

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 196387.)

THE ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY

A SCRAPBOOK

The clippings in this scrapbook are excerpted from actual newspaper articles written during World War II. Each clipping describes a war-related product being produced someplace in the United States. Most of the clippings also describe challenges the companies faced in manufacturing these goods, and/or strategies they employed to help produce goods more efficiently.

Aluminum Said To Be Above Demand

The Tennessean – June 14, 1941

ALCOA, Tenn., June 13—Correspondents surveying the nation's major defense centers today toured the gigantic plant here of the Aluminum Company of America and found it ahead of demand with about 30 days reserve stock piled up awaiting shipment.

This condition may not continue, however, unless there are rains on the watershed of the Little Tennessee River, which generates about half of the enormous amount of electric power needed for production of the light metal which today rivals steel as the basic material of war. Tennessee Valley Authority supplies the balance.

Radio Fuse Weapon Kept Secret at State War Plant

Indianapolis Star—September 22, 1945

Bloomington, Ind., Sept. 21—Real identity of RCA-Victor Corporation's mysterious "Madame X," a proximity fuse which explodes electronically when it reaches the vicinity of a target and turns near misses into "bulls eyes," came as a complete surprise to employees of the firm's Bloomington plant, where the secret war weapon had been manufactured for three years.

Not more than 20 of the 2,000 employees knew of the fuse, which has been ranked as second only to the atomic bomb as a scientific war achievement by Assistant Secretary of the Navy H. Struve Hensel.

Tribute Paid To Higgins for Landing Boat

March 6, 1943

Shreveport Times

Washington, DC, March 5—Tribute to Andrew Jackson Higgins, New Orleans boatbuilder, is contained in the Congressional Record published today.

Representative Joseph O'Brien (R.-N.Y.) placed in the record an editorial describing the adventures of Warrant machinist James D. Fox and Chief Boatswain's Mate Hunter A. Wood, who have been with the American forces at Guadalcanal.

"The one man in the South I want especially to see is Andrew Jackson Higgins," Fox was quoted as saying.

"I want to tell him, face to face, that Higgins's landing boats such as we had at Guadalcanal are the best in the world. They do everything but talk; honest, they do."

Arkansas Receives Defense Contract

Northwest Arkansas Times
February 27, 1941

Helena, Ark., Feb. 27—
Helena residents today hailed the first major defense contract to be awarded an Arkansas firm—and agreement by the Metals Reserve Corporation, FRC subsidiary, to take 100,000 tons of grade A manganese ore for defense use from the Manganese Cooperative Producers association company of Helena, at a price of \$4,611,000.

The plan calls for construction of a plant on five acres at Helena where the company would process ore to be hauled from the Independence County fields around Batesville. [Senator] Ezekiel Candler "Took" Gathings said the Missouri and Arkansas and Missouri Pacific Railroads, and truck lines, would be utilized in the hauling, and that the plant would have a weekly payroll of \$2,100 exclusive of salaries of executives, salesmen, and office employees. The government contract calls for delivery of the manganese before December 31, 1944.

Chalco is projecting a net loss might not

Rubber Plant for Houston Area

Denton Record-Chronicle
June 4, 1942

HOUSTON, Texas, June 4—The Humble Oil & Refining Company announced here that two plants, one to make synthetic rubber and the other to supply a basic ingredient, would be built in the Houston area at a total investment of about \$43,000,000.

The government will build the plants at a cost of \$18,000,000 each and lease them to Humble for operation. A portion of the total investment will be made by Humble in its new refinery for the production of raw materials used in manufacturing butyl rubber, the announcement stated.

The exact location of the plant was termed restricted military information.

Called "Maneuver"

May 30, 1941

The Danville Bee

LOS ANGELES, California, May 30—Anti-aircraft guns and army pursuit planes were stationed at Southern California aviation plants today. Col. Ira C. Eaker described the action as a tactical maneuver. Headquarters were established in the Army Air Corps hangar at Los Angeles Municipal Airport, near the North American Aviation aircraft plant. Detachments of soldiers manned anti-aircraft guns at the Consolidated Aircraft Corp. plant in San Diego, the Douglas Aircraft Company's Santa Monica and El Segundo plants, the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation's Burbank factory, and the Vultee Aircraft plant in Downey.

Volunteers Save Sugar Beets of Sheridan Region July 23, 1942

Wyoming Eagle

Sheridan, Wyoming, June 22—(U.P.)—A thousand acres of the vital sugar beet crop of the Sheridan area has been saved for the war effort through the energy of volunteer workers.

G.W. Hardy, Chairman of the Sheridan County labor subcommittee for the agriculture war board, says that from the first call for volunteers up through the weekend more than 450 persons have registered to work in the beet fields. The volunteers include high school boys and girls, men and women from local business firms and practically every miner from the Sheridan area coal mines.

Hardy says the work of thinning the beets probably will be finished early next week and he declared the amount of sugar saved by the volunteers will fill at least 36,000 sacks.

US Will Ask For Bigger Crops in Colorado

Denver Post — October 12, 1941

Believing that food will win the war and write the peace, county supervisors of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration will visit farmers in Colorado in the near future and discuss with them increased farm production for 1942.

The national plan envisions the United States supplying food for more than 10 million persons in Great Britain, for an increased demand in this country, and a sufficient surplus for export to countries throughout the world needing food. The plan calls for a great increase in dairy products and substantial increases in supplies of eggs, pork, beef, lamb and mutton, for the abolition of limitations on sugar beet acreage and for larger truck crops.

the 20th season.

Farms Score Food Victory

Omaha World-Herald — January 1, 1944

Nebraska's 120,000 farmers and ranchers can present the following year's end report to their fellow citizens:

If 1944 turns out as well as the year just past, we can say again at its end that Nebraska's agriculture, its great resource, has made a worthwhile contribution to the causes of victory and peace.

You've read lately of the markets being glutted with hogs. That's because, while answering the nation's call, we raised a whacking big crop of spring pigs—4,581,000 head, three and one-half hogs for every man, woman and child in the state, a 52 per cent increase over the spring of 1942.

2,000 Mexican Workers in ND

June 15, 1944

Bismarck Tribune

More than 2,000 Mexican sugar beet workers already are in the state and many of these will be available to North Dakota farmers when the haying harvesting season begins, the NDSU Extension Service said Thursday.

All have been brought into the state through the combined efforts of the Extension Service, the United States Employment Service and the American Crystal Sugar Beet Company of Grand Forks.

"Except for some 200 who are working in the McKenzie County area, the workers for the most part have been placed in the Red River Valley, where the largest acreage of beets has been planted," H.W. Herbison, supervisor of the emergency farm labor program, said.

Unions Agree to Help Farmers in Enid’s Wheat Belt

Miami Daily News-Record
February 24, 1943

ENID, Oklahoma, Feb. 24—Garfield County, in the heart of Oklahoma’s wheat belt, was mobilizing its urban and rural manpower today to see that the crops are brought in this year.

The Garfield County War board and the US Employment Service have stationed volunteer placement officials in each community to help in meeting manpower shortages as they develop.

The Enid Trades Council, representing union labor here, has pledged that its members will work on nearby farms in their spare time, especially during the wheat harvest.

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Jacksonville Shipyard Awarded Production “M”

Tampa Tribune
December 17, 1943

JACKSONVILLE, Florida, Dec. 16— The St. Johns River Shipbuilding Company has been advised by Rear Admiral Howard L. Vickery, Vice Chairman of the US Maritime Commission, that it will be presented with the “M” for ship production before Feb. 1.

James C. Merrill, Company President, made the announcement at the yards, where the 24th Liberty ship was launched earlier this week.

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Kaiser Shipyards Run out of Steel

Klamath Falls Herald and News
June 1, 1943

PORTLAND, Ore., June 1—The record-breaking Henry Kaiser shipyard, Oregon Shipbuilding corporation, has run into a steel shortage that threatens to cut into production.

So said General Manager Edgar F. Kaiser, blaming the yard’s speed partially for the situation. “We have been getting enough steel each month for 15 or 16 Liberty ships, and we have been turning out 16 or 17. Well, that procedure has caught up with us. We are hoping to get out of this spot, but it is the tightest hole we’ve been in,” he said.

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19th Ship Launched

Lumberton Robesonian – July 8, 1942

Wilmington, North Carolina, July 8—The Hugh Williamson, third Liberty freighter to be launched at the yard of the North Carolina Shipbuilding Company here within the past 10 days, slid down the ways yesterday afternoon after being christened by Mrs. Richard D. Dixon of Edenton. It was the 19th ship launched here since last December 6.

January 23, 1944

Willow Run Aims at Goal of One Bomber an Hour

Port Huron Times-Herald

Detroit, Michigan, Jan. 22—The dream of volume production of gigantic four-engine bomber planes, long a subject of controversy among automotive experts, is being realized at the Ford-operated Willow Run plant west of here.

The big “warships of the air,” whose cost runs into several hundred thousand dollars each are rolling off the automotive-type assembly lines daily in increasing numbers; in addition complete “sets” of parts for assembly at other plants are being shipped in mounting volume.

Most, if not all of the credit for what has been accomplished at Willow Run goes to 62-year-old Danish-born Charles E. Sorensen, longtime associate of Henry Ford and production genius of the Ford Motor Company. Willow Run was Sorensen’s brain-child. As he long ago developed the moving assembly line for automobile production, so did he adapt automobile production methods to the big bomber plant.

Chalco is projecting a net loss... might not... way

Citrus to be Used to Make War Explosives

Tampa Tribune – October 8, 1942

The much-discussed issue of using citrus by-products, and solving the disposal problem of citrus peel waste from canning plants, will find a dramatic solution in Winter Haven soon, when the newly-formed Florida Chemical Company begins manufacture of alcohol and molasses from pressed citrus juice and the wastewater of the citrus peel.

[The owner of the new factory] said today the federal government desired that this plant be in position to operate on Cuban molasses during the season when citrus is unavailable, and wants to use the alcohol distilled by the local plant, at the Edgewood Arsenal facility in Alabama, in the production of smokeless powder.

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Firms Will Seek War Contracts

Arizona Republic – December 1, 1943

Four Phoenix manufacturing plants are preparing to submit bids within a few days for the production of ship parts for the U.S. Maritime Commission, D.L. Bouse, District Manager of the Smaller War Plants Corporation, announced yesterday. The four firms are Allison Steel Manufacturing Company, Johnson Brothers Manufacturing Company, Arizona Metal Manufacturing Company, and Karlson Machine Works.

Two local firms, Allison Steel and Johnson Brothers, now are engaged on contracts for the Maritime Commission. Submission of information on the facilities of local firms to the Maritime Commission by the district SWPC office has been mainly responsible for much of this work coming to Arizona.

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Pittsburgh Mills Produce Record Quantity of Steel

Pittsburgh Press – January 2, 1942

Pushing facilities to the limit to meet war demands, Pittsburgh district steel mills produced a record quantity of metal in 1941 and headed for higher levels as extensive expansion programs were launched.

Close to 19 million tons of ingots were manufactured in the past 12 months in this area—the greatest single steel-producing center in the nation—and an even higher tonnage would have been forthcoming were it not for an acute shortage of iron and steel scrap.

This volume of Pittsburgh steel is almost three times as much as Japan can produce in a year and is almost seven times greater than Italy's capacity.

Chalco is projecting a net loss might not vary

North Carolina's Military, Natural Resources Geared for War

Nashville Graphic – December 11, 1941

North Carolina has converted pine woods and bare fields into vast defense establishments. War orders have placed the textile industry on an overtime basis to fill more than \$40,000,000 in contracts for cotton and woolen products essential to outfitting fighting forces.

Demands of war have revived industries dormant, or languishing, since World War I, created new ones and spurred production to new levels in enterprises established in the state within the last decade, particularly those of the chemical industry.

"Painless Boomtown" Operates in Georgia

July 14, 1944

King City Chronicle

At least one small town in America has proved beyond all doubt that a boom town created by the war need not be subject to the usual problems—that, in fact, a "Painless Boom Town" is quite possible.

The town is Marietta, Georgia, which awoke one morning to hear the news that it had been selected as the site for the new Bell Bomber Plant which would turn out the world's largest battle planes, the B-29s.

Citizens of the territory promptly registered fear of boom town expansions, but Mayor "Rip" Blair, as soon as he heard the news, developed plans for a painless boom town. Instead of giving way to honky tonks and undesirable road houses, Marietta outlawed them immediately. Beer and liquor licenses were restricted to those already issued. Renewals of some which had expired were refused.

Ordnance Plant Project Outlined by Major Grosse

June 23, 1942

Eau Claire Leader

The first authoritative public statement on the Eau Claire Ordnance Plant and what it would mean to the city and citizens of Eau Claire and adjacent area was made Monday to this paper by Major Boone Grosse, US [Army], in charge of the plant.

In brief, this is what the Eau Claire Ordnance Plant will be:

The Gillette Tire plant here has been taken over by the war department and will be converted into a small arms munitions plant for the manufacture of 25, 30, and 50-calibre shells, mostly for automatic firearms.

A plant for loading the shells made in the plant here is being built on the 700-acre tract of land acquired by the government four miles northeast of Eau Claire.

First of Billion Dollar String of Plants Open

Press and Sun-Bulletin – March 14, 1941

Washington, DC, March 14—Three months ahead of schedule, a critically-needed smokeless powder plant reached completion today, the first of a \$1,000,000,000 string of government-financed munitions factories ready for production.

Under Secretary of War Robert Patterson, Governor James Price of Virginia, Major General Charles M. Wesson, the Army's Chief of Ordnance, and Major General Edmund B. Gregory, Quartermaster General, arranged to attend the formal opening of the new \$44,000,000 Ordnance Works at Radford in southwestern Virginia.

The first production line will start full-time operations the beginning of next week. Its expected daily output of 100,000 pounds will more than double the Army's existing flow of powder from one arsenal and smaller commercial sources.

US to Finish War Plants Within Utah

Salt Lake Tribune

May 19, 1942

WASHINGTON, DC, May 18—The federal government does not intend to abandon any war or defense plants under construction in Utah, Senator Abe Murdock and Representative J.W. Robinson reported Monday.

The announcements came after the senator and representative made an investigation into Sunday press reports that many plant projects, especially steel plants, would be abandoned in order to divert structural steel to plants manufacturing guns, tanks, and other war materials.

The two congressmen said they each made a careful inquiry Monday into the press reports and were assured that the reports had little foundation as far as Utah is concerned.

Chalco is projecting a net loss might not...

Conductorettes to Serve Riders

Arizona Republic

May 28, 1943

Smiling conductorettes will greet Goodyear war workers who ride the trailer-type busses now in use on the Phoenix-Goodyear Aircraft plant run. The conductorettes will collect fares and punch tickets, and also serve as contact between the passengers and the driver who sits in the cab of this type of bus. Use of girls for this work will release more men for war work and the military service.

Report Greater Demand for Bay State Products

March 24, 1942

Fitchburg Sentinel

Boston, Massachusetts, March 24—The demand for the products of Massachusetts factories reached a new high in February, the Associated Industries of Massachusetts reported today.

The association said in a statement that the demand for metal trade products was extremely heavy. A sustained demand for cotton textiles and a sharp increase in calls for wool fabrics was noted.

Demand for shoes, leather, and paper, although showing a slight reduction compared with January, remained high, the report said.