard building large cargo ships and the fabrication shop building heavy machinery for domestic use and export. The Chamber of Commerce felt Panama City's location made it ideal for shipping goods to South America and importing raw materials from that area. Senator Claude Pepper issued a statement in August, 1943, that "he believes the Government will maintain the Shipyard here for the construction and repair of ships after the war emergency has passed." Such post-war contracts would not require the same level of work force. The shipyard management frequently noted this as a method to encourage greater productivity by its employees -- the shipyard would continue to employ only the

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1"Huge Expansion of City, C. of C. Post-War Program," Panama City News-Herald, 4 July 1943.

2"Panama City-South America Shipping Program Under Study by Commerce Body," Panama City News-Herald, 14 April 1943.

most efficient workers after the war. In 1944, attention turned to the world's post-war shipping needs as it related to Liberty Ship construction. One article summarized the debate as follows:

"To date, about seventy per cent of the merchant ships that have been built during this war are Liberties. These Liberty ships are slow and comparatively cumbersome. Their eleven knots an hour adds little to their desirability as permanent fixtures to the post-war merchant marine. Opinion concerning their ultimate disposal is divided. There are some who believe that they can be converted into suitable vessels by the addition of improved steam turbines capable of practically doubling their speed. On the other hand there are those who feel that the Liberties should be broken up as soon as possible after the war to prevent their being sold cheaply to foreign nations, which, because of their lower wage scales for personnel, might be able to compete with the American merchant marine."

L. R. Sanford, U.S. Maritime Commission director of the Gulf-Great Lakes Region, countered rumors of the imminent closing of the shipyard by announcing in October, 1944, that shipyards in the Gulf Coast area would operate until mid-1945 at least. The Wainwright Liberator reported that President Roosevelt directed Admiral Emory Land, U.S. Maritime Commission chair, at an October 25, 1944 meeting "to prepare a broad program of Government construction of greatly improved


*"Shipbuilding Certain to Survive the War," The Wainwright Liberator, 26 February 1944.

*"All Gulf Yards Expect to Run Until June, '45," The Wainwright Liberator, 14 October 1944.
cargo and low-travel-cost passenger ships to keep the American merchant marine in a commanding position in world commerce and at the same time to make jobs for shipyard workers during the reconversion and postwar period.\footnote{7} The Wainwright Liberator reported other signals favoring continued production of ships in the United States. The Merchant Marine Act of 1936 had emphasized the need for a domestic source of ships for national defense and to develop foreign and domestic commerce.\footnote{8} European shipyards were not expected to be operational for three years after the war. Consequently, those nations would buy ships from the United States. Unfortunately, they were unlikely to purchase the Liberty Ship because of its slow speed.\footnote{9} The world demand for ships would increase as peace led to more international shipping trade.\footnote{10}

In 1945, the management's attention turned to reducing costs. During the war emergency, costs were not as important as speed. The U.S. Maritime Commission contracts with shipyards such as Wainwright operated on a "cost-plus" basis. However, as the war's end approached costs became more

\footnote{7}{Maritime Has Building Plan for Shipyards," The Wainwright Liberator, 11 November 1944.}

\footnote{8}{H. Gerish Smith, "Great Merchant Fleet Essential in Peace," The Wainwright Liberator, 2 December 1944.}

\footnote{9}{U.S. to Build Ships for Europe After War," The Wainwright Liberator, 3 March 1945.}

\footnote{10}{L. R. Sanford, "Sanford Praises Yard's Record in Pennant Award," The Wainwright Liberator, 5 May 1945.}
important for a shipyard seeking post-war contracts."

Despite hopes for continued operation as a shipyard, this did not occur. September, 1945, The Wainwright Liberator reported on "farewell parties" held by various shipyard departments. An editorial encouraged workers to continue buying War Bonds, renamed Victory Bonds, to help them once their shipyard employment ended. However, the payroll department announced it would cease deductions for bond purchases the week ending October 7, 1945. The department also noted the shipyard employees had bought almost thirteen million dollars worth of bonds through the Payroll Savings Program.

The shipyard ceased active production in October, 1945. Approximately two thousand remaining employees were released.

Actions to dispose of Wainwright Shipyard began in 1946. Congressman Bob Sikes' office announced three firms, including Jones Construction Company, had placed bids to buy the


"C. A. Moore, "Time Department News," The Wainwright Liberator, 8 September 1945.


"Yard to Discontinue Payroll Bond Deductions," The Wainwright Liberator, 6 October 1945.

shipyard in February, 1946. Panama City also expressed
interest in acquiring the shipyard in a request to the War
Mobilization and Reconversion office. That office decided the
city could buy the shipyard if a private firm was not
interested. However, the U.S. Maritime Commission still had
authority over the shipyard. In March, 1946, the Panama
City News-Herald published an unofficial report that the U.S.
Maritime Commission had released Wainwright Shipyard to the
Surplus Property Administration for disposal. Once the
government decided the shipyard was surplus, it had to decide
whether it classified as marine property, for disposal by the
U.S. Maritime Commission, or industrial, for disposal by the
War Assets Corporation. March, 1946, the Panama City News-
Herald announced the War Asset Corporation was responsible for
the shipyard's disposal. The shipyard lay idle for years
and its buildings deteriorated. Attempts to sell the shipyard
were complicated by "a provision that they ... be maintained so
that the government could again utilize them for shipbuilding,
if necessary."

"Three Bidders Seek Local Shipyard, Sikes Reveals," Panama City News-Herald, 17 February 1946.


"Shipyard Goes to WAC," Panama City News-Herald, 6 March 1946.

Post-War Use

Ultimately, the president of Southeastern Rail and Steel Company, Jacksonville, Florida, acquired the shipyard and converted it to a shipbreaking yard. In the 1960's, the yard removed steel plates from the old Liberty Ships and rolled and shaped them for welding into prefabricated sections for use in barge construction at a shipyard at Green Cove Springs, Florida. In 1967-1968, the Union Minerals and Alloys Corporation, New York, bought fifty-six Liberty Ships from the Maritime Administration. This corporation contracted with two shipbreaking companies to scrap the Liberty Ships. One of the two was the former Liberty Ship construction site -- Panama City. At least seven of the Liberty Ships built by Wainwright Shipyard were scrapped at Panama City -- Newton D. Baker, Alanson B. Houghton, Nick Stoner, George Ade, Samuel G. Howe, Mary Ball, and John Barton Payne.  

Housing

The U.S. Maritime Commission and the Federal Public Housing Authority had to dispose of the war housing. This housing was vacated in November, 1945. An Executive Order issued December 31, 1945, granted the authority to move the houses. A nineteen million dollar presidential contingency

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fund paid for the disposal.\textsuperscript{21} Congressman Bob Sikes proposed the Veterans Administration use the Wainwright housing and the metal and woodworking shops for vocational training for veterans in January, 1946.\textsuperscript{22} However, the housing was dismantled instead and moved to other locations. A. C. Littleton, Sr. was employed to dismantle and mark the plumbing for reassembly.\textsuperscript{23} January and February, 1946, many of the units were moved to the University of Florida campus in Gainesville to provide housing for veterans returning to school.\textsuperscript{24} Secretary of State R. A. Gray spoke at the dedication of this subdivision known as "Flavet Village."\textsuperscript{25} March, 1946, the Federal Public Housing Authority financed the move of seventy-six additional units to the University of Florida to meet the needs of its increased enrollment of married veterans.\textsuperscript{26} Memphis, Tennessee, also requested some

\textsuperscript{21}"Work Starts on Housing Units," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 13 March 1946.

\textsuperscript{22}"Sikes Proposes Use for Housing," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 20 January 1946.

\textsuperscript{23}A. C. Littleton, Sr., interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Panama City, Florida.

\textsuperscript{24}"Panama City Transplanted," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 21 January 1946.

\textsuperscript{25}"Ex-Panama City Homes at University of Florida to Be Dedicated," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 8 February 1946.

\textsuperscript{26}"Married Vets to Be Housed at Florida," \textit{Panama City News-Herald}, 14 March 1946.
of these units to house veterans settling there. That city received two hundred of the Drummond Park units. The government granted the Henry C. Beck Company, Atlanta, the contract to relocate the units by June 1, 1946. Four of these went to Lamoyne Gardens, a housing project for African-Americans. Columbia, South Carolina, received fifty-six of the Drummond Park units for their veterans. Tuscaloosa, Alabama, received 176 of the housing units from U.S. Maritime Housing Project Number Two. After the distribution to these cities, two thousand units remained. Some were purchased by individuals to use as cabins on nearby lakes. Others were purchased and relocated within the city. The Federal Public


28"Work Starts on Housing Units," Panama City News-Herald, 13 March 1946.

29"Housing Units Are Scheduled for Tuscaloosa," Panama City News-Herald, 24 March 1946.

30"Housing to Go to Columbia," Panama City News-Herald, 20 March 1946.

31"Housing Units Are Scheduled for Tuscaloosa," Panama City News-Herald, 24 March 1946.

32"Housing Units Are Scheduled for Tuscaloosa," Panama City News-Herald, 24 March 1946.

33Millie Nauman, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 2 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida

34"Fannie Mae Hutchison, interview by Peggy D. Pelt, 24 June 1992, Wainwright Shipyard Oral History Collection, Gulf Coast Community College Library, Panama City, Florida.
Housing Authority sold the Ware Trailer Park early in 1946. The twenty-nine acre park located on St. Andrew Bay had eleven buildings.\(^3\)

By mid-1946, many of the buildings constructed rapidly to house the shipyard and its workers had been as quickly dismantled and moved. What remained was a vacant testimony to the presence of a vibrant shipbuilding war effort. Within a few years, some of the buildings became eyesores. The building that housed the Wainwright Shopping Center was one of these. It was demolished in late 1993.

**Long-Term Impact**

Wainwright Shipyard's long-term impact on Panama City is almost immeasurable. Although the shipyard closed and the government built housing projects were relocated, the community retains much evidence of the shipyard's existence. The vast amount of infrastructure built to meet the needs of the shipyard population continue to serve the present population. The water and sewage systems, inadequate even before the war, were expanded to provide adequate supplies to the shipyard and its housing remained. This system remained to serve the community after the war was over. Roads were built within the newly constructed housing projects and the major east-west road from Hathaway Bridge to Panama City was four-laned.

\(^3\)"Ware Trailer Park on Block," *Panama City News-Herald*, 30 January 1946.
The city's largest park, Oakland Terrace Park, was built during the war. The community acquired a new public health clinic facility. The port facilities developed for the shipyard became available for use by the Port Authority.

Classrooms overcrowded before the war became even more so during the war. New schools were built and the existing ones were enlarged. After the war, the state allowed the local school system to maintain its wartime level of teachers, thereby reducing class sizes. The addition of classrooms during the war period encouraged this decision. School enrollment declined from 10,000 in 1945 to 7,700 in January, 1946.

The U.S. government funded virtually all of these projects. The community could not fund them itself. The U.S. government would not have done so had it not been for the presence of a war industry in Panama City.

The Wainwright Shipyard administration buildings and the land occupied by the government housing projects were acquired by the local government. The buildings were used as the "incubator" for Gulf Coast Community College and for the Florida State University - Panama City Campus until these institutions built their permanent facilities. The Bay County School Board was the last resident of the Wainwright buildings. They are currently vacant and will probably be

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"Converting from War to Peace, Here's How - Panama City Style," Panama City News-Herald, 3 January 1946.
demolished. The land occupied by Gulf Coast Community College was the location of some of the government war housing projects.

The community has hundreds of houses built and sold by private developers during the war years. Additionally, many of the people who came here to work returned with their families to the local beach for annual vacations, contributing significantly to the tourism industry. St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church developed because of the presence of Catholic workers at the shipyard. Churches already in existence ended the war years in much better financial shape than they had the previous decade of the 1930's.

Panama City would lack much of the infrastructure it currently enjoys if the U.S. Maritime Commission had decided to locate Wainwright Shipyard in another community.
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Пегги Дортон Пелт получила степень бакалавра и степень магистра по политическому управлению в Университете Южной Миссиссипи. Она работает профессором в Gulf Coast Community College в Панама-Сити, Флорида.

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Она замужем и мать двух детей.