

# ***MAPPING RICHMOND'S WORLD WAR II HOME FRONT***



Courtesy Richmond Redevelopment Agency

A Historical Report Prepared For  
  
National Park Service  
Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front  
National Historical Park

by

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## INTRODUCTION

This study was designed to deepen understanding of the social landscape of the World War II home front in Richmond, California. Several of the most obvious structures associated with Richmond's wartime past had been identified during preparation of the feasibility study to establish Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park.<sup>1</sup> Yet these places represent only a portion of the complex story Richmond has to tell about the changes that Americans and their communities went through during the war. The sites already included in the Park are concentrated on or near Richmond's waterfront. While they capture a range of themes related to the industrial and social history of the time, Richmond's urban landscape has traces and stories to tell of an even more rich and diverse portrait of home front America. The results of this research provide an overview of home front Richmond that can inform interpretative efforts for the National Historical Park, preservation activities by the City of Richmond, and further research on the history of Richmond during WWII.

The authorizing legislation for Rosie the Riveter/WWII National Historical Park specifically states that the "general management plan shall include a determination of whether there are additional representative sites in Richmond that should be added to the park or sites in the rest of the United States that relate to the industrial, governmental, and citizen efforts during World War II that should be linked to and interpreted at the park."<sup>2</sup> This study provides a preliminary compilation of additional information on sites and structures relevant to the story of Richmond's home front years. It was intended to

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<sup>1</sup> Planning and Partnership Team, Pacific Great Basin Support Office, Pacific West Region, National Park Service, *Feasibility Study: Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front*, (Oakland, CA: National Park Service, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> H.R. 4063 / Public Law 106-352 Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park Establishment Act of 2000 (Oct. 24, 2000; 114 Stat. 1370).

aid the National Park Service and others in developing a more comprehensive picture of how Richmond was transformed by the efforts of federal, county and city governments; the Kaiser Shipyards and other defense industries; war-specific organizations including civil defense and ration programs; war-related activities of national and local organizations, such as the Red Cross and USO, the Elks Club and the NAACP; and other social changes related to the home front, such as the internment or displacement of “enemy aliens.”

Richmond was a small city at the beginning of the war, with only 23,000 people spread over a landscape that was largely semi-rural, though dotted with major industries such as Standard Oil, the Ford Assembly Building, American Radiator and Standard, and the Pullman factory. Macdonald Avenue was already a vital commercial thread that wove through much of the community, yet older Richmond residents’ memories are filled with stories about the farm animals they and their neighbors kept for sustenance and income. Many residents of pre-war Richmond have fond memories of a place where city life and farm life were knit together.<sup>3</sup>

Patterns of life, work and land use were utterly transformed during the war. Recruitment of workers for the four Kaiser shipyards brought the city’s population to over 100,00, and changed the city’s ethnic composition, increasing the African American community by a factor of ten, and bringing greater numbers of Latinos and Chinese Americans who lived in, or simply commuted to, new defense jobs within Richmond. As the city’s population quadrupled in the opening years of WWII, much of Richmond was built out, and many neighborhoods are filled today with

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<sup>3</sup>For depictions of pre-war Richmond see Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, *To Place Our Deeds: The African American Community in Richmond, 1910-1963* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) and Lawrence DiStasi, “Not at Home on the Home Front: Italian Americans in Richmond, California” in Donna Graves et al., *Not at Home on the Home Front: Japanese Americans and Italian Americans in Richmond During WWII*, 2004 report for California State Library, Civil Liberties Public Education Program.

the same buildings that wartime workers would have lived among and moved through.

Given the breadth of potential topics associated with the story of Richmond during WWII, and the quantity of structures that date to the period, description of the methods used for this study and the areas of focus are in order. The sites selected for initial inclusion in the Park -- Shipyard Three, Maritime and Powers Child Development Centers, Ford Assembly Building, Kaiser Field Hospital, Atchison Village and Fire Station 67A -- touch on a number of important home front themes including advances in the availability of childcare and health care, defense industries and their workforce, housing and public safety. These sites allow us to begin to understand the impacts of war upon large industries and local government, and their responses to wartime change. They also provide insights into the experiences of defense workers who had access to housing at Atchison Village and daycare at these child development centers, although a limited view given that these sites reportedly served only white workers.

This study aims to broaden the current base of information about Richmond during WWII to include locations and themes that lie outside those already designated. Alongside the themes exemplified by the historic sites listed above, this study has sought out places in Richmond that can help us understand:

- the range of local defense industries, including pre-war businesses that converted to defense production
- efforts by municipal government to address the needs on an expanding population
- civil defense and rationing programs
- community organizations that rallied to the war effort
- organizations that served newcomers
- civil rights groups and ethnic-specific organizations

- expansion of local schools
- businesses that supplied goods and services for Richmond's expanding economic base
- patterns of private and public housing for defense workers
- recreation and entertainment

In addition to these themes, which expand the range of information for Park planning and interpretation, the study sought to locate sites beyond the waterfront that acknowledge the presence of Richmond's home front legacy across the city's many neighborhoods. Thoroughfares that promise to be major paths of travel for future visitors to the Park received special emphasis, including Harbour Way, Marina Way, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street/Marina Bay Parkway, Cutting Boulevard and Macdonald Avenue.

Several local archives yielded rich material, however the collections of the Richmond Public Library and the Richmond Museum of History were identified from the outset as key to beginning to piece together the details of life in this city on the home front. I combed through the collections of both institutions over many months and found a wealth of information that has shaped this study.<sup>4</sup> Yet many gaps in the record became apparent. The holdings of both the Museum and Library tend to favor published accounts of events during the period, and while the newsletters and annual reports of the Chamber of Commerce proved invaluable for their detail about local businesses and their wartime efforts, these are, by their very nature, filtered through the "booster" lens of the organization and the class and ethnic make-up of its members.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> During the course of this study, interns and staff at the Museum and Library separated WWII-era materials from their general collections for a joint project to digitize material related to home front Richmond. The project stalled for a variety of reasons, and the scattered nature of the pertinent materials has left me less than confident that I was able to locate all of the relevant documents.

<sup>5</sup> Although some correspondence in organizational files was available and useful, letters, diaries and other personal accounts of the time were rarely found in the Richmond Museum of History or the Library. This underscores the value of the oral histories gathered to date, and the larger collection of individual narratives

For example, African American or Latino-owned businesses and civic groups rarely appear in these publications, nor are they adequately represented in the Richmond City Directory. Published reports are also, obviously, tailored and edited accounts that may mask failures, debates, or schisms within the community that the authors wish to keep out of the public record.

Despite these archival biases, which are common to many institutional collections, the archives of the Library and Museum, and their generous staff, have been invaluable for accomplishing what this study set out to do – to begin to draw the contours of a “portrait” of home front Richmond that might provide the groundwork for interpretive planning. The shading and coloration that others will add to this sketch can only enrich its depiction of Richmond during the WWII years.

## CIVIC MOBILIZATION and COMMUNITY LIFE



### **American Red Cross** 3200 Macdonald Avenue

Local chapters of the American Red Cross were one of the most important conduits for funneling home front Americans' energy toward the war effort, and for communicating health and safety information to local residents. Richmond's Red Cross chapter operated out of the Lincoln School building at the start of the war, before moving in 1944 to a new facility within Nicholl Park. The city's female residents were the foundation of Red Cross activities, which included visiting nurse programs, blood drives, making surgical bandages to send to the front, serving as members of the Motor Corps (which provided defense-mobilization transportation), teaching first aid courses, and support for wounded servicemen in local hospitals.

Many local organizations, including the Richmond Women's City Club, formed Red Cross sections to raise funds and perform on-going home front activities such as refurbishing old clothes and knitting and rolling bandages.<sup>7</sup> Employees at the Richmond Shipyards participated in

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<sup>6</sup> A note on illustrations; many of the historic photographs reproduced in this report were found as low-quality illustrations in publications and ephemera from the period. When high quality, reproducible images were available, I have noted their source in the credit line. All others are contemporary depictions by the author.

<sup>7</sup> *Richmond Independent*, 2 July 1940, p. 4.



Red Cross blood drives, and work crews competed with one another to see who could raise the most dollars for the organization's activities.<sup>8</sup>

### **Boys' Club**

263 S. 20<sup>th</sup> Street

Richmond citizens shared the national concern that unsupervised youth whose mothers had joined the war effort would engage in anti-social activities. The Richmond Boys' Club was seen as a means to "make better citizens and reduce juvenile delinquency." With leadership and fundraising support by the Elks Club, the Richmond Community Chest remodeled an armory building in 1944 to give local boys a place to pursue more healthy activities. Serving boys six years of age and older, the new facility was designed to accommodate a membership of 600 children from 7 am until 10 pm with activities in woodworking, sports, pool, games, reading, etc.<sup>9</sup> Building permits for this structure through the 1970s remained in the name of the Boys Club; in 1996 a permit to remodel the building was issued to the West Contra Costa County YMCA, which occupies the building today.



### **Chamber of Commerce**

337 10<sup>th</sup> Street

Richmond's Chamber of Commerce was intimately involved with many aspects of Richmond's home front -- whether in helping to coordinate the

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<sup>8</sup> *Fore 'N Aft*, 7 May 1943.

<sup>9</sup> "Boys' Club Organized," *Richmond News*, June 1944.

interests of local businesses and federal programs, or devising strategies that addressed issues such as defense worker recruitment or the critical housing shortage. The Chamber developed a new publication, *Richmond News*, in late 1941 to provide more information on its increasingly war-related activities. Just a few examples of the Chamber's home front work follow:

The Chamber requested a survey by Richmond's Postmaster in 1942 that established the rise in the city's population from 23,000 in 1940 to 114,899 just two years later.<sup>10</sup> The following year, the organization provided office space for counters from the special 1943 Federal census.<sup>11</sup> Advertising placed in local papers by the organization was dedicated to various matters related to the war effort.

A Chamber publication, "Job Facts," aimed at recruiting labor from throughout the US for the shipyards and other local defense industries, was distributed nationally through the 1,500 offices of the US Employment Service.<sup>12</sup> A Rental Bureau opened by the Chamber in 1942 helped incoming workers find rooms in private homes when defense housing projects could not meet the demand. According to the Chamber, approximately 6,000 placements were made that calendar year.<sup>13</sup>

The group was actively involved in post-war planning to address lingering problems brought on by the influx of new residents, and to maintain the economic growth that the war years had created. The Chamber appointed a special committee in late 1944 to help sustain existing businesses and to attract new post-war industrial development. Twenty-five thousand dollars allocated by Richmond's City Council and \$35,000 raised from private interests supported a national advertising and promotion campaign to recruit new industries to the City.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Richmond News*, December 1942.

<sup>11</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California, 1944* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> "Job Facts Recruits Labor," *Richmond News*, August 1942

<sup>13</sup> *Richmond News*, December 1942.

<sup>14</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California 1945* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 2.



### **Elk's Building**

10<sup>th</sup> and Macdonald

The Elk's Club has connections to at least two important themes in wartime Richmond's history. The building, depicted in a ca. 1930 photograph above, served as one of nearly twenty air-raid shelters organized under the Richmond Defense Council. Members of the Elks Club also initiated an effort by the Community Chest to remodel an existing armory building as headquarters for the Boy's Club of Richmond in 1944.<sup>15</sup>



### **Greek War Relief**

130 Washington Avenue

Americans across the nation organized to provide relief to those suffering in allied nations directly affected by the war. This structure is identified as the site for Richmond's Greek War Relief offices in Chamber of Commerce publications, which also list local relief organizations for

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<sup>15</sup> "Boys' Club Organized," *Richmond News*, June 1944.

China, Britain, France, Russia, Yugoslavia, Poland and Holland acting through the United War Relief Fund of Richmond. Although records of the Greek War Relief activities were not located, most WWII relief organizations raised funds to send abroad or gathered clothing, blankets and other goods to ship to citizens in allied nations.



**Hospitality House**  
1030 Nevin

Operated by the YMCA and the Richmond Recreation Department, Hospitality House provided recreation and sleeping quarters for servicemen and also housed the YMCA Youth Center. By 1944, the main USO at 10<sup>th</sup> and Virginia was described as "chiefly industrial and has such heavy demands in this field that it cannot provide for all the requirements of service men." With a lobby and snack bar, recreation room, lockers and showers, the new fifty-bed-facility could accommodate visiting servicemen and provide them with activities alongside local youth organized by the City's Recreation Department. Funded by the Community Chest and the State of California, the building was dedicated in a joint ceremony with the new Boys' Club facility on May 20<sup>th</sup> 1944.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> "Service for Service Men," *Richmond News*, June 1944.



Copyright Dorothea Lange Collection, Oakland Museum of California

**International Full Gospel Church**  
474 Spring Street

Storefront churches, prevalent in many parts of Richmond today, have a rich history in the city and strong connections to the war years. This small church, captured in a series of photographs by Dorothea Lange shortly after it opened, still stands today. As historian Charles Wollenberg described its context, white and black migrants “brought a tradition of populist, evangelical religion, often practiced in hastily established storefront churches.”<sup>17</sup> Titled by Lange, “Revival Hall Just Off Housing Projects,” the wartime image depicts the church when it was located amid the Cutting War Apartments built by the US Maritime Commission and just north of Harbor Gate Homes.

**Richmond Area Church Defense Council**  
318 9<sup>th</sup> Street

Directed by Rev. H.H. Henderson, the United Church Ministry of the Church Defense Council oversaw the provision of religious services at the defense housing centers including the Richmond Trailer Camp, the Canal Administration Building, the U.S.O. at 10<sup>th</sup> and Virginia, and Auditoriums at Harbor Gate, Terrace, Cutting Avenue War Apartments and Atchison

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<sup>17</sup> Charles Wollenberg, *Photographing the Second Gold Rush: Dorothea Lange and the Bay Area at War, 1941-1945* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1995), p. 20.

Village. Special “Colored Church Services” were offered at Harbor Gate, Canal and Cutting Auditoriums.<sup>18</sup>

**Richmond Women’s City Club**  
12<sup>th</sup> and Nevin

Long a stalwart actor in Richmond’s civic life, the Richmond Women’s Club continued to play an active role during WWII. In the 1970s, a group of clubwomen recalled that “many members worked in the shipyards” while others served as plane spotters, Civil Defense block wardens, and volunteers in the Ration Board. The Clubhouse itself was offered for use as a disaster shelter, and a site for first aid and plane spotter training classes.<sup>19</sup>



**Salvation Army**  
1430 Cutting Boulevard

Now a discount store, this structure housed the Salvation Army during the war years.

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<sup>18</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California, 1944* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> “The History of the Richmond Women’s City Club, 1906 to 1975,” in Richmond Museum of History, vertical file V1-2.



**St. Luke's Methodist Church**  
32<sup>nd</sup> and Barrett Avenue

The congregation of St. Luke's erected this large, Mission-revival style edifice in 1941. Records from the Richmond branch of the NAACP indicate that St. Luke's might have been among the churches leading the post-war campaign for interracial unity. A 1948 letter from the NAACP's secretary, Juanita Williams, describes St. Luke's Dr. Eldredge, as assisting with a "special campaign among the White people for memberships."<sup>20</sup>

**USO Traveler's Aid**  
248 14<sup>th</sup> Street

Traveler's Aid was established as a program of the United Services Organization to assist newcomers to Richmond in finding housing and other essential services. According to an oral history with Traveler's Aid employee, Tarea Hall Pittman, who went on to become a regional civil rights leader, the organization's services were not segregated and were open to all newcomers.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> NAACP Branch file, Richmond 1947-1949, Bancroft Library.

<sup>21</sup> Tarea Hall Pittman. *Tarea Hall Pittman*. (Berkeley: Regional Oral History Office, University of California, 1971-72), pp. 37-38.





### **U.S.O. Building**

Tenth and Virginia

The national organization's slogan "A Home Away from Home," indicated the range of recreational and leisure activities USOs offered to build morale among servicemen and women, and to workers at defense industries. Writing tables, snack bar, lounge, library, games and records, boxing shows and a weekly dance were offered at Richmond's USO. A demonstration Victory Garden was planted on the facility's grounds and courses on gardening, nutrition, and cooking were offered throughout the war years. One example is the "Health for Victory Club" offered by the USO and Pacific Gas and Electric Company. Monthly meetings were announced in November 1942 with the purpose of teaching "wives, mothers, sisters – in fact anyone who needs a Richmond shipyard worker," how to maintain that workers' optimum health through good nutrition and wise meal planning on a tight budget.<sup>22</sup>

According to a 1944 Chamber of Commerce publication, the USO proved so popular with defense industry workers that another facility needed to be developed to address the needs of service men, which resulted in the dedication of Richmond's downtown Hospitality House.<sup>23</sup> Negotiating demands on the USO facility was an ongoing issue. In spring of 1943, the *Richmond Independent* announced that a USO Club for

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<sup>22</sup> "Shipyards to Have Health Victory Club," *Berkeley Gazette* 16 November 1942.

<sup>23</sup> "Service for Service Men," *Richmond News*, June 1944.



African American servicemen was to open in an unused building in Point Richmond that June. Mirroring the segregationist policies of the US armed forces, USO facilities in most metropolitan areas were formally segregated, or more informally targeted at specific ethnic groups such as the Chinese USOs in San Francisco and Los Angeles. USO regional and local leadership held a special meeting with protesters from Point Richmond who brought petitions arguing that a “colored club” was not appropriate in their neighborhood, but more suitable for a “negro section” of town. Within two weeks, the USO announced that it would “be governed by the people of the community” and would no longer pursue the proposed new facility in Point Richmond.<sup>24</sup> It is unclear whether this event had any impact on subsequent patterns of USO use by African American shipyard workers or servicemen, but a separate USO was never built.

This story reinforces the seemingly implacable segregation of African Americans that informed social and recreational activities during the war: primary and secondary sources indicate that commercial recreational facilities, such as dance halls and bars, were highly segregated. Further research on the ability of other ethnic groups to use these facilities, and of use patterns at movie theaters will be important.

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<sup>24</sup> Robert Wenkert, *An Historical Digest of Negro-White Relations in Richmond* (Berkeley: University of California Survey Research Center, 1967), pp. 24-26.

## CIVIL DEFENSE/RATIONING

The Richmond Defense Council headed up dozens of citizens efforts and formal committees, including: Advisory, Civil Protection, Resources & Skills, Health, Welfare & Consumer Interest, Transportation, Housing, Works & Facilities, Public Information, Industrial Resources & Production, Recreation, and the Home Front Unity Committee.<sup>25</sup>



Courtesy of Richmond Museum of History

### **Kaiser Field Hospital** 1330 Cutting Boulevard

A quarterly report from 1944 for the Richmond Defense Council lists fifteen “Interpreters” for the local civil defense program based at the Shipyard Field Hospital. The languages spoken by these men and women included Spanish, French, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Hungarian, Italian, German, and Finnish.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> “Richmond Defense Council: Report for January-February-March 1944,” Richmond Collection/Richmond Public Library.

<sup>26</sup> “Richmond Defense Council: Report for January-February-March 1944,” Richmond Collection/Richmond Public Library.



Courtesy ChevronTexaco Archives

**Lincoln School**  
205 10<sup>th</sup> Street

Lincoln School was the headquarters for the Richmond Ration Board.<sup>27</sup> Remarkably little information about Richmond's wartime rationing program was found in local archives. This site for local operations might have been selected because staffing tasks, such as distributing ration books and general information, were performed by schoolteachers in many communities. When local quantities of rationed items were perceived to be seriously out of kilter with Richmond's booming population, a special 1942 count of residents was called for because foodstuffs were allotted to stores based on the outdated 1940 census. According to the Chamber of Commerce, protest from "shipyard interests, local merchants, and the public" about resulting food shortages inspired the Chamber to ask Richmond's Postmaster to make an assessment of current residents based on mail deliveries.<sup>28</sup> (See *Schools and Children* for more on Lincoln School)

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<sup>27</sup> *Richmond News* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) August 1942 stated that the Board operated out of Lincoln School's Room 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Richmond News* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) December 1942.



Courtesy of Richmond Museum of History

### **St Marks Catholic Church** 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Bissell



### **Winters Building** 1031 Macdonald

St. Marks Church and the Winters Building, as well as the Main Library, the Carquinez Hotel, and the Post Office, were designated air raid shelters under Richmond's extensive web of civil defense organizations. Richmond had four Air Raid Districts divided into precincts, with a captain for each.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> "Richmond Defense Council: Report for January-February-March 1944," Richmond Collection/Richmond Public Library.

## COMMERCIAL



**Richmond Motor Company**  
500 23<sup>rd</sup> Street



**Trulson Motor Company**  
23<sup>rd</sup> and Bissell



Published in a 1946 report by the Chamber of Commerce, the pair of photographs above shows the “completely new and modern automobile row” that grew along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in the last years of the war.<sup>30</sup> Automobile

<sup>30</sup> *Pictures Tell the Story: What's Happening in Richmond* (Richmond: Richmond Chamber of Commerce, 1946).

manufacturing was halted in 1942 in order to divert scarce materials to defense industries. Along with rationing of tires, this meant that many people's ability to use automobiles, let alone purchase one with their newly increased earnings, was severely curtailed. As these restrictions lifted toward the end of the war, the number of automobile showrooms in Richmond rose significantly. The concentration of several of these emphatically modern dealerships along 23<sup>rd</sup> street creates an opportunity to interpret changing transportation patterns, and the beginnings of the post-war boom in consumerism.

### **Defense Diner**

501 Cutting

In May 1942 Leo and Mary Lockshin moved a railroad dining car onto a foundation at 501 Cutting and opened a diner just north of Richmond Shipyard No. 1. By October of that year, they had expanded the restaurant, presumably due to high demand for their food services. A 1945 building permit describes a "small lunch counter facing the street." By 1946, the Lockshins had received a permit to convert the restaurant into a bar.



### **New China Café**

230-234 Macdonald

Still standing at 230-232 Macdonald, this modest one-story structure held a number of wartime businesses that illustrate important aspects of daily



life on the home front. A 1943 electrical permit was issued to Wing Fong for use of a hot plate in the “New China Café,” one of many new restaurants opened to serve the needs of busy defense workers with more disposable income than time and ration coupons for shopping and cooking. The same year a heating permit was issued to the Melrose Dress Shop at 234 Macdonald – again illustrating new, small businesses that reaped the benefits of Richmond’s booming commercial sector. The owner of the building is listed in a 1935 permit at the Pacific Ice Company of San Francisco. Pacific Ice may have been the parent company of Union Ice, which operated out of this shared structure (presumably from the rear). Ice was a crucial household commodity for preserving food in the days before refrigerators were widely available.



Courtesy Richmond Museum of History

### **Newell's Market**

505-509 S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street at Cutting Blvd.

Local developer C. W. MacGregor built this store in 1941, at the same time as he developed a number of residential projects north of Cutting Boulevard on and near 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. By 1943, MacGregor had sold the structure to Jack Newell, who changed the name and added on to the structure. Although several important elements of the building façade have been altered (most significantly the series of large windows with

overhanging canopy), the handsome tower defining its entry at the corner of 23rd and Cutting still stands. As an attractive, if modest, example of commercial art deco architecture, this building is worth considering as a possible site for interpretation. It is on important travel routes for people driving between other WWII-era structures – and might provide a place to interpret the impacts of wartime rationing on commercial establishments and on home life.



**Park Florist**  
2015 Macdonald

The Katayanagi family sold their thriving florist shop at 1508 Macdonald when they were forced to leave Richmond in 1942.<sup>31</sup> Oakland florist Dave Piazza bought the business and soon added Frank Perata, whose family operated nurseries in the Colma area, as his partner. Frank Perata and his wife left their children with their grandmothers in San Francisco during the week to run the Richmond shop, finally moving the whole family to Richmond in the early 1950s. The business moved to its present location five blocks east in the late 1950s. According to Bob Perata, one of two sons who still operate the business, Park Florist

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<sup>31</sup> *Interview with Tom Oishi* by Donna Graves and David Washburn (Berkeley, CA: Regional Oral History Office, UC Berkeley, 2002).



provided the floral displays for many of the ship launchings at the Kaiser Shipyards.<sup>32</sup>



**Richmond Pool Hall**  
327-335 Macdonald

The 1942 Richmond City Directory lists this structure as housing a hotel, a restaurant, the Salvation Army, and the Richmond Pool Hall.<sup>33</sup>

**Richmond Sanitary Service**  
327 7<sup>th</sup> Street

Richmond Sanitary Service, first established ca. 1917 as Richmond Scavenger,<sup>34</sup> was awarded the garbage service contracts for housing projects operated by the Richmond Housing Authority (RHA) in 1942-43. By June 1943, RHA administered 25,063 units within the City, a staggering number to provide trash service for (let alone build and manage). Not surprisingly, RHA reported at the time that Richmond Sanitary “had their troubles. Equipment and manpower have been hard to obtain. On our side we have experienced difficulty in getting garbage cans.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Author’s conversation with Bob Perata, February 2004.

<sup>33</sup> “Map of Macdonald Avenue Storefronts from 1942 City Directory,” Richmond Museum of History.

<sup>34</sup> Maria Sakovich, “Exhibit Text for La Nostra Storia: Italian American Contributions to Richmond,” (Richmond: Richmond Museum of History, 2003), p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Housing Authority of the City of Richmond, *Second Annual Report, 1942-43* (Richmond: Richmond Housing Authority, 1943).



Courtesy Richmond Museum of History

### **Victory Café**

11<sup>th</sup> and Cutting Boulevard

Advertisements for the Victory Café announced “good meals... convenient to Yards Nos. 1 and 2.” Open from 5:30 a.m. to 2:30 a.m., this establishment was clearly designed to serve workers on all shifts at the nearby shipyards.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately, this handsome modern building is no longer standing. But its location and title make it a potential interpretive subject.



### **Victory Liquor**

201 Macdonald

Built in 1929 as a store by L. Dias (presumably a member of Richmond’s sizable Portuguese community), this structure housed the Victory Liquor

<sup>36</sup> *Richmond War Homes Weekly*, 9 April 1943.

Store by the close of the war years according to building permit records. Access to alcohol for Richmond's home front revelers was plentiful; nightclubs and liquor stores mushroomed in those years, and even the numerous Italian households that clung to the tradition of home winemaking listed their services in the City Directories. According to City records, the Victory Liquor Store operated at least until the 1960s at this location, which is now occupied by the Bibleway Church.

## ETHNIC COMMUNITIES/CIVIL RIGHTS



### **Galileo Club**

371 S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street

Richmond, like the greater Bay Area, numbered Italian Americans as the community's largest single ethnic group in the pre-war years. The Galileo Club was founded as a men's social organization in 1932, with initial meetings held in members' homes throughout the town. By 1938 the organization had begun work on the clubhouse at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Virginia, with subsequent additions including a ballroom and a court for bocce ball.<sup>37</sup> A woman's auxiliary was formed in late 1938 to join the men's club in organizing social events and raising funds for charities and sponsoring

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<sup>37</sup> For a detailed description of the building and its social history see Marjorie Dobkin, "The Richmond Galileo Club 1932-1952: Historic Context Report," (Richmond: 2002).

Richmond's first Columbus Day celebration. On October 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 1939, the Club, with extensive cooperation from the City of Richmond, organized an historical pageant recreating Columbus' landing, a parade down Macdonald Avenue, sporting events and a ball open to the larger community.

Two years later, the Galileo Club's Columbus Day program was a far more "subdued and cloistered affair."<sup>38</sup> Italy had joined the Axis countries in 1940 and by 1941, Italian consulates in the U.S., including San Francisco's, had been closed. By February 1942, many in Richmond's community were among the 600,000 non-citizen Italian Americans designated as "enemy aliens." The Galileo Club history during the war years symbolizes the strangely schizophrenic place Italian Americans held in American society at the time. As residents who had lived in the U.S. and Richmond for several decades, most Italian Americans identified first as Americans and supported the broader war effort. Galileo Club members bought war bonds, served in Richmond's civil defense program, and organized gift mailings to service men. The Galileo Club itself served as one of 22 local sites for civil defense "fire guards."<sup>39</sup> Yet members of their community were targeted as potential foes by local institutions such as the *Richmond Independent*, which described the announcement of sanctions as proof that "war makes possible enemies out of people whom we have considered friendly acquaintances for years.... All must go to eliminate from danger spots the ones who are really dangerous..."<sup>40</sup>

Sanctions enforced by the FBI on Italian American enemy aliens included forced relocation away from prohibited defense zones, confiscation of cameras, radios and other property, restrictions on travel, and nighttime curfews. Although not as severe or long lasting as the

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> "Richmond Defense Council: Report for January-February-March 1944," Richmond Collection/Richmond Public Library.

<sup>40</sup> "For Safety's Sake," *Richmond Independent*, 3 February 1942.

more widely known incarceration of Japanese Americans, hundreds of Richmond residents suffered from these policies. Most non-citizens were elderly immigrants whose limited English was a major factor in their decision not to pursue US citizenship. Hundreds of Italian Americans in Richmond were faced with the choice of separating from kin who fell under the sanctions, or relocating entire families in a period of extreme housing shortages. Many lost their homes and businesses during relocation – one despondent long-time resident, Martin Battistessa, took his life a few blocks away from the Galileo Club.<sup>41</sup> Italian Americans lived with the irony of having sons fighting in the U.S. military (shared by many Japanese Americans), or family members working in the shipyards, while parents and grandparents were publicly identified as enemies.

Columbus Day 1942 marked the announcement of the lifting of most of the restrictions placed on Italian Americans. Although lasting less than a year, the enemy alien program had created enduring disruptions for many in Richmond's Italian American community through loss of homes, businesses and jobs. The Galileo Club is one of several sites where this story, along with the contributions of Italian Americans to the war effort, might be told. Although this story in Richmond has received only cursory review to date, it is the subject of a current study sponsored by the California State Library, which will yield more detailed information.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> "Richmond Alien, Fearing Move, Takes Own Life," *Richmond Independent*, 17 February 1942.

<sup>42</sup> The project, titled "Not at Home on the Home Front: Japanese Americans and Italian Americans in Richmond During WWII," will be completed in Summer 2004. Project Director Donna Graves is working with historians Lynne Horiuchi and Lawrence DiStasi to produce historical reports about each community's experience and to record a number of oral histories.



Courtesy Richmond Housing Authority

### **Harbor Gate Homes**

Area immediately Northeast of Yard No. 2

Roughly bounded by current streets Hoffman and Regatta, with most of the housing units east of Marina Bay Pkwy. Historian Shirley Ann Wilson Moore places the founding of the Richmond branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at this defense housing project in 1944. Organizational records found at the Bancroft Library show that in its first few years, meetings of NAACP members were held at the Harbor Gate Auditorium.<sup>43</sup> The Richmond NAACP was a leader in the fight against the segregated shipyard union and discrimination in housing. NAACP President Cleophas Brown and Secretary Margaret Starks (who booked musicians for the blues club Tappers' Inn) helped to organize the local branch, rallying newcomers from the defense housing projects and old-timers alike to address the gap between wartime rhetoric of social equality and the discrimination African Americans faced on the job and outside of work.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Branch files in records of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>44</sup> Moore, *To Place Our Deeds*, p. 132, 86.



(Left) Honda flower fields adjacent to Cutting War Apartments, ca. 1947. Courtesy Honda Family.  
 (Right) Oishi home at 220 S. 47<sup>th</sup> Street, which was Richmond's original Japanese Language School, with one of many greenhouses in rear

### **Japanese American Nurseries**

Approximately one dozen nurseries owned by Japanese American families flourished in Richmond from the 1910s until the forced relocation and incarceration of their community in 1942. The area bounded roughly by Cutting Boulevard, 45th Street, San Pablo, and the Santa Fe Railroad held the most intense concentration of Japanese American families and their nurseries, which specialized in growing carnations, roses and other cut flowers, primarily for the wholesale market through the San Francisco Flower Market.<sup>45</sup> The neighborhood in east Richmond also housed the Japanese Language School, a cultural hub for nearly all members of West Coast *Nihonmachis* (Japantowns). A smaller group of Japanese American-owned nurseries was located in North Richmond as well.<sup>46</sup>

After compulsory registration in April of 1942, Richmond's Japanese American families were sent to Tanforan Assembly Center south of San Francisco. Most were then sent on to Topaz Relocation Center in Utah. All faced the extreme hardship of being uprooted, and of

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Tom Oishi, 2002.

<sup>46</sup> Eleanor Ramsey, "Richmond, California, 1850-1941." *Investigation of Cultural Resources Within the Richmond Harbor Redevelopment Project 11-A, Richmond, Contra Costa County, California*. Prepared by California Archaeological Consultants, Inc. for the City of Richmond (1981), 5.28-5.32.

finding strategies for maintaining, or disposing of, their homes, property and businesses. Many nursery families were forced to sign quickly drafted (and financially troubling) leases for the businesses they had nurtured for decades. Others lost them entirely when unable to make mortgage payments from the relocation camps. A few, such as the Ninomiyas in North Richmond, found friends or neighbors who cared for their nurseries in their behalf while they were imprisoned.

A handful of the original owners were able to return and revive their nursery businesses. Among them were the Oishi brothers, whose nursery had been leased by an Oakland flower grower, Frank Piazza. Piazza increased his revenues by turning the Oishi home into a rooming house for shipyard workers. The Oishi and Sakai nurseries are still extant and operated by members of the original families. The Oishi family home at 220 S. 47<sup>th</sup> Street sits amid an L-shaped configuration of greenhouses, and is particularly significant in that its upper floor is the community's original Japanese Language School. The Oishis purchased the building and moved it to the site from a few blocks away when the local families raised sufficient funds to build a new school at 47<sup>th</sup> and Wall in the early 1930s.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Interview with Tom Oishi, 2002.*





### **Mexican Baptist Church**

100 West Barrett

Located in the heart of Richmond's Mexican American community, the Mexican Baptist Church, along with St. Marks Catholic Church on Tenth Street, were important centers for the community before and during the war. Richmond's pre-war Mexican American community was comprised of a collection of small homes near the Santa Fe Railroad yards, one of the community's largest employers before the war. Bounded roughly by Pennsylvania and Macdonald on the north and south, and Garrard and 5<sup>th</sup> Street from east to west, the neighborhood was the primary area in Richmond where Mexican Americans could purchase a home before the war. For the most part, pre-war Richmond's Mexican American community was spatially, socially, and linguistically isolated from much of the rest of the city in this relatively poor, but vibrant, ethnic enclave.<sup>48</sup>

Mexican American migrants to Richmond during the war boom came from throughout the Southwestern United States. As with African American migrants, most came to pursue shipyard jobs they had heard about from defense industry recruiters or more frequently, from networks of family, friends and church. Because the U.S. census at that time counted people of Mexican descent as "White," accurate figures on wartime migrants are impossible. However, secondary sources on the Bay Area and WWII as well as oral histories conducted in Richmond

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<sup>48</sup> David Washburn, "The End of Town: Richmond's Mexican Colonia and the World War II Migration," (Berkeley, CA: 2003), p. 7.

indicate that the Mexican American population grew substantially.<sup>49</sup> The shipyards represented a step-up economically for Mexican Americans, especially women who had generally been confined to low-paid service jobs before the war.

Increasing numbers of migrants intensified crowding in Richmond's Mexican neighborhood, which subsequently expanded its eastern boundary beyond 5<sup>th</sup> Street to 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The neighborhood was changed as well by the construction of Atchison Village Defense Housing Project, immediately to the south, where many Mexican American families had grazed livestock. And wartime housing pressures meant that Mexican Americans began to settle across the City, particularly through gaining residence in defense housing projects constructed throughout Richmond's Southside (as a completely segregated project, Atchison Village was not available to Mexican Americans).<sup>50</sup>

In addition to more formal channels, migrants found help in locating housing and other resources through social networks centered around Richmond's churches with substantial Mexican American populations: the First Mexican Baptist Church and St. Marks Catholic Church in downtown Richmond. Traditional adherence to the church's central role in individual and family life, as well as language barriers, made these churches extremely important resources for Mexican American people who came to Richmond during the war. The churches fostered connections between migrants and long-time residents, and supported transition into a city that was unfamiliar and often chaotic.<sup>51</sup>

Mexican American shipyard workers recall working in integrated crews, and that dating among Mexican Americans and white Richmond residents did occur, reflecting changes in social patterns brought on by the war. Although the war years saw some erosion of longtime social

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<sup>49</sup> Marilyn S. Johnson, *The Second Gold Rush: Oakland and the East Bay in World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 56. Washburn, p. 16.

<sup>50</sup> Washburn, pp 23-25.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

barriers between Mexican Americans and whites in Richmond, culturally specific traditions and events were maintained. Mexican Americans from throughout the Bay Area remember the *tardeadas* held at Sweet's Ballroom in Oakland, one of the region's most famous halls for music and dance during WWII.

Mexican Baptist Church leadership were involved in the Richmond Defense Council, the citywide organization of civil defense activities. Revered John Garcia is listed among the city officials, department heads, and community leaders who served on the Defense Council's Home Front Unity Committee appointed by the Mayor.<sup>52</sup>

## **GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES/PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE**



**Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company**  
343 10<sup>th</sup> Street

**Pacific Gas and Electric**  
345 Tenth Street (see photo accompanying Chamber of Commerce description under Civic Mobilization)

**East Bay Municipal Utility District**  
717 Macdonald

Expanding services to accommodate the explosion of new households and businesses was a Herculean task for the utility companies. As early as 1940, all of them began to enlarge facilities and provide new

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<sup>52</sup> "Richmond Defense Council: Report for January-February-March 1944," Richmond Collection/Richmond Public Library.

connections to areas with increased usage, such as the area around the shipyard, North Richmond, East Richmond and the Mira Vista neighborhood in the Richmond hills. By the end of the war the number of water meters had climbed by 125%, electric meters by 86%, and gas meters by 95% from their 1939 numbers.<sup>53</sup> Information about additional telephone service and other aspects of the Telephone and Telegraph Company's operations was restricted during the war, but published expenditures for 1941 of approximately \$350,000 to expand its facilities and increase its service areas indicate that similar growth occurred.<sup>54</sup>



### **Richmond Health Center**

240 8<sup>th</sup> Street

The Richmond Health Center began in 1922 as a clinic offering health education and free medical care to “those unable to pay.” Jointly supported by the City of Richmond and Contra Costa County, which built a new facility on 8<sup>th</sup> Street in 1940, the Health Center served as the public health laboratory that tracked and treated communicable diseases (including venereal diseases – a prominent wartime concern). It also provided free medical, dental and surgical care for people who could not afford these services. A free immunization program offered protection from diphtheria, smallpox and other diseases of the time.<sup>55</sup> This facility,

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<sup>53</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California 1946* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 52.

<sup>54</sup> “A Report of Progress: Two Shipyards Add 15,000 Workers,” *Richmond News*, December 1942.

<sup>55</sup> *Richmond, California: Municipal Employees' Public Service Magazine* (January 1947).

through its visiting nurse program and health clinics, cared for many residents who were not eligible for coverage under the Permanente plan, which was limited to shipyard employees.<sup>56</sup>

Although the healthcare program instituted by Kaiser for shipyard workers has rightly received focused attention as a major interpretive element of the National Park, it is worth noting that healthcare for Richmond residents and workers was addressed by a number of organizations and agencies. Standard Oil offered a health care program for its employees, presumably sharing the Kaiser administration's perspective that a healthy worker was a more effective worker. The *Standard Oil Bulletin* of February 1942 states that the Richmond refinery was among the first of their facilities to offer medical care, albeit on a limited basis, prior to 1920. During WWII, the Richmond plant had full-time doctors and nurses to provide regular physical examinations, supervise treatment of work-related injuries and diseases, and provide physical therapy to prevent disabilities. It also had a fully staffed emergency hospital to care for injured workers, who were transferred to the City Hospital at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Gaynor if they needed treatment beyond the scope of the refinery unit.<sup>57</sup>

The Richmond Housing Authority (RHA), in partnership with California Physicians' Service, initiated a program reminiscent of the Kaiser Permanente Health Plan in spring of 1943. The March 26<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Richmond War Homes Weekly* reported that all residents of defense housing were eligible to enroll in the plan, which appears to have included routine and emergency medical care. RHA had tested the program at Harbor Gate Homes and reported that ninety percent of the

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<sup>56</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California 1940* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 49. *Handbook of Richmond California 1943* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 46. "Study of Youth Services in Contra Costa County" (Sacramento: California Youth Authority, 1945), p. 12. "Report of the Survey of the Organization and Administration of Richmond, California" (Richmond: Public Administration Service, 1944), pp 51-63.

<sup>57</sup> *Standard Oil Bulletin* (February 1942), pp. 13-15.

residents signed up for the service, which cost \$2.50 per month for a single person and \$5.00 for a family group of three or more. Given that the Richmond Field Hospital had opened six months prior to this announcement, it seems clear that significant gaps in the health of the community, including that of defense workers, remained of great concern to local authorities. One of the primary omissions was coverage for healthcare of workers' dependents; the Permanente Health Plan did not include shipyard workers' family members under its coverage until 1945.<sup>58</sup> RHA announced its intention to convert apartments into clinics "with the idea of providing our residents with the highest type of collective medical services ever presented in any state of the Union..."<sup>59</sup> Further research is needed to determine if this program was put into effect.



**Richmond Memorial Civic Center and Memorial Youth Center**  
Barrett to Macdonald between 25<sup>th</sup> and 27th Streets  
3230 Macdonald Avenue

Described as a "monument to post-war confidence in the most perfectly characteristic style of the time," the Richmond Civic Center, an award-winning collection of handsome modernist buildings designed by Milton

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<sup>58</sup> Alicia Barber, "Richmond Field Hospital" (Washington, DC: Historic American Building Survey, 2001), p. 25

<sup>59</sup> "Medical Care Important to All," *Richmond War Homes Weekly*, 26 March 1943, p. 4.

Pflueger, was dedicated in 1951.<sup>60</sup> Although erected after the war, planning for this impressive complex began during the war years; a bond for nearly \$4million dollars to erect the Civic Center was passed in 1945.<sup>61</sup> The Memorial Youth Center was built in 1950. Financed by an unusually successful campaign for public donations, and built on land leased from the City, the \$400,000 structure was designed by Donald L. Hardison Architects.<sup>62</sup> The YMCA and YWCA administered the Youth Center until the 1980s, when the Y moved to the Hilltop area and the City moved its Parks and Recreation offices into the structure.

Received with widespread acclaim for its innovative design and comprehensive assemblage of city services, the Civic Center is notable in the context of this report for three reasons. Its title (and that of the Youth Center) as *Memorial* Civic Center reflects the City of Richmond's desire to recognize and honor the sacrifices of those who served in the war within the urban fabric of their community. Traditional methods of honoring the dead through statuary and lists of names had fallen out of favor by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1938, urban critic Lewis Mumford suggested that: "the notion of a modern monument is virtually a contradiction in terms; if it is a monument it is not modern, and if it is modern it is not a monument." By WWII many people argued that public effort and funding was better spent on what they called "living memorials" -- so bridges, schools, libraries, hospitals, even swimming pools were named after individuals and events that were deemed worthy. This trend tied into the post-WWII drive to develop the nation's infrastructure, so that highways, hospitals and stadiums were assigned to do double duty, serving their primary function while carrying the burden of remembrance.

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<sup>60</sup> Gebhard, Winter, Sandweiss et. al, *Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1985), p. 240.

<sup>61</sup> *Handbook of Richmond, California 1946* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce, 1946), p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> "Youth Center, Now Operating, One of the Finest of Its Kind in California," *Richmond Business*, September 1950.

The second reason that the Memorial Civic Center and Youth Center are significant to our understanding of the war and its impact on the city is their refutation of the simplistic narrative that Richmond's war boom went completely bust in 1945 with the closing of the Shipyards. Statistics in numerous post-war records indicate that, despite the obvious lingering strains on the city, many indications of civic growth continued after the war including housing starts, arrival of new industries and continuation of old, increased enrollment in schools and upgrading of infrastructure. While the aftermath of the shipyard closing was obviously a significant factor in Richmond's postwar story, many of the tougher aspects of the decades after the war are likely due to the combination of variables that afflicted many urban centers across America including public and private disinvestments in urban cores, and promotion of suburban development of housing and retail.

The third reason is that this is the logical place to interpret the confused and inadequate, but still impressive, effort by local government to address the "avalanche" that hit Richmond, as it was described by its City Manager, James McVittie.<sup>63</sup> Despite the increase in community needs brought on by its newly exploded population, the City's tax revenues fell because the huge new federally funded developments of defense housing and shipyards were not subject to local property tax. Local agencies found themselves scrambling for resources and strategies to address a myriad of community issues, from the provision of police and fire services, to construction of new streets, to protecting its residents from the specter of enemy attack, to developing suitable recreational programs for children, youth and adults. All of these and more needed to be organized and offered to a community made up primarily of newcomers, and coordinated with other entities including non-profit organizations, businesses, and state and local agencies.

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<sup>63</sup> McVittie, "An Avalanche Hits Richmond," (Richmond, 1944).





Courtesy of Richmond Museum of History

## **Richmond Police Department** 49 Park Place

Along with other public services, police facilities were expanded during the war years to meet the challenge of Richmond's enlarged population. Personnel grew from 35 in 1940 to 107 in 1945, while annual arrests rose from just over three thousand in 1939 to a wartime high that varies from over 13,646 as reported by the Chamber of Commerce to nearly 17,000 as counted in the *Congested Areas Hearings* of 1943.<sup>64</sup> As one means of enabling the force to deal with new challenges, the department inaugurated a radio dispatch service to connect patrol cars with headquarters in 1941. Initially, the dispatch system carried 1,500 calls per month for both the Police and Fire Departments. By December 1946, calls to the departments totaled 15,000 monthly.<sup>65</sup>

A 1944 report stressed the need for reorganization of the police department to better handle record-keeping, as well as increased traffic issues, crime prevention (especially among juveniles), and vice control. Although the Richmond Police Department's staffing, at 1.26 officers per

<sup>64</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California 1940* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 6. *Handbook of Richmond California 1941* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 6. *Handbook of Richmond California 1946* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 5. Congested Area hearings figure cited in Shirley Moore, *To Place Our Deeds*, p. 76.

<sup>65</sup> *Richmond, California: Municipal Employees Public Service Magazine* (January 1947).

thousand residents, compared far more favorably to nationally recommended standards than many other civic functions, the “gross inadequacy in almost every respect of the present police station” was widely recognized, along with its location in Pt. Richmond, which was inconvenient to most residents and officers. The jail, designed to hold 29 inmates, was reported to be frequently crammed with 50 to 60 people, especially on weekends and holidays.<sup>66</sup>



**US Post Office, Richmond Main Branch**  
1025 Nevin Ave

The Richmond Post Office is a handsome Art Deco building completed in August 1939, just in time to accommodate the explosion of services it would be required to perform as the City's population quadrupled. When it opened, 16 clerks and 17 mail carriers staffed the office. By 1943 those numbers had risen to 142 permanent and short-term clerks, and 98 carriers, including four rural carriers, six special delivery carriers and two mail messengers. Annual receipts went from \$150,000 in 1940 to \$560,000 in 1943. According to the Chamber of Commerce's *Richmond News* the city gained “substantial advantages when the business goes above \$550,000 for the year.... Chiefly in the form of

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<sup>66</sup> “Report of the Survey of the Organization and Administration of Richmond, California” (Richmond: Public Administration Service, 1944), pp. 69-72. The report cites a national average was 1.4 officers per thousand residents; staff for health and library programs was far below nationally recommended ratios according to the same report.

added personnel such as carriers, clerks and other workers, now badly needed to handle the tremendous rush of business at this key war center.”<sup>67</sup> The Post Office conducted a special census to establish Richmond’s newly expanded population in 1942, and also served as an Air Raid Shelter.

## HOUSING



### **Richmond Housing Authority**

Atchison Village Community Center/ 271 10<sup>th</sup> Street

Before building a central administration facility, the Richmond Housing Authority’s administrative staff worked out of the community center at Atchison Village.<sup>68</sup> The purpose-built RHA administrative building at 271 10<sup>th</sup> Street depicted above is no longer extant.<sup>69</sup> The Richmond Housing Authority has the distinction of being the first agency appointed to manage a federal defense housing project and the administrator of the largest defense housing program under one agency by the end of the war. The Authority had built and administered a staggering 23,000+ units of housing within four years.

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<sup>67</sup> “Post Office Gains,” *Richmond News*, December 1943.

<sup>68</sup> *Richmond News*, August 1942.

<sup>69</sup> Various addresses for the Housing Authority are listed in wartime publications. The address on 10<sup>th</sup> Street appears on RHA letterhead dating from 1942, yet subsequent correspondence has different addresses. Further research into Housing Authority archives should resolve this confusion.

Formed in 1941, the Richmond Housing Authority's early years have been described as "business-dominated" and controlled by the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>70</sup> Their committed opposition to allowing construction of permanent housing projects to address the severe housing shortage was mirrored in most other wartime boomtowns, whose longtime residents assumed that defense migrants would return to their home states when peace prevailed.

Only three of the fifteen housing projects funded by the US Maritime Commission and Federal Works Agency were designated as permanent low-income housing: Atchison Village, Nystrom Village and Triangle Court. These were also the projects further away from the Shipyards and open only to white residents. The higher density projects closer in to the Yards along the city's south side offered housing to African Americans segregated by area or building. Actual patterns of tenancy by race is a topic for further research, but the fact that "colored" church services were offered at Canal, Cutting and Harbor Gate projects may indicate that these were the primary housing projects in which African American residents were concentrated.



### **Atchison Village**

Sited at the foot of Macdonald Avenue, Atchison Village Defense Housing Project consists of 450 units in 162 separate buildings. The first defense

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<sup>70</sup> Marilyn S. Johnson, *The Second Gold Rush*, pp. 97-98.

housing project managed by a local agency, Atchison was the Richmond Housing Authority's (RHA) first construction project. Financed with Lanham Act funds through the Federal Works Agency, the project was designed by architects Carl Warnecke and Andrew Haas.<sup>71</sup> Warnecke designed the large Canal Apartment project with Albert F. Roller (depicted below). Located to the south of Atchison Village along Cutting Boulevard, the Canal project included over 1,300 units.



Courtesy Richmond Housing Authority

### **Canal War Apartments**

Between Garrard and First Streets, north of Cutting.



### **Cutting Boulevard Housing Office**

18<sup>th</sup> and Cutting

The current building depicted above right at 18<sup>th</sup> and Cutting appears similar to the structure described in war-era publications as the Cutting Boulevard Dormitory Office (left). The first Richmond dormitory project for single men, Cutting Boulevard dormitories consisted of 26 buildings on Cutting between Eighth and Fourteenth Street. No building permit

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<sup>71</sup> "First Annual Report of the Housing Authority of the City of Richmond," (Richmond: Richmond Housing Authority, 1942).



history for the extant building could be found, although some Richmond residents have identified the structure as a war housing office.



Courtesy Richmond Housing Authority

### **Recreation Center 27<sup>th</sup> and Virginia**

Now the location of the Richmond Housing Authority's maintenance department and its Hope VI office, this structure was one of eight recreation centers built and staffed by the RHA to provide a range of services and activities for residents of defense housing projects. The other wartime recreation centers were located within housing projects at 6<sup>th</sup> and Maine, Terrace War Apartments, Canal War Apartments, Atchison Village, Seaport War Apartments, Pullman War Apartments, and Cutting War Apartments. Historic photos such as the image on the right of the recreation center at 6<sup>th</sup> and Maine, indicate that similar structures were built for the various recreation centers. The single extant building at 27<sup>th</sup> and Virginia was converted to administrative and support functions for the Richmond Housing Authority in the early 1960s. A renovation at that time by Donald Hardison's architecture firm included the addition of large garage doors to the gymnasium, which became a garage/storage facility for the agency.<sup>72</sup>

The City of Richmond Recreation Department administered programs in the housing project centers (as did the Housing Authority),

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<sup>72</sup> Donald Hardison, conversation with the author, December 2003.

as well as in parks, playgrounds and schools. The Department was staffed by about 80 employees and operated with a budget of \$229,000 for the fiscal year 1944-1945. By early 1944, estimates of average daily attendance were over 4,000 per month at recreation centers,<sup>73</sup> which offered sports, performing and visual arts activities, and even “Charm School” for women and girls.<sup>74</sup>



**El Nido Apartments**  
5600 Panama Avenue

“War Housing in the United States,” described the El Nido as a nightclub “converted into 16 apartments – some with beamed ceilings and fire places!” Published by the National Housing Agency for distribution at the United Nations conference in San Francisco in April 1945, the brochure offered a an upbeat overview of the war housing effort.<sup>75</sup> The building above is the only multi-unit structure in a neighborhood of single-family homes in Richmond Annex. Its entrance is now on San Mateo Street, but it is at the location for 5600 Panama.

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<sup>73</sup> “Report of the Survey of the Organization and Administration of Richmond, California” (Richmond: Public Administration Service, 1944), pp. 83-85.

<sup>74</sup> Leona Bertrand, “Report on Drama Section, Richmond Recreation Department, December 1, 1943-March 1, 1944” in Richmond Collection, Richmond Public Library.

<sup>75</sup> National Housing Agency, “War Housing in the United States,” (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945), p. 17.



### **MacGregor Houses**

411-423 S. 23rd St (above left), 2218-2230 Florida, 2218-2230 Ohio

(right), 2218-2230 Virginia

Local contractor and developer C.M. MacGregor developed hundreds of homes throughout the East Bay in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many of them feature a distinctive profile with pitched roofs and bedrooms at 1-1/2 stories over a garage. McGregor constructed and sold a number of such projects during the war years along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street north of Cutting and along adjacent streets. Because these homes lie on a potential visitor's path of travel between the waterfront and downtown, they might provide an interpretive opportunity.<sup>76</sup>



### **Nicholl Court Apartments**

2808-2838 Nicholl Court

This collection of 4-unit apartment buildings was constructed in 1943.

The building permits list Morris Gallas as owner of the properties, and P.

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<sup>76</sup> Not all of the "MacGregor-type" houses (as they are known among East Bay realtors) on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street date from the war years. The addresses listed above were confirmed with building permits, but a few permits for similar buildings nearby date to the pre-war period.



Hammerberg as the architect of these simple, modernist buildings. This well-maintained complex sits at the corner of Macdonald and 28<sup>th</sup> Street, between Civic Center and the Memorial Youth Center. Its central location makes Nicholl Court one of several potential sites for interpreting how private developers were actively trying to capture the mushrooming market for housing before restrictions on building materials severely curtailed their activities in 1943.

Courtesy Richmond Housing Authority

Bordered by Maine, Virginia and Florida, from 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Streets

<sup>77</sup> Architectural Resources Group, “Nystrom Neighborhood Report: Final Draft,” (San Francisco, CA, 2003) p. 17



### **Rheem Avenue Houses**

The Chamber of Commerce's *Richmond News* of December 1941 described Rheem Avenue between 13<sup>th</sup> and San Pablo as having "perhaps the heaviest concentration" of housing generated by private developers. A caption describing a home similar to 1405 Rheem depicted above stated: " This is a good example of the small home, sold at a low figure, and much in demand by mechanics and other defense workers who have invaded Richmond by the thousand this year."



Copyright Dorothea Lange Collection, Oakland Museum of California

### **Richmond Trailer Camp**

From 17<sup>th</sup> to 23rd Streets, between Meeker and Wright

A trailer camp identified as federal project CAL-4411 T was located directly north across the rail lines from the shipways at Yard 2. Residents of the Trailer Camp, like the family depicted above by Dorothea Lange, had the shortest walk to the shipyards of any workers

living in defense housing projects. Bay Area cities, like those across the country, were concerned about the impact of wartime migrants on their communities, and trailer camps exemplified, for many, the worst blight that this mushrooming population would generate. Towns adjacent to Richmond fought hard to stop the location of defense housing within their city limits. The City of Berkeley successfully kept all defense housing out. This meant that even more pressure to provide for the housing needs of the huge shipyard work force was concentrated in Richmond. Although the Richmond Chamber of Commerce announced in December 1942 that “the community has been opposed to such camps” and opined that there would not be a substantial need for trailer camps in Richmond, by the following year its *Richmond News* listed the Richmond Trailer Park as the location of 334 dwelling units.<sup>78</sup>



Courtesy Richmond Museum of History

### **Rollingwood Housing Development**

Unincorporated area between Richmond’s Hilltop neighborhood and San Pablo

The Federal Housing Administration’s first attempt to relieve wartime housing shortages was through partnerships with local housing developers. Rollingwood, a neighborhood of modest homes built just outside of Richmond city limits, was one of such developments funded

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<sup>78</sup> *Richmond News*, December 1942 and December 1943.

by the FHA's Title 6 program, which provided federal guarantees for loans to private industry to develop housing. Rollingwood's 700 units featured three bedrooms and second entrances to accommodate boarders and family members. With a realty office located across from the shipyard hiring hall, and bus service to the yards, the development was designed for migrant shipyard workers, who could lease or buy their homes.<sup>79</sup>

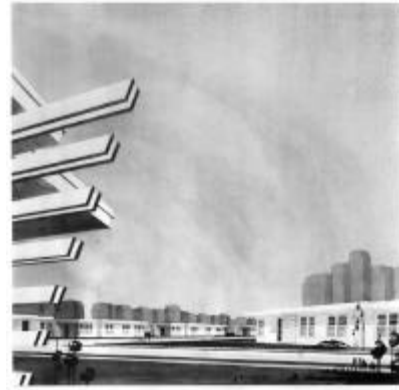
Rollingwood followed the pattern established by FHA-funded projects in the late 1930s in its use of restrictive covenants excluding anyone "not wholly of the Caucasian race."<sup>80</sup> In 1952, an African American former shipyard worker, Wilbur Gary, used a white intermediary to negotiate on his behalf for the purchase of a home in Rollingwood. Within a few hours of moving into the house, hundreds of his new white neighbors and their cohorts shouted epithets and threw bricks at Gary, his wife and seven children. The rioting, which continued for two days, included a cross burning on the Gary's lawn. The NAACP and a few sympathetic white liberals organized 24-hour vigils to guard the family, and ultimately called upon the Governor and State Attorney General to order the reluctant Richmond Police Department to protect them.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Marilyn S. Johnson, *The Second Gold Rush*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p. 92

<sup>81</sup> Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, *To Place Our Deeds*, pp. 116-118.



Courtesy Richmond Housing Authority

### **Triangle Court**

Northern tip of Iron Triangle

Named for its location at the apex of Richmond's Iron Triangle of railroad tracks, Triangle Court was intended to be permanent low-rent housing. Designed by local architects Narbett, Bangs, and Hurd, Triangle Court had a distinctively modernist style, unlike the other two permanent projects Atchison and Nystrom Villages. The project was demolished in the 1980s to make way for a new low-income housing development that continues to be administered by Richmond Housing Authority.



Courtesy Bancroft Library

### **US Maritime Commission War Apartments**

Constructed as six separate projects flanking Cutting Boulevard from San Pablo Avenue west to First Street, these apartment blocks cut a swath

through the length of Richmond and comprised the largest number of defense housing units in the city. Over 10,000 apartments were built in similar style -- typically in six-unit structures of two stories.

## INDUSTRY

Many descriptions of Richmond's home front contribution cite the figure of fifty-five local defense industries, in addition to the Kaiser Shipyards. This figure may well be true, but documentation of just over twenty Richmond industries involved with defense work was located in the course of research for this report. While several new industries, such as the Kaiser Shipyards, helped win Richmond its status as a "Purple Heart City," it was most likely through wartime conversion and securing of government contracts for previously produced goods that the figure of 56 was reached. As the Chamber of Commerce stated in 1944: "A large percentage of local plants were able to go into manufacture of war goods without conversion by simply producing their regular line of goods and turning them into war and lend-lease channels."<sup>82</sup>



**American Radiator and Standard**  
1089 Essex/1130 Seventh

A long-time Richmond industry, American Standard converted from "bathtubs to bombs," as one publication phrased it, the month after Pearl

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<sup>82</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California, 1944* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 18.

Harbor was attacked.<sup>83</sup> In addition to bombs, the plant produced thirty percent of the national output of hand grenades by 1945, according to the *Richmond Independent*. That record was a factor in American Standard's award of three Army-Navy E "for excellence in production of war materials."<sup>84</sup> While women made up forty percent of American Standard's wartime labor force of over 1,000, 1945 projections about peacetime reconversion were typical in their estimation that "few women will be hired."<sup>85</sup>

### **Chemurgic Corporation** Giant Road

Chemurgic's pre-war business was in development of a variety of chemicals and insecticides. By 1943, the company was adding three buildings to their plant and had tripled the number of employees from the previous year to 320 workers. The factory's products were described as "railroad torpedoes and fuses, aircraft parachute flares, red parachute flares, orange smoke signal, hand grenade fuses."<sup>86</sup> The Chamber *Handbook* of 1945 reported that Chemurgic had dropped back down to 250 employees in 1944, which may indicate how volatile defense contracts were to business' cash flow and ability to retain employees.

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<sup>83</sup> "Bathtub Plant Now Manufactures Incendiary Bombs," *P.G. and E. Progress*, (June 1944).

<sup>84</sup> "Outstanding," *Richmond Independent*, 28 July 1945.

<sup>85</sup> "Richmond's Big Industries Speeding Up Reconversion," *Richmond Independent*, 30 August 1945.

<sup>86</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California, 1944*, p. 19.





**Filice and Perrelli Cannery**  
1200 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street

Enticed to Richmond's waterfront by developer Fred Parr, Filice and Perrelli cannery opened in 1930. Like the nearby Ford Assembly Building, which opened the following year, F&P found in Richmond's newly developed Inner Harbor facilities for shipment by rail and water attractive enough to support a new plant.<sup>87</sup> Although they were not forced the close by the Depression's economic decline, as did many other California canneries, F&P "barely made it through the eight to ten years from 1930 to 1940, " according to founder Joseph Perrelli.<sup>88</sup>

The increase in production at Filice and Perrelli Cannery during 1941 brought about a change in fortune as 25% more workers were hired (reaching 1,200 during peak seasons). Much of its canned fruit production that year went to the lend-lease program under government contracts.<sup>89</sup> After US entry into the war, F&P let go of most of its civilian market in order to secure well-paid government contracts to supply tomatoes and fruits to the armed forces. Joseph Perrelli, recalled the enduring hardships that his business, and its employees, had faced during the Depression. His 1986 oral history establishes the degree to which the war years represented a dramatic reversal of their previous meager fortunes.

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<sup>87</sup> Marjorie Dobkin and Ward Hill, "Filice and Perrelli Canning Co, Inc. Richmond, California: Historic Resource Evaluation Report (San Francisco, CA, 1998), pp. 7-9.

<sup>88</sup> Joseph Perrelli, "The Establishment of the Filice and Perrelli Canning Company," (Berkeley: Bancroft Library, University of California) p. 54.

<sup>89</sup> *Richmond News* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) December 1941.



F&P had traditionally hired only white workers, and primarily Italian Americans, before the war. Men and women were placed in separate job categories, with women only eligible for seasonal employment lists (no matter their seniority with the company) and men automatically eligible for permanent, higher-paid jobs in the warehouse and shipping departments. Wartime labor shortages reportedly forced management to place women in some positions from which they had been previously excluded, but only for the duration.<sup>90</sup>

In addition to increasing the number of employees and production volume, F&P was able to expand their physical plant during the war as well. Storing a season's worth of canned goods for months until a customer needed its shipment was a traditional business method for California canneries, and made warehouse space of prime importance.<sup>91</sup> Parr-Richmond Terminal Corporation built a new warehouse in 1944 for use by the cannery across 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The structure, at 400 x 75 feet, was envisioned as having a "permanent peace-time use."<sup>92</sup>

The nearby Kaiser Shipyards requested use of vacant land owned by the cannery to store steel plates to be used in ship construction. Perrelli recounted that he offered the land to Kaiser at no charge "because we were at war," but the Federal government would not agree to such an irregular arrangement. Kaiser leased the land for a nominal sum and brought in rock and landfill to create a more stable surface for the immense weight of the plates. After the war, F&P benefited from the improved land as a site for additional warehouse expansion.<sup>93</sup>

The story of forced relocation of Italian "enemy aliens" in Richmond can be linked to the cannery. Joseph Perrelli recalled a female relative who had been required to move to a Berkeley neighborhood outside the prohibited zone that encompassed all of Richmond.

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<sup>90</sup> Eleanor Ramsey, "Richmond California, 1850-1941." *Investigation of Cultural Resources*, pp. 5.38-39.

<sup>91</sup> Joseph Perrelli, p. 56, 69.

<sup>92</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California, 1945* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 8-9.

<sup>93</sup> Joseph Perrelli, pp. 65-69.

Although she had three sons in the American armed forces, and was “not a recent immigrant,” her lack of US citizenship meant that she was required to leave her home, which fell within the designated “prohibited zone” around Richmond’s defense industries.<sup>94</sup>



Courtesy Richmond Museum of History

### **Ford Assembly Plant**

Foot of 10<sup>th</sup> Street (Harbour Way)

The Ford Motor Company assembly plant, like the Filice & Perrelli Cannery to the north, were among those brought to Richmond by developer Fred Parr, who sold Richmond’s cheap land and deep water port to industries looking to expand into the San Francisco Bay Area. The handsome, mammoth structure, designed by famed industrial architect Albert Kahn, was completed in 1931 and dedicated with much fanfare. Workers at the Ford plant assembled and sold several different types of Ford cars until the facility converted to tank and jeep outfitting with the suspension of civilian auto production and the commencement of government contracts in February 1942.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Joseph Perrelli, p. 71.

<sup>95</sup> For a detailed understanding of the Ford plant, see Fredric L. Quivik, “The Ford Motor Company’s Richmond Assembly Plant A.K.A. the Richmond Tank Depot,” (Washington, DC: Historic American Engineering Record, 2003).



## Kaiser Shipyards

At least three, and possibly four, buildings from the shipyards appear to remain. These include two buildings currently in use by SimsMetal on South 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The former Mold Loft at Yard One is located at 700 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street. This building appears in plan labeled “Mold Loft” on a map prepared for the Richmond City Planning Commission in the 1950s.<sup>96</sup> Donald Hardison, former shipyard architect and member of the Richmond City Planning Commission confirmed the building’s origins as the Yard One Mold Loft.<sup>97</sup> A Kaiser publication described the Mold Loft’s purpose as “a drafting room working from blueprints or plans made to scale – but with a major exception that the finished pattern is actual size.... After having developed or enlarged the blueprints to actual size on the mold loft floor, a template or pattern is made for each particle or piece of steel in the ship”<sup>98</sup> The wood templates were marked with identification numbers, and information such as the weight and size of the metal piece necessary for shipbuilding.



**Yard One Mold Loft**  
700 S. 4<sup>th</sup> St.

<sup>96</sup> Untitled post-war map of Marina Bay area in collection of Donald Hardison.

<sup>97</sup> Personal communication with author, 1/5/04.

<sup>98</sup> *Richmond Shipyard Number Two: Full “V” Ahead* (Richmond: Kaiser Shipyards, n.d.) p. 77.



Courtesy Richmond Museum of History

600 S. 4<sup>th</sup> St.

The Planning Commission map shows the much larger structure of the Yard One Plate Shop positioned at the southeast corner of the Mold Loft – with seven shipways directly south at the junction of the Sante Fe Channel and Richmond’s Inner Harbor. Across 4<sup>th</sup> Street from the Mold Loft stood two structures marked General Store and Machine Shop. All of these structures, as well as the Main Office and Overflow Warehouse that fronted Cutting Boulevard to the north have been demolished or moved from their original sites.

The Planning Commission map does depict a small structure between the Mold Loft and the Administration building, which may be the current SimsMetal’s office at 600 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Identifying text on the map is illegible and Mr. Hardison was unsure as to whether this building is in its original location, or one of many shipyard structures he stated were moved after the Shipyards closed to serve post-war industries. The current structure at 600 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street looks identical to that in a photograph from the Collection of the Richmond Museum of History (above right). This photo is undated, but it is possible to read “United Heckathorn” on its sign.

Another photograph of a similar building (below) depicts the Parr-Richmond Industrial Corporation offices, which opened at 550 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street in 1948 in the former Maritime Commission office building at Yard No. 1. According to the Chamber of Commerce’s *Richmond Business*, the company headed by long-time Richmond entrepreneur, Fred Parr, worked

to attract new industries to the former shipyard, which it had taken over from the War Assets Administration.<sup>99</sup>



Courtesy of Richmond Museum of History



### 530 W. Cutting

A building permit from October 5, 1948 in the City Building Department files has a handwritten notation at the top “moved from Shipyard #2.” The permit was to remodel the building as offices for a Duncan-Harrelson, Co. The building’s exterior appears to have been altered somewhat from the war years; shingles have replaced what was probably wood siding, yet the building’s hipped roof and double-hung windows are typical of smaller structures at the shipyards. Further research as to the wartime function of this building is needed, although its scale and architectural features indicate it may have been used for offices.

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<sup>99</sup> “Parr Company Opens Offices in Richmond,” *Richmond Business* (June 1948), p. 1.



### 1961 Meeker Avenue

An additional building that may date from the shipyards is located at 1961 Meeker Avenue, between Marina Bay Parkway and S. 19<sup>th</sup> Street. Constructed with the clapboard siding, ribbon windows and bow truss roof characteristic of many shipyard structures, the building does not appear on the post-war plan that included the buildings described above. The current owner of the building claims that it was constructed in 1961, but the City has no permit history for the structure.<sup>100</sup> It may be an example of a building relocated after the war, and merits further research.



Dorothea Lange Collection, Oakland Museum of California

### **Kaiser Shipyard Hiring Hall** Ninth and Nevin

Kaiser Shipyards installed a centralized hiring hall to screen applicants and make preliminary placements for workers in the former Montgomery Wards Department Store at the Northeast corner of Ninth and Nevin.

<sup>100</sup> Telephone conversation with Rich Bremer of Timber Construction, 1/15/04.



Although demolished, the former site of the Shipyard hiring hall in downtown Richmond is a potential site for interpretation.



**National Oil Products Co.**

1141 S. 14<sup>th</sup> Street

National Oil Products took over a 7-acre site adjoining the Filice & Perrelli cannery between 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets in 1941 or '42. Headquartered in Harrison, New Jersey, the company manufactured a variety of vitamins and chemical products. By 1943, the Richmond Chamber of Commerce described NOPCO-Richmond as “the largest, the latest, and the most modern vitamin production plant in the United States.” The Chamber *Handbook* touted NOPCO’s products as “highly essential to the war program.... The Government, primarily for Lend Lease purposes, is purchasing large quantities of Vitamin A and Vitamin A concentrates.” Made from fish liver oils, NOPCO’s Vitamin A supplements may have been manufactured from by-products of Richmond’s fish processing plants at Pt. San Pablo.

NOPCO-Richmond’s main office was located at 1141 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street in its first few years; in March 1946 a building permit was issued for a new structure described as “manufacturing and office” at 1141 S. 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Although it is unclear whether the new building augmented or replaced the previous facility, this handsome moderne structure is a current architectural “jewel” of the Marina Bay neighborhood. Now home to Shaper Lighting, the former NOPCO building is an emblem of the good

fortunes that the war bestowed on many new and existing businesses in Richmond.

This structure also reflects another interpretive theme that might be explored by the Park, that of “Health for Victory.” The importance of good nutrition was a frequent message in educational campaigns created by national and local agencies. Federal campaigns focused on the importance of worker health as a foundation for defense production, and many state and local organizations organized classes and workshops on good nutrition, food preparation and storage, and creative meal planning with rationed ingredients. New theories about balanced diets (the “Basic Seven Food Groups” was a commonly reproduced icon of the era), and the importance of vitamins and minerals for health were stressed in home front posters and slogans such as the “U.S. Needs Us Strong.”

### **Point Molate Fuel Annex**

Winehaven buildings at Point Molate

A closely guarded secret from its inception in April 1943, the facility received, stored and dispersed petroleum products to thousands of ships serving in the Pacific Theatre. Originally built in 1907 by the California Wineries Association, what had been the world’s largest winery was taken over by the U.S. Navy during WWII. The Point Molate Fuel Annex employed over 300 civilians and several-hundred contract laborers at its 417-acre plant. Closed since the 1919 passage of the Volstead Act, Winehaven’s fanciful crenellated structures stored fuel, rather than wine, in its new incarnation. The Annex also stored overflow supplies from the larger Oakland Naval Supply Depot. In addition to an extensive system of underground oil tanks, the Annex included a fire department, garage,



machine shop, and cafeteria, as well as a school, hotel and 27 homes for officers and civilians who lived on site.<sup>101</sup>

### **Port of Richmond, Parr-Richmond Terminals**

Terminal One, Foot of Dornan Drive

Terminals Two and Three, East Side of Harbor Channel

Terminal Four, Point San Pablo

The Port of Richmond, even more than other major industries such as the railroads or Standard Oil, might be described as the primary source of Richmond's industrial strength, for it was Richmond's location along a segment of the East Bay suitable for ship traffic that attracted the other endeavors. Initial work on creating the Harbor Channel and the provision of terminals was begun by the City of Richmond at the time of its incorporation in 1905 and for the next two decades.

The story of Fed Parr's further development of the Port, at the behest of the Chamber of Commerce and with considerable financial backing from City coffers, has been recounted in several publications.<sup>102</sup> A lease in which "the city assumed all of the risk and paid all the bills, and Parr-Richmond Terminal Corp. reaped all the rewards" was signed in 1926.<sup>103</sup> The terms of this unusual fifty-year lease were still in operation during the WWII period. Parr was instrumental in drawing Henry Kaiser's interest to Richmond as a location for his shipbuilding enterprise, and the Port presumably was a site for receiving goods and raw materials to be used at the Shipyards and by Richmond's other defense industries. (Prior to the war, oil and gas shipments by Standard Oil were the predominant cargo shipped out of the Port).

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<sup>101</sup> "Winehaven: National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form" (Richmond CA: Winehaven Historical Study Committee, 1976). "Reveal Point Molate as Huge Naval Fuel Depot," *Berkeley Gazette*, 15 September 1945.

<sup>102</sup> Joseph C. Whitnah, *A History of Richmond California* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce, 1944), pp. 103-118.

<sup>103</sup> League of Women Voters-Richmond Area, "Port of Richmond, 1901-80," (Richmond: League of Women Voters, 1980), p. 7.

Terminal No.1, the current location of the *SS Red Oak Victory*, was leased to the U.S. Army from 1942-1945.<sup>104</sup> The other three Terminals, two along the east side of the Harbor Channel next to Shipyards One and Two, and Terminal No. 4 at the tip of Pt. San Pablo were extremely busy during the war years as well. According to a Chamber of Commerce publication, “commodities moving through the Port, particularly after entrance of the United States into the war on December 7, 1941, consist largely of material directly connected with the war program and with the lend-lease effort, Richmond, during 1941 returned to its former position, second Port of the Pacific Coast in tonnage, crowding Portland out of second place. At the same time, Richmond became the twelfth Port of the entire United States. Richmond’s tonnage for the period was 10,064,359.”<sup>105</sup>

### **Pullman Factory** Pullman and South Street

Historian Shirley Moore describes the Pullman factory’s wartime activities as manufacturing cars for troop transports and cites testimony at the Congested Area Hearings.<sup>106</sup> Yet Chamber of Commerce publications do not mention Pullman’s efforts as defense related, but as “maintenance repairs to and for railroad equipment owned solely by the company.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid. p. 12.

<sup>105</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California, 1943* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 12.

<sup>106</sup> Moore, *To Place Our Deeds*, p. 72

<sup>107</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California, 1944* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 20.



**Rheem Manufacturing Company**  
Chesley and Southern Pacific RR

Rheem Manufacturing won a Navy “E” for excellence award – the first Bay Area industry to receive the Bureau of Ordnance flag – according to a March 1942 publication by the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>108</sup> With employment at 450 workers, the company’s activities the following year were reported as “practically all government contracts” to produce steel drums, pails, tanks, boilers, and depth-charge casings.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> *Richmond News*, March 1942.

<sup>109</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California, 1944* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 21.



Courtesy ChevronTexaco Archives

### **Standard Oil Company**

Standard Avenue (now 841 Chevron Way)

Much of Standard Oil's (now ChevronTexaco) Richmond Refinery research and production work was directly involved with the war effort, emphasizing research toward military applications and supplying fuel for the U.S. military and Allied nations. Standard Oil's contribution to the war effort was recognized with an Army-Navy "E" in February 1942, the highest honor awarded by the Navy Board for Production Awards. Over the next few years four stars were added to the "E" pennant, in recognition of continued outstanding production.<sup>110</sup>

Several new buildings and specialized manufacturing facilities were added from 1940-45. A new laboratory and office building on Standard Avenue opened near the refinery just after New Years Day 1940.<sup>111</sup> While presumably planned with more long-term interests in mind, the research facility must have quickly converted much of its energy to determining how the refinery's current pursuits could aid the war effort. The *Richmond Independent* announced later that year that the company had negotiated a \$25 million bank loan for development and expansion and expected that "at least some of the program will affect the Richmond "

<sup>110</sup> "Presentation at Local Refinery Dignified Rite," *Richmond Record-Herald*, 20 February 1942.  
 "Standard Oil Co. Refinery Wins Third "E" Award," *San Francisco Examiner*, 18 February 1944.  
 "Standard Award," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 February 1945.

<sup>111</sup> "New Research Plant for Standard Oil," *Wall Street Journal*, 8 January 1940.

refinery.<sup>112</sup> The enormous increase in aircraft manufacturing during the war inspired Richmond's refinery to build a plant to produce high-grade aviation lubricants and another high-octane aviation fuel processing plant.<sup>113</sup> A toluene plant was built at the refinery in 1942 to produce toluene, a critical component of explosives.

The Richmond refinery workforce expanded to fulfill the plant's new contracts from 2,500 employees in 1939 to nearly 9,000 in 1945.<sup>114</sup> Like many large defense industries, the refinery had an array of employee benefits and programs designed to boost morale and retention, from facilities such as cafeterias and dormitories, to war bond drives and ride-sharing programs, holiday events and company sports teams.<sup>115</sup>

Women began to be hired for jobs that had previously been filled only by men and the refinery created the new position of "women's counselor"; in late 1942 the *San Francisco Examiner* stated that 230 women were employed there, and company publications increasingly featured women in non-traditional jobs.<sup>116</sup> Unlike the Kaiser Shipyards, the refinery continued its discriminatory pre-war practices against hiring African Americans; only under pressure from the federal government in 1944 did the number of black employees grow to a mere 114 workers.<sup>117</sup>

Labor relations at the refinery appear to have been complicated, and are worthy of further research. A strike by 600 steamfitters during construction of the high-octane aviation fuel plant in 1944 was reported in local newspapers. The same year, the National Labor Relations Board ordered a union election, giving employees the choice of joining the CIO affiliated Oil Workers of America or the independent Standard

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<sup>112</sup> "25 Million Loan Expected to Aid Refinery Here," *Richmond Independent*, 25 August 1939.

<sup>113</sup> "Standard Plans New Oil Plant at Richmond," *San Francisco Examiner* 5 October 1941.

<sup>114</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California, 1940* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 20. *Handbook of Richmond California, 1946* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 26.

<sup>115</sup> Wartime issues of the *Standard Oiler*, produced by the company's San Francisco headquarters, describe a number of employee programs, including those at the Richmond plant.

<sup>116</sup> Zilfa Estcourt, "An Executive Talks About Oil Workers," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 December 1942. "Five Refinery Workers Seek Victory Title," *San Francisco Examiner*, 13 November 1942.

<sup>117</sup> Moore, *To Place Our Deeds*, p. 45.

Employees' Association (described by the CIO as “company-dominated”).<sup>118</sup>

### **Stauffer Chemical Stege**

Even prior to US entry into the war, Stauffer Chemical had increased its number of employees by 20% and ran three shifts to produce acids and heavy chemicals for defense contracts.<sup>119</sup>

## **LABOR**

A concentration of union halls and offices on and near Macdonald Avenue in the downtown area is reflected in Sanborn maps and listings in Chamber of Commerce publications, indicating their active role in the life of the City around the war years. Although most of these buildings have been demolished, the activities they supported are worthy of further research and interpretation.



Dorothea Lange Collection, Oakland Museum of California

**Boilermakers Local 513**  
707 Macdonald

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<sup>118</sup> “600 Steamfitters Walk Out in Richmond,” *San Francisco Examiner*, 4 December 1944. “CIO Loses in Standard Oil Election,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 October 1944.

<sup>119</sup> *Richmond News*, December 1941.



Private Collection

### **Boilermakers Auxiliary A-36**

1600 Barrett

The International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders and Helpers of America represented the majority of workers at West Coast shipyards, including nearly three-quarters of the Kaiser Shipyard workers in Richmond.<sup>120</sup> Primarily concerned with maintaining the status of long-time shipyard workers, the union did little for those new to the industry, and made a point of subverting local control by having the International direct new unions in booming defense areas like the Bay Area. Even prior to the war, the Union had established that African Americans could only join auxiliary unions that were controlled by the white local. Local A-36 initially represented new access to black workers at the Richmond shipyards, but members could not vote in national union conventions, had no grievance mechanisms, and were led by officers appointed by the white “parent” union.<sup>121</sup>

East Bay Shipyard Workers Against Discrimination, founded by Moore Dry Dock worker Ray Thompson, and the Richmond branch of the NAACP, worked to remake and finally dismantle the Jim Crow unions in Oakland and Richmond. They picketed Local 513’s offices on Macdonald

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<sup>120</sup> Moore, *To Place Our Deeds*, p. 54.

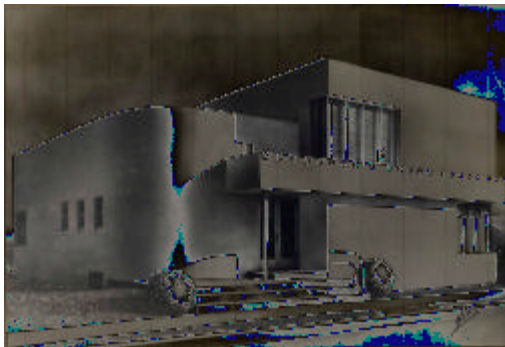
<sup>121</sup> Ibid, pp. 59-61.

Avenue and joined a number of Bay Area civil rights organizations to file suit against the segregated locals.<sup>122</sup>

### **Brotherhood Hall**

257 Fifth Street

Brotherhood Hall appears to have been the main meeting hall for union-organized workers in Richmond apart from shipyard workers, and held offices for many unions. Among the unions that met at Brotherhood Hall were: Contra Costa Building and Construction Trades Council, Metal Trades Council of Contra Costa County, Barbers Local 508, Electrical Worker B-302, Electrical Workers; Marine Unit B-302, Fish Cannery Workers Union of the Pacific, Leadburners No. 512, and Machinists Union 824. These were, presumably, composed of white, male workers.



Courtesy Richmond Museum of History



### **Musicians Local 424**

4 14<sup>th</sup> Street

Local musicians had formed a union in 1907, and for the following three decades Richmond performers found work accompanying silent movies, playing in the municipal band, and providing entertainment at public events. Following the city's wartime population explosion, the number of local nightclubs ballooned, as did the all-white membership of this union. According to long-time 424 President, Al Del Simone, most of the music performed at ship launchings was by musicians affiliated with Local

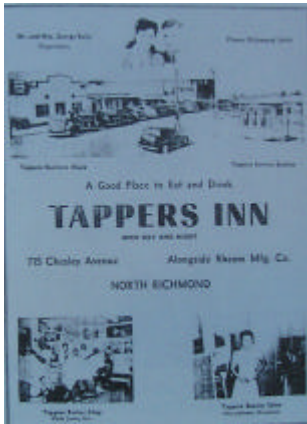
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<sup>122</sup> Marilyn S. Johnson, *The Second Gold Rush*, p. 71-73.



424.<sup>123</sup> The union erected a new building at 4 14<sup>th</sup> Street in 1944 and saw its membership climb to 700 in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>124</sup> No building permits were found in the Richmond Planning department files to determine if the handsome moderne building was erected as drawn in the rendering above. The massing of the current building has similarities to the drawing, but it is unclear if this is a new building, or the 1944 structure renovated. More research about this union, and their relationship to musicians of color is warranted.

## RECREATION AND CULTURE



### Blues Clubs

#### North Richmond

Secondary sources indicate that Richmond's blues clubs were concentrated in North Richmond. Traditionally home to Richmond's small pre-war black community because properties there were not controlled by restrictive covenants, North Richmond had been an ethnically diverse community prior to 1940. Italian, Mexican, Portuguese and Japanese Americans all lived alongside one another in this rural area,

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<sup>123</sup> David Washburn, "The Formation of Country and Western Swing Bands in Richmond, California, During WWII" (Berkeley, CA: 2003), pp. 29-32.

<sup>124</sup> "Musicians Local 424" *Richmond Mirror* (Richmond: Richmond Museum of History) Winter 1996-97, p. 8.

near the garbage dump along unpaved roads.<sup>125</sup> Despite the allocation of a portion of defense housing to African Americans, wartime housing discrimination only tightened restrictions on where blacks could find living quarters. Forced relocation of Italian Americans and Japanese Americans opened up some housing in North Richmond, while lax enforcement of building codes allowed migrants to construct what they could not buy or rent elsewhere in town. By 1943, “North Richmond had become virtually all black,” according to Shirley Anne Wilson Moore.<sup>126</sup>

According to Moore, the Savoy Club and Tappers’ Inn were the most popular among the establishments that sprang up in North Richmond to serve the musical and culinary tastes of African American newcomers. The Savoy club was owned and operated by Arkansas native Willie Mae Johnson, whose sister had married the famous pianist and singer Jimmy McCracklin. Bay Area musicians and touring blues performers entertained Savoy Club audiences who could feast on Johnson’s home-cooked meals of southern favorites such as fried chicken, greens and ribs. Described by Moore as “the most popular night spot in North Richmond,” Tappers’ Inn supplied various needs of its patrons, from card games to haircuts and shaves, to a service station and a restaurant serving dishes familiar to migrants from the American South. Opened in 1941, the club featured well-known blues signers such as B.B. King, Charles Brown and Mabel Scott until it closed in the mid-1950s.<sup>127</sup>

Locating these establishments has been something of a challenge. Because black businesses did not advertise in the kinds of publications that have found their way into local archives (such as the Richmond Independent, the City Directory, and Chamber of Commerce

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<sup>125</sup> Moore, *To Place Our Deeds*, pp 23-24.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, p. 132. Moore’s account of the North Richmond blues clubs, while the best source on this subject, does not always distinguish which clubs operated during the war and which started in the post-war years.

publications), further research is needed to confirm their wartime locations and the existence of any of the structures. According to an undated manuscript in the collection of the Richmond Museum of History titled “Richmond Bars & Lounges, Past & Present,” there was a concentration of clubs along Chesley Avenue with the Savoy in the 200 block of Chesley, the Dew Drop Inn in the 300 block, and Tappers’ Inn in the 600 block. Addresses for the Down Beat are listed as York Street, and the Brown Derby as Grove Street.<sup>128</sup>



**Fox Theater**  
823 Macdonald

**Studio Theater**  
811 Macdonald

The Fox and Studio theaters depicted above represent the rapid growth of new entertainment and recreational facilities for Richmond’s population during the war. From two movie houses in pre-war Richmond, the City’s stock grew to ten, and nearly all featured the exuberant architecture common to the period. Unfortunately, it appears that all of these structures have been demolished, or radically altered.

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<sup>128</sup> “Richmond Bars & Lounges, Past & Present,” in “Local Businesses” vertical file, Richmond Museum of History. *Seaport Center Activities: Log Book* (1948) located in the Richmond History Room/Richmond Public Library, carries an advertisement for Tappers’ Inn with the address 715 Chesley.

**Moose Club**

615 Macdonald Avenue

In addition to its role as the meeting place of a long-time Richmond men's organization, the Moose Club doubled as a popular nightspot. Nearly every weekend, the hall featured bands such as "Ray Wade and His Ozark Mountaineers," or other shipyard workers' favorites. Additional local facilities that rented out their space for dances included Redmen's Hall at 11<sup>th</sup> and Nevin, the Townsend Club in Pt. Richmond, and Alvarado and East Shore Parks.<sup>129</sup> Unlike African American blues clubs, which appear to have been confined to North Richmond, these locations are scattered throughout much of the city.

**Richmond Art and Craft Center**

1942 Ninth Street

The Richmond Art Center offered a variety of classes for adults at its facility, including weaving, sketching, painting, sculpture, flower arranging and other crafts. During the war, Lanham Act funding enabled the Center to train Recreation Department staff and other community members to share these skills with their own groups.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Washburn, "The Formation of Country and Western Swing Bands," p. 15.

<sup>130</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California, 1945* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 23.



### **Richmond Public Library**

Main Library at 4<sup>th</sup> and Nevin; Branch libraries at 25<sup>th</sup> and Macdonald, Cutting Boulevard, Stege Branch on 41<sup>st</sup> Street, Washington Avenue and Park Place in Pt. Richmond

The Richmond Public Library worked hard to address the needs of a community bursting at the seams, adding branch facilities and developing programs in defense housing projects. By 1942, the Library Director was pleading with the American Library Association, as well as federal and state agencies, for support in meeting extraordinary new demands. In a letter outlining his request for \$55,450 in Lanham Act funding, City Librarian Coit Coolidge wrote: "I need not point out that books are a sort of canned brain power, and that the workmen, many of them for the first time in shipbuilding, need library service. Their families and children will need library service in the normal course of their public education."<sup>131</sup> By spring, Coolidge reported to staff at the American Library Association that a storefront branch had opened at 24<sup>th</sup> Street and Macdonald. He also described a program for lending technical books at Shipyards No. 1 and 2, claiming that: "these books will be used by men on the job during their lunch hours and at home."<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Letter from Richmond City Librarian, Coit Coolidge to District Director of Works Projects Administration, San Francisco, 20 January 1942 in the Richmond Collection, Richmond Public Library.

<sup>132</sup> Letter from Coit Coolidge to Mildred L. Batchelder, American Library Association, 13 April 1942 in the Richmond Collection: Richmond Public Library

While circulation numbers at the Main Library reportedly declined, new borrowers at branches on Macdonald Avenue and Cutting Boulevard helped to increase total circulation of books by one-third.<sup>133</sup> Numbers of books loaned, however, do not indicate the increasingly important role that the libraries played as a source of critical information for newcomers to the area. Libraries throughout the U.S. took their role as community classroom seriously during the war years, offering programs and publications on everything from international relations to victory gardens. Richmond's Main Library was a designated air raid shelter, and even added childcare to its list of services; in 1943 the Library announced that its doors would be opened from 10:30 am -12:30 pm to school children enrolled in the afternoon shift as a means of combating juvenile delinquency by getting children off of the streets.<sup>134</sup>

### **Rio Theater**

412 Macdonald

Constructed in 1922 as a one-story brick public garage, the building became the Rio Theater in 1943 to help satisfy demand for entertainment from Richmond's growing population of workers with disposable income. Buildings permits show that work was stopped on the renovation in August 1942 by order of the War Production Board, presumably for violation of use of scarce materials on a non-priority basis. Construction resumed the following year. Richmond's long-time Latino residents remember the Rio fondly for its weekly shows of Spanish language films.<sup>135</sup> Used as a storefront church in its later years, the building was demolished in 1994.

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<sup>133</sup> For library circulation figures see *Handbook of Richmond, 1945* (Richmond: Richmond Chamber of Commerce, 1945), p. 27.

<sup>134</sup> "Library to Open in Mornings For School Children," *Richmond War Homes Weekly*, 27 November 1943.

<sup>135</sup> Washburn, "The End of Town," pp. 33-34.

## SCHOOLS AND CHILDREN



Courtesy Richmond Museum of History

### **Harbor Gate School**

19<sup>th</sup> and Meeker (between Marina Way and Marina Bay Parkway)

Federal funds, while available to build defense factories and support some housing development, were not channeled to support the associated needs for building schools necessary to serve factory workers' children. At the same time as Richmond's population soared, the city's capacity for extracting tax revenues declined, creating a significant impact on all public budgets, including that of the school district. Richmond Superintendent of Schools, Walter Helms, made repeated requests for federal funding to help the district build schools that could address the overcrowded conditions in which Richmond's youngest residents were placed. Finally turning to local funds out of desperation, Helms authorized the creation of Harbor Gate School entirely out of portable, temporary classrooms adjacent to Shipyard No. 2 and defense housing projects. Harbor Gate School closed in 1950, and remained vacant until 1957 when several of the temporary structures were moved to Peres School.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Helen Pence, "Whatever Became Of...Harbor Gate and Seaport Schools?," *The Mirror* (Richmond: Richmond Museum of History) Fall 1996, p. 8.



## **Lincoln School**

205 10<sup>th</sup> Street

Although the original school complex was demolished and the facility relocated to 5<sup>th</sup> and Ohio, its previous location along 10<sup>th</sup> Street, now Harbour Way, and myriad connections to themes central to the home front make it a site worth interpreting. Lincoln School's significance as the central location for Richmond's rationing program has been noted above. School district administrators had closed Lincoln's classrooms just prior to the war to conduct an earthquake survey and to retrofit the facility as needed. The deluge of new children who accompanied the City's defense workforce compelled the district to reopen the school for the duration.

Lincoln school was the focus of an interesting debate over free speech just prior to the war. Opponents to US entry into the war organized a public meeting in July 1940 at the school auditorium. Despite the fact that sentiments against the US being drawn into the European war were common, the *Richmond Independent* reported that some labor and veterans groups protested to the school superintendent that such "communist" voices should not be allowed on school grounds. Within a few days, the School Board appears to have appeased the protestors by passing a resolution banning use of school auditoriums by *any* group until the district's earthquake survey was completed.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> "School Use by Communists Faces Protests," *Richmond Independent*, 11 July 1940, p. 5. "School Denies All Groups Till Survey Finished," *Richmond Independent*, 16 July 1940, p. 1.



Richmond childcare center, Courtesy Bancroft Library

Woodville, CA. Courtesy of Library of Congress

### **Maritime and Pullman Child Development Centers** 1014 Florida Avenue/Maine Avenue

A critical component for ensuring women's access to defense jobs, organized childcare in the U.S. represented a huge advance from the scattered support offered to working mothers first by settlement houses and later through WPA programs. Although the subject of continued wartime debate, childcare centers became a common and crucial component of urban defense centers during WWII. Richmond's program of childcare was funded by the federal government through the Lanham Act, which was designed to help relieve some of the strains felt by congested defense areas. The childcare centers, which applied theories and methods of early childhood education shared by other programs of the time, were administered by the Richmond School District.<sup>138</sup>

Centers were integrated into a number of the defense housing projects, including Canal and Terrace War Apartments and the Trailer Camp, and incorporated into several public schools. It might be argued that the first wartime childcare program was located at Peres School, which had operated a WPA-funded nursery school since 1936 and converted to serving defense workers in 1942.<sup>139</sup> The history and architecture of Maritime Child Development Center has been described in

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<sup>138</sup> Contemporary accounts of childcare programs in many defense centers discuss the importance of well thought-out curriculum, on-site health supervision, and creative play. For one example, see "Mare Island Has First Navy Sponsored Nursery School," *Berkeley Gazette*, 10/15/42.

<sup>139</sup> Alicia Barber, "Maritime Child Development Center," (Washington, DC: Historic American Building Survey, 2001). According to Barber, Erla Boucher, Director of Richmond's wartime childcare program, began as the head of this WPA nursery school, p. 8.

detail in Alicia Barber's Historic American Building Survey Report CA-2718. The modernist style of these buildings has been noted repeatedly; comparing their design to a nursery school in California's Central Valley built by the Farm Security Administration (above) confirms that many of the Richmond center's features were common to similar buildings of the time. Both structures emphasize strong horizontal lines and include ample windows for generous day-lighting. Most particularly, each has sliding, glass-filled exterior doors to encourage use of indoor/outdoor space.

The Maritime and Pullman Child Development Centers, like all of those in Richmond, were positioned as closely as possible to the shipyards and to defense housing, creating a nexus of home, jobsite and childcare services for war workers who used these facilities. Yet many who labored at the Richmond Shipyards commuted from other communities in the Bay Area and often sought their childcare closer to home: the Shipyard publication *Fore 'N Aft* listed programs in El Cerrito, Albany, Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco in a September 1943 article encouraging women employees to avail themselves of these services.<sup>140</sup>

Contemporary accounts of Richmond's childcare program state that just over one thousand children were served at the centers, under the maximum program capacity of 1,400 children.<sup>141</sup> Given the commonly cited statistic that over 25 % of Kaiser's 100,000-plus workforce was female, it is safe to assume that only a fraction of their childcare needs were met through the Richmond program. An important aspect of the childcare story that has not been fully explored is the range of strategies used by most working mothers during the war years, who chose not to place their children with strangers in daycare centers and used networks

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<sup>140</sup> "Mothers By Day," *Fore 'N Aft*, 3 September 1943, p. 3.

<sup>141</sup> "Study of Youth Services in Contra Costa County" (Sacramento: California Youth Authority, 1945), pp. 11.

of kin, neighbors and friends, or those whose children were unwelcome at the centers by virtue of their race.



### **Mira Vista School**

Barrett and Tassajara Avenues

Now Tehiyah Day School, portions of this campus were constructed during WWII. Known as Mira Vista, the school was named after the upper-middle-class neighborhood of hillside homes that surrounded it. This is the only one of the three new schools built during the war that was not demolished.



Courtesy Richmond Museum of History

### **Nystrom School**

Tenth Street (Harbour Way) at Maine

Nystrom School, along with Pullman, Lincoln, and Stege Schools, bore the brunt of wartime overcrowding by virtue of their proximity to the defense housing projects and the large proportion of new students who

lived there.<sup>142</sup> Because funding was unavailable for construction of new classrooms, Richmond schools went on double and even triple sessions.<sup>143</sup> According to historian Charles Dorn, “with a prewar total of 132 classrooms, average enrollment per classroom in the elementary district was twenty-three children. The construction of only sixty additional rooms by 1944 led the average elementary school enrollment to rise to sixty-seven children per classroom.”<sup>144</sup>



### **Peres School** Pennsylvania and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets

Among the oldest schools in Richmond, Peres operated one of the Lanham Act-funded childcare centers under the administration of the Richmond School District. Peres, along with several other Richmond schools, remained severely overcrowded in the post-war years. According to records of the WCCUSD, “with the ending of the war and the closing of the war time emergency housing in the old Harbor Gate housing development, the district decided to relocate this school to the Peres site.”<sup>145</sup> Even with a new multi-purpose room, the demolition of the old

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<sup>142</sup> Charles Dorn, *Education in a Time of War* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2003), p. 185.

<sup>143</sup> McVittie, “An Avalanche Hits Richmond,” 77.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. 73. cited in Dorn’s *Education in a Time of War*.

<sup>145</sup> Standing files in the office of Vince Kilmartin, Facilities Director for the West Contra Costa Unified School District. Helen Pence, “Whatever Became Of...Harbor Gate and Seaport Schools?,” *The Mirror* (Richmond: Richmond Museum of History) Fall 1996, p. 8. Pence dates this transfer of buildings to 1957.

Peres School meant that the facility remained overcrowded. Not until ten modular buildings were installed in 1966 did Peres resume a standard school day for the first time since the war years. Although recent site maps from the West Contra Costa Unified School District describe the southern end of Peres' campus as newly constructed between 1953 and 1955, Donald Hardison, whose architecture firm undertook this renovation and expansion project, confirmed that the L-shaped structure at the corner of Pennsylvania and 5<sup>th</sup> was moved from the school at Harbor Gate homes.<sup>146</sup>

### **Point Molate School** Winehaven

A school was developed to serve children of workers at Point Molate Fuel Annex from spring of 1943 until 1950. The one-room school operated out a converted building from the old Winehaven facility and served approximately 20 children. The Navy provided facility costs, while administration and staff were supplied by the Richmond School District.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Site tour with Donald Hardison, December 2003.

<sup>147</sup> "Whatever Happened to.... Point Molate School?" *Richmond Mirror*, Spring 1997, p. 7 "Reveal Point Molate as Huge Pacific Fuel Depot," *Berkeley Gazette*, 15 September 1945.



**Richmond School Administration Building**  
1108 Bissell

Constructed in 1942, the building appears to be largely intact, and would provide an appropriate place to interpret the astounding pressures that the school system, teachers and students felt during the war.



**Roosevelt Junior High School**  
157 Ninth Street

Now Gompers Continuation High School, this facility's main administration and classroom building is a three-story structure built of reinforced concrete in 1944.





**Stege Elementary School**  
4949 Cyprus Avenue

Along with Nystrom and Harbor Gate, Stege School accommodated the largest share of newcomers to Richmond's over-taxed system of primary schools. Built to hold 315 students, by January 1943 Stege enrolled 622 children in its over-crowded classrooms.<sup>148</sup> Opened in 1906 within the former township of Stege, the school drew for several decades from families who made their living in this semi-agricultural landscape, including many of the children of Japanese nursery families.<sup>149</sup> According to WCCUSD records, the Federal government and the U.S. Maritime Commission added new facilities to the existing school, which operated on a double shift basis until the 1950s. The main classroom buildings, along Potrero and Cyress Avenues, date from 1943 and 1944.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> University of California, Berkeley. Bancroft Library. Henry J. Kaiser Papers, Carton 159, Folder 25, "Education Report," 1.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Tom Oishi, 2002.

<sup>150</sup> Standing files in the office of Vince Kilmartin, Facilities Director for the West Contra Costa Unified School District.



Courtesy Richmond Museum of History

### **Washington School** Richmond Avenue

Washington School (located just below center of the photograph) housed one of the day care centers offering services to defense workers, and like the Maritime Child Development Center was placed in a nexus that located school, child development center and defense housing in close proximity. Esmeralda Court, a complex of 94 demountable single-family units lay directly to the east across Wine Street, while the much larger Canal War Apartments began one block north. A nearby Recreation Center appears on the 1950 Sanborn map at the northeast corner of Cutting and Wine.<sup>151</sup> Records of the WCCUSD date the buildings along Wine Street (depicted below) from 1940.<sup>152</sup>



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<sup>151</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Richmond (1950), p. 149.

<sup>152</sup> Standing files in the office of Vince Kilmartin, Facilities Director for the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

Washington School housed the only ongoing 24-hour childcare program in Richmond. A 1945 report described it as “helpful to the social agencies in Richmond. It is used extensively by Police and other authorities for short-term care. Between November 1943, and May 1945, the center cared for a total of 368 children brought in by the Richmond Police Department. Many of them were kept for only a few hours until their parents could be located. Other children remained at the center for as long as a week until suitable arrangements could be made for them.”<sup>153</sup>

## **TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Santa Fe Railroad**

Foot of Macdonald Avenue

Operated transcontinental freight and passenger service with extensive yards and repair shops. Employment numbered 656 in 1939 (“including eight women” according to the 1940 *Handbook of Richmond* published by the Chamber of Commerce) and increased to 1100 workers in 1945. The Santa Fe opened a new passenger station in 1944.

### **Southern Pacific Railroad**

16<sup>th</sup> and Macdonald

Operated transcontinental freight and passenger lines and was the arrival point for many migrants to Richmond. Employment increased from 58 to 241 employees from 1941-1942.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> “Study of Youth Services in Contra Costa County,” pp. 12-13.

<sup>154</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California, 1943* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce) p. 13.



### **Greyhound Bus Terminal**

320 23<sup>rd</sup> Street

Richmond's Greyhound facility in 1940 was a waiting room at 2207 Macdonald Avenue. A new building opened in 1942 to accommodate large numbers of riders, including the torrent of migrants to Richmond.<sup>155</sup> Rapid subsequent additions to accommodate increasing numbers of bus riders are shown in a 1945 photograph.

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.



### **Shipyard Ferries**

San Francisco to Richmond

The US Maritime Commission resuscitated a number of older ferries to provide transportation from San Francisco to the Kaiser Yards. The illustration above from *Standard Oil Bulletin* shows an on-board film screening for shipyard workers.

### **Shipyard Railway**

Oakland to Richmond

Because of the severe housing shortages, many Richmond workers commuted from throughout the East Bay and San Francisco. The resulting traffic congestion was of great concern to residents and public officials who helped businesses organize “share the ride” programs, and worked to secure federal funding for public transportation that could ease the situation. Running sixteen miles and connecting workers to the Richmond Shipyards and Moore Dry Dock in Oakland, the Shipyard Railway carried more than 11,000 passengers on a daily basis. The US Maritime Commission completed work on the railway in 1942, using portions of existing rail, and importing converted cars from New York’s elevated line.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Marilyn S. Johnson, *The Second Gold Rush*, p. 99.

## Street and Sewer Improvements

The *Handbook of Richmond California 1942* published by the Chamber of Commerce stated that “the largest project of the Street Department during the [previous] year was the removal of the center strip in Cutting Boulevard, turning this artery into a first-class boulevard to handle the enormously increased traffic which came as a result of the two new shipyards.” However, the expenditures reflect an outlay of \$9,387 for “Improvement of Cutting Blvd. from Fifth to Nye Streets,” and a larger amount, \$12,110, for improvements of 10<sup>th</sup> and Fourteenth Streets and Hall Avenues, all thoroughfares that also served Shipyards 1 and 2.<sup>157</sup>

The Chamber’s *Handbook* reported that greatly increased wartime traffic had thrown an “unprecedented load” on the Street Department in 1942. That year, the City had spent an additional \$8,152 adjacent to the shipyards on 10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and Hall Streets, as well as major expenditures for improvements on Cutting Blvd between Nye and Springs Streets (\$22,942), and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street from Macdonald to the northern city limits (\$15,383). Seven thousand five hundred dollars were spent on “Surveys and Plans for Defense Access Streets.” In 1943, an additional \$60,178 was spent on “Improvements of Streets Account of Defense Housing.”<sup>158</sup>

The same *Handbook* described over \$730,000 allocated in federal funds for a new sewer main on Tenth Street in 1942, and for new sewer connections to nearby defense housing projects. “The necessity of Federal financing becomes obvious when it is realized that Federal projects in Richmond will probably result in property assessed at more than \$1,500,000.00 being removed from the tax rolls, a problem that is having the urgent attention of Richmond’s efficient City officials.”<sup>159</sup> A new 36-inch sewer main was installed in 1944, and in 1944-45 new pipes

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<sup>157</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California 1942* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce), p. 8.

<sup>158</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California 1943* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce), p. 10. *Handbook of Richmond California 1944* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce), p. 8.

<sup>159</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California 1943* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce), p. 3.

and fire hydrants were installed throughout the areas surrounding defense housing projects to provide better fire protection.<sup>160</sup>

1942 saw the completion of a new access road just west of the Southern Pacific tracks connecting to the shipyards, which relieved the increasing congestion along Cutting Boulevard and East Shore Highway. Additional transportation improvements aimed solely at shipyard workers were completed the same year; a new ferry service traveled between San Francisco and slips within the shipyards, and electric train cars operated by the East Bay's Key System and financed by the Maritime Commission which originated in Oakland and picked up shipyard workers in Emeryville, Berkeley and Albany before entering Richmond.<sup>161</sup>

## **INTERPRETIVE CONCLUSIONS AND THOUGHTS ON FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study attempted to locate and weave together the threads of a broad social history of Richmond during the WWII years. While it has succeeded in developing a "snapshot" of what happened and where on Richmond's home front, it is a quick sketch with many areas that need further delineation. Perhaps the most troubling lacuna is that of community organizations and the part they played. Documenting the involvement of a wide array of residents in the war effort was impeded by the lack of records related to community organizations in local archives. The Richmond Chamber of Commerce's *Handbook of Richmond* during the war years lists scores of local organizations, from Masonic Lodges and the Richmond Women's Club to Soroptomist, Elks Club (including a "Negro" branch) and the musical group Club Mendelssohn. By the end of the war, listings for ethnic-specific organizations included

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<sup>160</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California 1945* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce), p. 14.

<sup>161</sup> *Handbook of Richmond California 1943* (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce), p. 14.



Gustav Vasa, Croatian Fraternal Union of America, United Negro Association of North Richmond, Jewish Community Service of Richmond, Haddassah and others.

Tantalizing references to home front efforts by these and other groups was found during the course of my research, but no extensive collections documenting their activities were uncovered in public archives. In the case of long-standing clubs such as the Elks or Soroptomists, future researchers may find materials in the hands of their successor organizations. Religious institutions, which are a relatively unexplored, but important, aspect of this story, may also hold records that would aid understanding of public sentiment about the war as an ethical and moral issue, and how churches, temples and synagogues organized members for the war effort. Records for local branches of national organizations, such as the USO, Boy and Girl Scouts, American Red Cross, Hadassah and the YMCA/YWCA, may be found in archives at the regional or national offices.<sup>162</sup>

A careful review of the *Richmond Independent*, which was beyond the scope of this study, would be an important way to flesh out this picture of the city in wartime. Yet, as noted previously, the *Independent* did not include adequate information about important segments of the city's new population. Locating smaller publications, such as the *Richmond Guide*, started in 1944 by NAACP co-founder, Margaret Starks, could deeply enrich our understanding of African Americans experiences during the war, and efforts to forge an inter-racial coalition in Richmond at its end.<sup>163</sup>

Gaps in the archival record were mirrored in Richmond's built environment. The belief that Richmond's urban fabric was largely intact from the home front period was one of the assumptions guiding the

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<sup>163</sup> Only two copies of articles from the *Richmond Guide* were found during the course of this research, and it did not appear in on-line searches of local university and library collections.

city's identification as a premier place to illustrate the story of the American home front. It was thought that the city's long period of economic distress relative to the rest of the Bay Area post-war construction boom meant that a wealth of Richmond's home front structures had lain untouched by the hands of development. While this is true for a number of the city's neighborhoods, three critical areas have lost many important buildings: the Kaiser Shipyards, the defense housing program, and the City's downtown. The erasure of most of the shipyard structures, and of the majority of defense housing, is a well-known chapter in the story of Richmond's wartime transformation, and a logical one given the temporary status of most of the buildings. Yet the database of home front sites attached as Appendix A lists dozens of demolished sites on or near Macdonald Avenue important to understanding the story of Richmond's home front -- from the Shipyard hiring hall and union halls, to the Chamber of Commerce and local draft boards, to movie houses and dance halls.

Buildings associated with labor organizations and many of the civic groups that rallied around the war effort were clustered in the heart of Richmond on Macdonald Avenue between 5<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets. Although most of these specific structures have been demolished, many pre-war buildings are scattered throughout this area. Interpretation of these themes is important for recalling citizen involvement in the war and the growth and complex role of labor organizations during that time. Focus on the area where these activities took place, even without the historic buildings associated with them, could be an important planning tool for the Park and City's efforts to weave the home front story more extensively throughout Richmond and to revitalize the City's historic downtown.

The National Park Service bases its work on a mission of "preserving and caring for America's treasures," yet many important sites

in Richmond no longer hold historic structures to be preserved. This makes efforts to maintain buildings at existing sites that reveal our home front history all the more important, yet it also points to the need for alternate strategies to engage residents and visitors with Richmond's exciting and complex past. Precedent for using art to interpret Richmond's history has already been set, most notably in the *Rosie the Riveter Memorial*. This approach could be extended to include urban design, interpretive plaques, festivals, publications, public programs, and performances that connect residents and visitors to Richmond's home front heritage.

## POTENTIAL INTERPRETIVE CORRIDORS

Because they served as primary paths of travel for future visitors to the Park, areas of specific focus for his study included Macdonald Avenue, Harbour Way/10<sup>th</sup> Street, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Cutting Boulevard. Because these streets have the potential to be important interpretive corridors. The last section of this study will provide a detailed "itinerary" of historic sites on or close-by each route that played a part on the home front. Extant buildings are listed in italics.

**Harbour Way**, known as 10<sup>th</sup> Street during the war, connects the Ford Assembly Building to downtown Richmond:

*Ford Assembly Building*

*Filice & Perrelli Cannery*

USO

*Nystrom School*

*Maritime Child Development Center*

Lincoln School

*Richmond School District Administration*

Richmond Independent

*St. Marks Church*

Chamber of Commerce/Richmond War Chest

Elks Club

*Carquinez Hotel*

USO Hospitality House/YMCA

Schwartz Ballroom

*US Post Office*

**Marina Way**, known as 14<sup>th</sup> Street during the war, connects Edwards Park to downtown and Macdonald Avenue.

*Lucretia Edwards Park*

*National Oil Products Co.*

*Kaiser Hospital*

*Nystrom Village*

Musicians Union Local 424

USO Travelers' Aid Bureau

Cannery and Vegetable Workers Union Hall

**23<sup>rd</sup> Street/Marina Bay Parkway** connects the Rosie the Riveter Memorial to Macdonald Avenue and Civic Center:

*Rosie the Riveter Memorial*

*Newell's Market*

*Galileo Club*

*MacGregor homes*

*Trulson Motors*

*Greyhound Bus Terminal*

*Richmond Motor Company*

**Macdonald Avenue** was the commercial and civic core for much of Richmond, and will be the primary point of entry for those arriving from outside of Richmond:

*Memorial Youth Center*

*American Red Cross*

*Nicholl Court Apartments*

*Memorial Civic Center*

Times Theater

*Park Florist*

Southern Pacific Railroad Depot

*Winters Building*

S.H. Kress

J.C. Penney

Fox Theater

Studio Theater

Moose Hall

US Selective Service Board

Boilermakers Union Building

Brotherhood Hall

Rio Theater

*Richmond Public Library*

*Richmond Pool Hall*

*New China Café/Union Ice Company*

*Victory Liquor*

*Atchison Village*

Santa Fe Railroad Depot

**Cutting Boulevard** may be a secondary path for East-West travel into the National Park.

*Japanese American Nurseries*

US Maritime Commission War Apartments

*Pullman Factory*

*Full Gospel Church*

*Newell's Market*

*Housing Office*

*Salvation Army*

US Maritime Commission War Apartments

*Kaiser Hospital*

Victory Café

*Relocated Shipyard No. 2 bldg.*

Defense Diner

Canal War Apartments

Esmeralda Court

*Washington School*

## **APPENDIX A**

Database of selected sites in Richmond pertinent to WWII, listing structure, address, significance, whether it still stands and which current neighborhood council it is located within.

Key to neighborhood councils/location: AV – Atchison Village; BW – Belding Woods; CC- City Center; CO – Coronado; CS – Cortez- Stege; EA – Eastshore; EC – El Cerrito; IT – Iron Triangle; MB – Marina Bay; MR – Metro Richmore Village; NE – North and East; NR – North Richmond; PP – Park Plaza; Pt. R. – Point Richmond; PU – Pullman; PV – Park View; RA – Richmond Annex; SF – Santa Fe; SR – Shields Reid.



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# Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*

Buildings in *italics* are further described in accompanying narrative.

Building or Site	Address	Significance	Extant?
<b>Civic Mobilization &amp; Community Life</b>			
<i>American Red Cross</i>	Lincoln School 205 10th Street	Public health education, blood drives and support to armed services	No
American Red Cross	3200 Macdonald	moved to site in 1944	Yes
American Women's Voluntary Service	Meetings held at Redmen's Hall, 1024/1025 Nevin	Local branch of national home front support organization	No
<i>Boy's Club</i>	263 S. 20th Street	funded by Community Chest to steer boys toward healthy activities	Now YMCA building
Boy Scouts	725 Ohio	various, including serving as messengers for Civil Defense fire watch program, distributing posters, scrap drives, etc.	??
British War Relief	based at 337 10th Street	solicited funds for aid to British citizens	No
<i>Chamber of Commerce</i>	337 10th Street	major supporter of defense-related industries, organizer of mobilization efforts	No
<i>Elks Club</i>	315 10th Street	raised funds to build boys club as way to address wartime juvenile delinquency	No (community garden)
<i>Greek War Relief</i>	130 Washington Avenue	solicited funds for aid to Greek citizens	Yes
Girl Scouts	707 Macdonald	various, including distributing posters, scrap drives, etc.	??
<i>Hospitality House</i>	11th and Nevin	recreation/sleeping quarters for servicemen	No
<i>International Full Gospel Church</i>	474 Spring Street	Example of small church opening to serve newcomers	Yes
Redman's Hall	1024 Nevin	Meeting place for many community groups and community events	No
<i>Richmond Area Church Defense Council</i>	318 9th Street	Organized church services for defense housing projects	No

# Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*

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Building or Site	Address	Significance	Extant?
Richmond Independent	202 10th Street	daily afternoon paper, major source of city news/shaped opinion	No
Richmond Herald	2201 Macdonald	daily morning newspaper	??
Richmond War Chest	337 10th Street	consortium of local groups involved with civil defense, war mobilization	No
<i>Richmond Women's City Club</i>	12th and Nevin	Organized Red Cross section in 1940 to raise funds and perform support activities for war effort	No
<i>Salvation Army</i>	1430 Cutting Blvd		Yes
<i>St. Lukes Methodist Church</i>	32nd and Barrett	Large building erected by congregation in 1941	Yes
United War Relief Fund	337 10th Street	Consortium of local groups organizing for international aid	No
<i>USO</i>	10th and Virginia	Recreation and classes for service men and defense workers	No
USO Richmond-San Pablo (YMCA Industrial Program)	located at YMCA, 1030 Nevin	" "	No
<i>USO Club #2, Travelers' Aid Bureau</i>	248 14th Street	Helped newcomers find housing and services	No
YMCA	1030 Nevin		now site of EBMUD office
YWCA	1201 Nevin	Headquarters for Council for Civic Unity; organization for inter-racial dialogue and activism	No
War Mothers	Memorial Hall	??	No
<b>Civil Defense/Rationing</b>			

## Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*

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Building or Site	Address	Significance	Extant?
Grace Baptist Church	21st and Roosevelt	Air raid shelter	Remodeled?
<i>Lincoln School</i>	205 10th Street	Ration program headquarters	No
Richmond Public Library	400 Nevin	Air raid shelter	Yes
<i>St. Marks Catholic Church</i>	10th St b/w Bissell and Chanslor	Air raid shelter	Yes
Trinity Lutheran	Nineteenth and Barrett	Air raid shelter	No
<i>US Post Office</i>	1025 Nevin	Air raid shelter	Yes
<i>Winters Building</i>	1031 Macdonald	Air raid shelter	Yes
<b>Commercial</b>			
Albert's Department Store	Macdonald and 9th	One of pre-war stores that thrived serving new consumer market in Richmond	No
<i>Claar Chevrolet</i>	23rd Street and Barrett	Formed portion of auto row that appeared a close of war	??
<i>C.O.D. Cleaners</i>	2409 Macdonald	Cleaning business	Yes
<i>Defense Diner</i>	501 Cutting	Diner positioned to serve shipyard workers	No
J.C. Penney Co.	916 Macdonald	One of pre-war stores that thrived serving new consumer market in Richmond	Yes
<i>Furniture Store</i>	216 Macdonald	Mixed-use building during WWII, housing, store, restaurant	Yes
S.H. Kress and Co.	1010 Macdonald	One of pre-war stores that thrived serving new consumer market in Richmond	No
Liberty Café	334 Macdonald	One of many patriotically-named businesses opened during war	Yes



# Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*

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Building or Site	Address	Significance	Extant?
National Dollar Store	Macdonald at 9th	One of pre-war stores that thrived serving new consumer market in Richmond	No
<i>New China Café</i>	230-232 Macdonald	Chinese restaurant opened during war years	Yes
<i>Newell's Market</i>	23rd and Cutting	Supermarket near shipyards	Yes
Palmer Fruit and Vegetable Market	1303 Carleson	built in 1943	Yes
<i>Park Florist</i>	2015 Macdonald	Business sold by Japanese Americans in 1942, provided flowers for shiplaunchings	Moved from 1500 block of Macdonald in
Renee Fur Shop	328 Macdonald	Representative of thriving local businesses serving customers with increased disposable income	Yes
<i>Richmond Motor Company</i>	500 23rd Street	Formed portion of auto row that appeared a close of war	Yes
<i>Richmond Sanitary Service</i>	327 7th Street	Awarded major contract for garbage service to defense housing projects	??
<i>Trulson Motor Company</i>	23rd and Bissell	Formed portion of auto row that appeared a close of war	Yes
F.W. Woolworth Company	800 Macdonald	One of pre-war stores that thrived serving new consumer market in Richmond	No
<i>Union Ice Company</i>	230 Macdonald	One of a number of ice suppliers, important household item in pre-refrigerator days	Yes

# Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*

Buildings in italics are further described in accompanying narrative.

Building or Site	Address	Significance	Extant?
<i>Victory Cafe</i>	11th and Cutting Boulevard	Restaurant for shipyard workers	No
<i>Victory Liquor</i>	201 Macdonald	One of many liquor stores in Richmond	Yes
<b>Ethnic Communities /Civil Rights</b>			
<i>Galileo Club</i>	371 S. 23rd Street	Italian American social and cultural organization	Yes
<i>Harbor Gate Homes</i>	Immediately Northeast of Yard No. 2	Founding place of NAACP Richmond branch	No
<i>Japanese American nurseries</i>	Neighborhood around Cutting, west of San Pablo	Cohesive community/commercial sector that was eradicated during the war, and partially rebuilt afterwards	Partial
<i>Mexican Baptist Church</i>	100 West Barrett (now 483 B St)	Center for Mexican American community, source of information for migrants during wartime	Yes
Negro Protective League	Cosmopolitan Club House, No. Richmond		??
<i>Park Florist</i>	1508-1510 Macdonald	Forced sale when Japanese American owners interned	relocated to 1900 block
United Negro Assoc. of North Richmond	257 Fifth St (mtg. Place at Brotherhood Hall)	Early civil rights organization	No
<b>Governmental/Public Infrastructure</b>			
<i>PG&amp;E</i>	345 Tenth Street	Expansion of services	No

## Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*

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Building or Site	Address	Significance	Extant?
<i>Pacific Telephone &amp; Telegraph</i>	343 Tenth Street	Expansion of services	No
Richmond Fire Dept. Headquarters	235 Fifth Street	Expansion of staff/facilities	??
<i>Richmond Health Center</i>	240 8th Street	County-built building	No
<i>Richmond Police Dept. Headquarters</i>	145 Park Place	Expansion of staff, presence in City	Yes
United States Employment Service	601 Nevin	Directed job-seekers to defense employment	No
<i>US Post Office</i>	1025 Nevin	Expansion of budget and services to accommodate new residents	Yes
US Selective Service Local Boards 52 & 53	629 Macdonald, 707 Macdonald	Location of military draft boards and registration	No
<b>Housing</b>			
Atchison Village	Lower Macdonald	1 of 3 permanent defense housing projects	Yes
<i>Carlson Houses</i>	900 - XXX blocks of Carlson	Numerous intact single family homes built in 1942 by Defense Homes Investment Corporation	Yes
<i>Cutting Boulevard Dormitories Office</i>	Cutting Blvd	Administrative office for a defense housing project	Yes (?)
<i>El Nido Apartments</i>	5600 Panama Avenue	Night club converted to apartments	Yes
Harbor Gate Homes	Immediately Northeast of Shipyard No. 2		No
<i>MacGregor Houses</i>	411-423 S. 23rd St, 2218-2230 Florida, 2218-2230 Ohio, 2218-2230 Virginia	Private homes built in 1941 and '42 by C.M. MacGregor, well-known regional builder	Yes
<i>Nicholl Court Apartments</i>	2800 block of Macdonald	Apartment complex, built in 1943	Yes

## Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*

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Building or Site	Address	Significance	Extant?
Nystrom Village		1 of 3 permanent defense housing projects	Yes
Overaa Construction	2105 Roosevelt Ave.	War-time construction projects allowed Richmond business to thrive	
<i>Recreation Center</i>	360 S. 27th Street	Last of several recreation centers run by Housing Authority.	Yes
<i>Richmond Housing Authority</i>	Commercial and Ohio, 1942 Handbook has it at 271 10th, 1943 lists it at Atchison Village	Admin. Center for Richmond's defense housing program	No
<i>Rollingwood</i>	Unincorporated area between Richmond and San Pablo	Private housing development for shipyard workers, built with govt support	Yes
<i>335 S. 10th Street</i>		House built in 1942 directly across from Nystrom School	Yes
Rheem bungalows	1402, 1405, 1421 Rheem	Private homes built in late 1941, typical of small bungalows designed for wartime migrants	Yes
Triangle Court	Northern tip of Iron Triangle	3rd housing project built as permanent, only one demolished	No, new housing on portion of site with same name
<b>Industrial</b>			
American Radiator & Standard Sanitary Co.	1089 Essex @ Critchett	Munitions	Yes
Arnot & Company	201 Nevin	Manufactured shipboard furniture under Govt. contract, as well as general office/library furniture	??
California Steel Products	Barrett @ "A"	Entirely new replacement plant built in 1942	??

## Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*

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Building or Site	Address	Significance	Extant?
Certain-teed Products	Chesley b/w SP and SF railroad tracks	Roofing for defense contracts (for local housing?)	??
<i>Chemurgic Corporation</i>	Giant Highway	Chemicals, pyrotechnics etc. under govt contract	??
Dorward & Sons and Philippine Refining Corp.	Pt. San Pablo (terminal 4)	Processing and shipping oils for Navy and lend-lease contracts.	No
Enterprise Foundry	Clinton Ave @ "D"	Cast iron, pattern work on government contracts	??
Gregg's Machine Works	649 21st Street	Industrial repair and defense work	??
<i>Filice &amp; Perrelli Canning Co.</i>	1200 S. 10th Street	fruit/veg. cannery, defense contracts	Yes
Independent Publishing	202 Tenth Street	Publisher of afternoon daily newspaper	No
Kaiser Shipyard Mold Loft	700 S. 4th Street	Mold loft for Yard One	Yes
Kaiser Shipyard Building	600 S. 4th Street	Unknown	Yes
Kaiser Shipyard Building	503 Cutting Blvd	Moved from Yard Two	Yes
<i>Kaiser Shipyard Hiring Hall</i>	Ninth and Nevin	Worker placement for shipyards	No
Mathews Welding Shop	1527 Barrett	offered welding courses	No
<i>National Oil Products Co.</i>	1141 S. 14th St (Marina Way So); moved from 1130 S. 10th Street in 1946	Government purchased vitamins made from fish liver oils	Yes
<i>Parr-Richmond Terminal One</i>	Foot of Dornan Drive	shipping support for defense industries	demolition expected
<i>Parr-Richmond Terminal Three</i>	East side of Harbor Channel, foot of 10th Street	Shipping support for defense industries	No

**Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves***  
**Buildings in italics are further described in accompanying narrative.**

<b>Building or Site</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Extant?</b>
<i>Point Molate Fuel Annex</i>	Point Molate/Winehaven	Stored and supplied fuel to military, merchant marine, and lend-lease fleets from 1943 to end of war	Yes
<i>Pullman Company</i>	Pullman and South Streets	Repaired troop transport cars	Partial
<i>Rheem Manufacturing Co.</i>	Chesley and SP RR tracks	Metal fabricating, galvanizing under government contract	Yes
Richmond Clothing Manufacturing	322 Seventh Street	Slacks, uniforms and defense contracts	No
Richmond Record Herald	22nd Street and Macdonald	Published morning paper	??
<i>Standard Oil Co.</i>	Standard Avenue	Major defense contractor	Partial
<i>Stauffer Chemicals</i>		Acid and chemical production on defense contract	No
<b>Labor</b>			
<i>Boilermakers Locals 513 and 317</i>	Mtgs and offices in Pillow Bldg, 707 Macdonald	Offices for major shipyard unions	No
<i>Boilermakers Aux #36</i>	1600 Barrett?	Auxiliary union for black shipyard workers	No
<i>Brotherhood Hall</i>	257 Fifth Street	Main union meeting hall, 1971 demolition permit to Grand Lodge F.A.M. - Masonic org.	No, demo. permit from 1971
Cannery and Vegetable Workers, Local 20794	246 14th Street	Office and meeting hall	??
<i>Musicians Local</i>	4 14th Street	moderne building constructed during war	Remodeled?
Painters Union No. 560	Mtgs at Moose Hall, 615 Macdonald Ave.		??

**Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front** *Donna Graves*

**Buildings in italics are further described in accompanying narrative.**

<b>Building or Site</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Extant?</b>
Shipyard Hiring Hall	9th and Nevin		No
Shipyard Unions	338 Ninth	Offices for several unions	??

## Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*

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Building or Site	Address	Significance	Extant?
<b>Recreation and Culture</b>			
Base Hit	512 Macdonald	Bar owned by Banducci Brothers from 1930s to 1970s	Yes
Costa Theater	710 Macdonald		No
<i>Fox California Theater</i>	823 Macdonald		No
Grand Theater	23rd and Rheem		??
Liberty Theater	14th and Macdonald		No
<i>Moose Club</i>	615 Macdonald	Civic organization that rented hall for music and dancing	No
Pablo Theater	2733 San Pablo		??
<i>Richmond Art and Craft Center</i>	237 Ninth Street		??
Richmond Bowl	220 11th Street	bowling alley	No
Richmond Bowling Courts	307 24th Street	bowling alley	??
Richmond Department of Recreation	School Board Bldg?	Developed and administered extensive Lanham-act funded programs for City	??
<i>Richmond Pool Hall</i>	327 Macdonald		Yes
<i>Richmond Public Library</i>	4th and Nevin, and branches		Yes
<i>Rio Theater</i>	412 Macdonald		Demolished 1994
<i>Savoy Club</i>	200 block of Chesley Street	Blues Club	??
Schwartz Ballroom	260 10th Street	Live music and dancing	No
State Theater	501 Macdonald		No



## Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*

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Building or Site	Address	Significance	Extant?
Studio Theater	811 Macdonald		No
<i>Tappers Inn</i>	715 Chesley Avenue	Blues Club	No
Times Theater	Macdonald near 23rd Street		Senior Center?
V Theater	Pt. Richmond		??
<b>Schools and Children</b>			
<i>Harbor Gate School</i>	19th St and Meeker	built near defense housing with local funds to accommodate new students	Demolished - portions moved to <i>Peres School</i>
<i>Lincoln School</i>	205 10th Street	district forced to open "condemned" buildings to house students	No
<i>Mira Vista School</i>	Barrett and Tassajara	New school added during WWII	School -Yes, historic structures unknown
<i>Peres School</i>	5th and Pennsylvania	added wartime nursery school program	Yes
<i>Nystrom School</i>	Tenth and Maine	overcrowding/substantial additions during WWII	Yes
<i>Point Molate School</i>	Point Molate/Winehaven	Conversion of bldg to accommodate new students from 1943-1950	??
Pullman School	41st and Waller	wartime additions to accommodate new students	Yes
<i>Richmond School Administration Building</i>	1108 Bissell	Administered Richmond school district under wartime expansion	Yes
<i>Stege Elementary School</i>	Potrero and School	extreme overcrowding from influx of children from nearby defense housing	Yes

# Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*

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Building or Site	Address	Significance	Extant?
<i>Washington School</i>	Richmond and Montana	24-hour childcare program opened in 1943	School - yes; childcare center building - ??
<b>Transportation, Streets &amp; Roads</b>			
<i>Greyhound Bus Terminal</i>	320 23rd Street	Arrival point for many migrants	Yes
<i>Santa Fe Railroad Depot</i>	Foot of Macdonald	carried defense materials, opened new station in 1944	No
<i>Shipyard Railway</i>	Moore Dry Dock to Richmond Shipyards	dedicated public transportation for shipyard workers	portions?
<i>Southern Pacific Railroad Depot</i>	16th and Macdonald		No
<i>Street and sewer improvements</i>	Primarily in shipyard and defense housing area		

**Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves***

**Buildings in italics are further described in accompanying narrative.**

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## Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*

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**Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front** *Donna Graves*

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**Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front** *Donna Graves*

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**Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves***

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Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*  
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**Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front** *Donna Graves*

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Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*  
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Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front *Donna Graves*  
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**Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front** *Donna Graves*

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