

# Teachers's

## Museum of History & Holocaust Education

### *Georgia in World War II: The Bell Bomber Plant*

# Guide



GRADE

8

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**KENNESAW STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

MUSEUMS, ARCHIVES AND RARE BOOKS  
*Museum of History and Holocaust Education*



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## *About this Teacher's Guide*

This curriculum guide for **eighth grade** teachers will help educate students about the role that Georgia played in World War II, and the impact that the war had on the people of Georgia. In exploring the history of the Bell Bomber plant in Marietta, Georgia, as well as other war industries and key individuals involved in Georgia politics, the lessons in this guide will help students understand the changes that Georgia encountered as a result of World War II.

Although many of the lessons in this guide focus on **Social Studies** standards, the activities are designed to be cross-curricular and can also be used for English Language Arts and Advanced Placement classes.

This guide is organized by individual lessons that are intended to take between one and two class periods to complete. We recognize, however, that not all teachers will be able to dedicate this amount of time to the topic of Georgia in World War II; the activities, therefore, can be pulled out of the lessons and stand alone as individual parts.

In designing this guide, we also sought to place a heavy emphasis on primary and secondary sources to teach this topic. All primary sources and worksheets that are needed for each lesson are included in the guide. Sources include images and oral history testimony.

**Teachers should review all resources provided in this guide before sharing them with students to determine the appropriateness for their class.**

***Credits:** The descriptions, activities, and graphics in this guide were developed by Dr. Richard Harker and Zoila Torres of Kennesaw State University's Museum of History and Holocaust Education. This guide was also designed to support an art exhibit curated by Matthew Harper, former Registrar of the Bernard A. Zuckerman Museum of Art at Kennesaw State University.*

## **Overview – The Bell Bomber Plant and the Growth of Modern Georgia**

For three-quarters of a century after the Civil War, the old Confederacy lagged far behind the victorious North in economic productivity. As late as 1940, per capita personal income in Georgia reached only 57 percent of the national average. Most other southern states were that bad or worse. World War II proved to be a watershed moment when the region finally started to catch up. The secret to the economic revival was a great influx of pump-priming federal dollars, spent primarily on defense. Marietta, Georgia, provides one of the best examples anywhere of how Georgia and the South escaped from economic stagnation and built a more hopeful future that allowed an ever-widening population to take advantage of its opportunities.

A couple of months after Pearl Harbor, on 19 February 1942, the War Department awarded a contract to the Buffalo (N.Y.)-based Bell Aircraft Corporation to build B-29 bombers in Marietta. At the time, Marietta contained fewer than 9,000 residents and Cobb County just over 38,000, but the area had several strategic advantages that appealed to military planners. First, it was neither in the Northeast nor on the West Coast. The Roosevelt administration was concerned that the concentration of the aircraft industry in those areas made it vulnerable to attack. Second, Marietta benefited from its proximity to Atlanta, the commercial and transportation hub of the Southeast. The two towns were connected by streetcar, by the Dixie Highway (today's Atlanta Road), and by a new U.S. 41, then under construction, which would become Georgia's first four-lane highway.

Despite these advantages, Marietta probably would not have won an aircraft industry had it not been blessed with a talented local leadership and a native son in Washington who knew how to get things done. In September 1940 the Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) started an emergency airport construction program to prepare the nation for the impending conflict. President Franklin Roosevelt chose Marietta-born Lucius D. Clay, to run the program. A West Point graduate and son of a former U.S. senator, Clay helped initiate the construction of some 450 airstrips in the fifteen months prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. When he was approached by a delegation led by Marietta mayor Rip Blair, an old family friend, Clay encouraged local leaders to gain title to a tract of land sufficient for an airstrip. They chose a rural area just south of Marietta between the Dixie Highway and the new U.S. 41. In June 1941 the CAA gave them an initial \$400,000 construction grant. More funds would follow. By the time the U.S. entered World War II, Cobb County was just completing Rickenbacker Field, named for World War I flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker, who, as president of Eastern Airlines, agreed to bring passenger flights to Marietta.

Rickenbacker Field had obvious military potential. During the war it became an Army Air Corps base (today's Dobbins). Meanwhile, the Cobb leadership lobbied for a Bell plant that could share the airstrip with the military. By that time, Clay had earned his first star as a brigadier general and had been appointed by Roosevelt to be the War Department's Director of Materiel with considerable influence over military contracts. His recommendation was perhaps the deciding factor in Marietta winning Bell Bomber. Clay later admitted that

he had a strong affection for the people of his hometown and “helped them in every way I could.” He noted that North Georgia “had a tremendous labor potential—both from Atlanta and from the surrounding mountain area” and that the plant “brought labor out of those hills that had never had an opportunity to work before.” Fortunately, Bell Bomber and the local school systems developed numerous training programs to make skilled laborers and managers out of people with no prior experience on assembly lines.

Originally estimated as a \$15 million project, the War Department ultimately pumped \$73 million into the plant. Atlanta-based Robert & Company designed and managed its construction. The main B-1 assembly building covered over 3.2 million square feet and took over a year to finish. According to Robert & Company president Chip Robert, B-1 was big enough for 63 football fields, could house the nation’s cotton crop, and had a roof four and a half stories high. Including the B-2 administration building and various other structures, the total project encompassed almost 4.2 million square feet, making it the Deep South’s largest business facility.

In its brief history the plant had four general managers. The first three, Captain Harry E. Collins, Omer Woodson, and Carl Cover, had substantial experience in the industry. The last, James V. Carmichael, was a lawyer-politician with no background in airplane manufacturing. Nonetheless, company founder and president, Larry Bell, was impressed from the beginning by Carmichael’s brilliance and political astuteness. In 1942 Bell bypassed several blue chip Atlanta law firms to choose Carmichael as company attorney. The Marietta lawyer became general manager in late November 1944, after his predecessor was killed in a tragic plane crash. In a private letter Bell told Carmichael how happy he was to find a southerner, and especially a “Marietta boy,” who was capable of running the giant enterprise. Despite lacking an engineering background, Carmichael mastered technical language and details quickly. His greatest asset was his ability to judge character. By surrounding himself with first-rate assistants, he managed to keep the assembly lines producing on schedule while maintaining an impeccable safety record.

Still in the design stage at the start of the war, the Boeing-engineered B-29 would be the country’s largest bomber and have the longest range. Its main service came in the war in the Pacific. In addition to Bell Bomber in Marietta, this magnificent plane was produced at a Martin plant in Omaha and at Boeing factories in Wichita and suburban Seattle. Eventually, 663 Marietta-built aircraft were delivered to the military. Housing was in short supply throughout the war, and many Marietta families took in boarders. In 1943 the federal government built a 500-unit housing project along Fairground and Clay Streets called Marietta Place. Of masonry construction, the average apartment consisted of a living room, kitchen/dinette, bedroom, and bath. Within the project, the government provided a community and a child service building. In the latter the Marietta school system operated a federally funded twenty-four hour daycare facility for children of Bell employees.

Bell Bomber reached its peak employment of 28,158 workers in February 1945. About nine in ten were southerners with the vast majority coming from communities in North Georgia.

Some 37 percent were women, 8 percent African-American, and 6 percent physically disabled. Opportunities for advancement were limited for women and blacks, and the job sites were segregated. Yet Bell's record was no worse than other southern industries of that era, and its pay scale was substantially higher. The plant afforded a chance for a diverse group of Georgians to help themselves and to serve their country in time of need. As Jimmie Carmichael later observed, "aircraft payrolls helped build the new Cobb County."

By mid-1945 the plant began scaling back in preparation for the end of the war. Shortly after the Japanese surrender, the government canceled the B-29 contract. By the end of September the Georgia Division was down to a few thousand workers. Bell and Carmichael feared that employees would be angry when they received their pink slips, but the opposite was the case. When the general manager called a mass meeting to make the announcement, numerous workers came up to tell him how grateful they were that they had been able to aid the war effort.

The local economy slowed slightly after the plant closed, but Marietta avoided serious unemployment, and the percentage of occupied houses and apartments remained high. During the War Rip Blair, Jimmie Carmichael, and their partners had built Pine Forest, a large private development of duplex homes on tree-lined streets just west of the Four-Lane Highway. It became a popular location in the late 1940s for upward-bound young families. Fred Bentley, Sr., recalls coming home on leave from the Navy in 1945 and getting lost in Pine Forest. He had planned to move elsewhere after his military service, but he remarked, "For me to get lost in Marietta, Georgia—especially here where I had grown up—was amazing." Realizing that "things [were] happening here," he scrapped his plans, went to law school, and eventually developed a highly successful Marietta practice.

The government used the massive B-1 building to store abandoned machine tools, while the Veterans Administration and other agencies took over the B-2 building. The population of Cobb County reached 62,000 by 1950, up over 60 percent from the total a decade earlier. In that year the U.S. found itself in an undeclared war in Asia and in January 1951, the Air Force invited the Lockheed Corporation to reopen the plant, with its first task the refurbishing of B-29s for the Korean Conflict. While Bell Bomber had been strictly an assembly plant, with the technical design work done outside the South, Lockheed-Georgia soon became a full-operation facility, with all the work from design to production completed on-site. The recruitment of large numbers of engineers in the 1950s would have a major impact on the local culture. What Bell had started, Lockheed brought to fruition as metropolitan Atlanta threw off the vestiges of a "colonial economy" and became a dynamic part of modern America.

By Thomas A. Scott  
Professor Emeritus of History  
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**Georgia Standards of Excellence correlated with *Georgia in World War II: The Bell Bomber Plant* activities:**

**EIGHTH GRADE**

These lessons meet the criteria for the following 8th Grade Georgia Standards of Excellence:

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

**SS8H9: Describe the role of Georgia in WWII.**

- a. Describe key events leading up to American involvement in World War II; include the Lend-Lease Act and the bombing of **Pearl Harbor**.
- b. Evaluate the purpose and economic impact of the **Bell Bomber Plant**, military bases, and the **Savannah** and Brunswick **shipyards**.
- c. Explain the economic and military contributions of **Richard Russell** and **Carl Vinson**.

**READING STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES: KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS**

- L6-8RHSS1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- L6-8RHSS2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

**CRAFT AND STRUCTURE**

- L6-8RHSS4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
- L6-8RHSS5: Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).
- L6-8RHSS6: Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

**INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS**

- L6-8RHSS7: Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- L6-8RHSS9: Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

**WRITING STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES: TEXT TYPES AND PURPOSES**

- L6-8WHST1: Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.
- L6-8WHST2: Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.



**PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF WRITING**

L6-8WHST4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

L6-8WHST6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

**RESEARCH TO BUILD AND PRESENT KNOWLEDGE**

L6-8WHST7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

L6-8WHST8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

L6-8WHST9: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research.

# One

## What are Primary Sources?

### Objectives:

- Understand primary sources and why they are important for historical study.
- Develop analytical techniques analyzing primary sources.

### Materials needed:

Whiteboard, projector, and computer with Internet access.

### Instructions:

1. Ask the students to define primary sources. Brainstorm ideas as a class. Use the following definition, projected or written on the board, as well as examples from this teacher's guide, for discussion:

*“Primary sources are the raw materials of history — original documents and objects which were created at the time under study. They are different from secondary sources, accounts or interpretations of events created by someone without firsthand experience.”*

**Source: Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/>**

2. Brainstorm with the class why primary sources may be useful for historians and people studying the past. Possible suggestions may be: that primary sources help us understand what individuals and groups thought or saw at a certain point in time and that they provide a different perspective on historical events.
3. Discuss what potential problems could arise from using primary sources to learn about the past. Possible problems could include: every primary source includes biases and perspectives, no primary source should be treated without caution, the author of the source is not always clear.
4. Present the students with examples of different types of primary sources, for example photographs, oral histories, and film and brainstorm different methods for analyzing these sources. Instruct the students that asking certain questions of each primary source is crucial. Suggested questions may include: Who created this primary source? When was it created? Where does your eye go first? What was the creator's purpose in making this primary source? What does the creator do to get his or her point across?
5. Have the students consult the Library of Congress Studying Primary Sources website to further understand the types of questions and methods needed to successfully analyze primary sources: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/>.
6. Display a primary source from this teacher's guide on the white board and analyze it with the class to practice using probing analytical questions.

# Two

## The Bell Bomber Plant

### Objectives:

- Develop a deep understanding of the development of the Bell Bomber Plant.
- Identify the most important moments in the plant's history throughout World War II.
- Understand what happened to the Bell Bomber Plant at the end of World War II.

### Materials needed:

Computers with Internet access, pens/pencils, paper, and copies of Dr. Thomas A. Scott's "Overview – The Bell Bomber Plant and the Growth of Modern Georgia" (page 4 – 6).

### Instructions:

1. Project a map of Georgia on to the whiteboard and highlight the Bell Bomber Plant (now Lockheed Martin Aeronautical Systems and Dobbins Air Reserve Base (ARB) in Marietta, GA.) Ensure that the students understand the geographical location of the Bell Bomber plant in relation to Atlanta, and within the state of Georgia.
2. Explain briefly that the Bell Bomber Plant was a plant that built B-29 Bombers during World War II and the establishment of the plant in Marietta changed the nature of both Marietta and Cobb County. Explain that these developments were part of broader changes happening throughout Georgia and the South during World War II.
3. Divide the students into groups of two or three and ask them to research and answer the following questions. You may distribute copies of Dr. Scott's overview included in this teacher's guide, or instruct the students to use resources in the media center and/or online for this group work.
  - When and why was the Bell Bomber Plant established?
  - Who lobbied for the Bell Bomber Plant to open in Marietta? Why?
  - What effect did the Bell Bomber Plant have on Marietta and Cobb County?
  - What happened to the Bell Bomber Plant as the war began to come to an end in 1945?
  - What did the Bell Bomber Plant do after World War II?
4. Ask different groups to present their answers to certain questions and discuss the answers to these questions as a class.

# Three

## Bell Bomber Plant Photography Analysis

### Objectives:

- Analyze photographs from the Bell Bomber Plant.
- Utilize analytical skills to draw connections between photographs from the Bell Bomber Plant and written evidence about the plant.

### Materials needed:

Computer with Internet access, projector, whiteboard, pens/pencils, paper, and copies of the photographic primary sources (Source Sheets A-J).

### Instructions:

1. Remind the students of the necessary questions to ask of photographs in order to ensure that a photograph is thoroughly and successfully analyzed. Consult the Library of Congress photograph analysis template for guidance: [http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing\\_Photos\\_and\\_Prints.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Photos_and_Prints.pdf).
2. Divide the class into groups of two or three students and distribute copies of the primary source photography included in this teacher's guide (Source Sheets A-J). Ask each group to analyze their photograph by answering the following questions:
  - What details are shown about the Bell Bomber Plant in this photograph?
  - What details about the Bell Bomber Plant are not shown here? Why do you think that is?
  - Does this photograph tell us anything about the relationship between men and women in Georgia during World War II?
  - Does this photograph tell us anything about race relations in Georgia during the war?
  - What does this photograph tell us about conditions for workers at the Bell Bomber Plant?
  - Why do you think this image was made?
  - Who was the audience for this image?
3. After the students have analyzed one photograph, instruct them to swap photographs with another group and to analyze the new photograph using the questions above. Ask the groups to analyze as many photographs as time allows.
4. Once the students have finished, pair groups together and ask each group to share their photographs and their analyses with the other group.
5. Ask each group to present their original photograph to the class and share their analyses. Project each group's photograph onto the whiteboard while they present their analysis.
6. Discuss as a class how each photograph compliments or contrasts with the information about the Bell Bomber Plant that they researched and presented in activity 2. Discuss possible reasons for these similarities and/or contrasts.

**Source Sheet A:**



*View of the Bell Bomber Plant with Kennesaw Mountain in the background.*

*Source: B-02-011, June 7, 1943, Bell Aircraft Georgia Division, 1942-45, SC/B/001, Box 1, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

**Source Sheet B:**



*The Bell Bomber Plant.*

*Source: B-02-021, no date, Bell Aircraft Georgia Division, 1942-45, SC/B/001, Box 1, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

**Source Sheet C:**



*Office workers, Janice Kilmer, and two others.*

*Source: B-03-028, no date, Bell Aircraft Georgia Division, 1942-45, SC/B/001, Box 1, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

**Source Sheet D:**



*Women working on an electrical harness.*

*Source: B-03-037, no date, Bell Aircraft Georgia Division, 1942-45, SC/B/001, Box 1, Kennesaw State University Archives.*



**Source Sheet E:**



*Workers in the plastic nose section.*

*Source: B-03-041, no date, Bell Aircraft Georgia Division, 1942-45, SC/B/001, Box 1, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

**Source Sheet F:**



*The Bell Bomber photography plant.*

*Source: B-03-083, no date, Bell Aircraft Georgia Division, 1942-45, SC/B/001, Box 1, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

**Source Sheet G:**



*Shift change at the Bell Bomber Plant.*

*Source: B-03-088, no date, Bell Aircraft Georgia Division, 1942-45, SC/B/001, Box 1, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

**Source Sheet H:**



*The Georgia Peach and Major Millar, 09/13/1944.*

*Source: B-04-017, September 13, 1944, Bell Aircraft Georgia Division, 1942-45, SC/B/001, Box 1, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

**Source Sheet I:**



*The Fifth War Loan Rally at the Bell Bomber Plant.*

*Source: B-05-020, no date, Bell Aircraft Georgia Division, 1942-45, SC/B/001, Box 1, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

**Source Sheet J:**



*B-29 Bombers nearing completion.*

*Source: B-04-004, no date, Bell Aircraft Georgia Division, 1942-45, SC/B/001, Box 1, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

# Four

## Bell Bomber Plant Oral History Analysis

### Objectives:

- Analyze first hand accounts of life at the Bell Bomber Plant.
- Draw connections between oral histories, photographs, and other accounts of the Bell Bomber Plant.

### Materials needed:

Computer with Internet access, projector, whiteboard, pens/pencils, paper, copies of the oral histories (Oral Histories 1-5).

### Instructions:

1. Distribute copies of the oral histories included with this teacher's guide (Oral Histories 1-5) to each student.
2. Ask each student to analyze their oral history by answering the following questions:
  - What was this person's experience of the Bell Bomber Plant during the war?
  - What emotions does he/she associate with his/her work during the war? Why do you think this is?
  - What are the main events and experiences that he/she speaks about? Why do you think he/she focuses on some aspects and not others?
  - What was the most surprising piece of information you learned reading this oral history and why?
  - Are there any pieces of information that you would want to ask a follow-up question about? What would your follow-up question be?
3. Pair together students who analyzed the same individual and have them share their answers.
4. Discuss each individual feature in the oral histories as a class and discuss similarities and differences between the different individuals. Also discuss the differences and similarities between the experiences of men and women as well as the differences of experience between African Americans and whites at the Bell Bomber Plant.
5. As a class, compare and contrast the information gained from these oral histories with the photographs studied in activity 3. What pieces of information about the Bell Bomber Plant are similar and/or different from the images and the oral histories?
6. Also discuss how these oral history testimonies compare and contrast to the information that the students researched in activity 2 from secondary sources.

7. After completing this discussion, ask the students to revisit their oral history and identify any problems or elements of bias that may exist within the primary source. They should ask the following questions of their oral history:
  - What was the purpose of this oral history?
  - What can you tell about the person telling the story, and about that person's point of view?
  - How does encountering this story firsthand change its emotional impact?
8. Conclude by discussing the students answers as a class or ask the students to write down their answers to be used for an activating activity the following day.



## Oral History Source Sheet 1: Betty L. Williams

*Mrs. Williams supervised a large number of men during her time at the Bell Bomber Plant.*

**TS:** Okay, what was your first job at Bell Aircraft when you first started working here? What was the first job that they had you doing?

**BW:** *I started on the wing.*

**TS:** On the wing.

**BW:** *Right. Well, your first few weeks you're actually not working; you're only observing the few people that do know how to work.*

**TS:** So you're watching somebody assemble the wing.

**BW:** *Right. Then it won't be long until they would pick someone out of that group, and they would be a leader. It works like that.*

**TS:** So you start out observing the wings being assembled.

**BW:** *Right. The wing would be brought in to our department just as a frame and then . . .*

**TS:** Oh, so the frame's already made before it gets to you.

**BW:** *Right.*

**TS:** Do you remember what department you were in, what the number was on it?

**BW:** *38-6.*

**TS:** So the framing comes in. Then what all do you do to it?

**BW:** *When you say it comes in, you don't pick up something and move it. You move what it's on. When it would get to me it would be fastened together. Then we started to put the big sheets of metal to . . .*

**TS:** So it's already fastened to the plane by the time you're working on it?

**BW:** *No.*

**TS:** How do they move the frame to your work station?

**BW:** *There's a picture with the stair-step things on it. Just as if we'd lined up six of these chairs, and they're fastened together. Then you would build on there. What we would do is move the whole chair thing down, so it would be the whole . . .*

**TS:** So the main thing you're doing then is putting this sheet metal on the plane? Is it aluminum or what kind of metal is it that makes the wing?

**BW:** *Steel, isn't it?*

**TS:** I guess it would be steel, wouldn't it? And does it have any kind of . . . ?

**BW:** *Well, now, you have huge, huge cranes up overhead that will bring in these big sheets of metal and things and set them down where you need them and various parts and frames and things.*

**TS:** These are really dumb questions on my part but do you rivet them on or how do you attach them to the frame?

**BW:** *The blue prints will show you exactly where the rivets are supposed to go, and that has to really be exact. If you threw a foot off here you would throw, you know. . . .*

**TS:** We're looking at a picture of a team of riveters on the center wing section at Bell's Marietta Plant Number 6, which, of course, is the plant here in Marietta. It shows the workers going up steps. They're on a platform where they're high enough to work on the wing that is turned sideways, isn't it?

*Oral History Source Sheet 1: Betty L. Williams*

**BW:** Right.

**TS:** And so they're doing the riveting and I guess various other jobs.

**BW:** *The metal and things are brought in by that crane. It would set it down on this right here.*

**TS:** So a crane brings in the wing and puts it . . .

**BW:** *The wing will be built right there, but it brings in this heavy thing.*

**TS:** This is from a book, Building the B-29, by Jacob Vander Meulen. So that's the kind of work that you were doing then?

**BW:** *After it had an inspection stamp on the whole thing, then I would check my blue prints. Then we would start the counter sinking. Counter sinking is completely different from riveting, because it's making a little funnel shaped hole so that the rivet will fit down in it. Now, if the counter sinker makes the hole too large or too small, they are in trouble. Of course, too small, is easy; but too large well, that's more trouble. Then they have the inspectors come and decide what they want to do about that. Generally, most of the time it would pass by using such and such size rivet, if it wasn't going to put too much strain on the part.*

**TS:** So if they've drilled the hole too large you use a larger rivet.

**BW:** *Right, but they don't like to do that because actually it weakens the wing. Too many of those holes in that piece would cause the section to have been junked. But that was all I was responsible for was that top of the wing.*

**TS:** Now when you started working at Bell, were you already a sub-foreman or sub-supervisor?

**BW:** *No, they had not . . .*

**TS:** Okay, so you were just building the wing when you started out, right, and then you get promoted . . .

**BW:** *They weren't building any yet.*

**TS:** Right, when you first got here. How long does it take before you're in a supervisory position?

**BW:** *Like I told you before, it wasn't that I was intelligent. It was just that they did not have any people here that had experience. That's why within three or four months I was in the supervisor capacity.*

**TS:** Now how many people did you supervise, would you say?

**BW:** *It would be between thirteen and twenty-five on a crew. It was according to how fast they had to have that job done. For instance, if my counter sink people were not doing their job, then they held up the riveters that would come in behind them. Then in turn they would hold up something else. It would get to where it would hold up the actual assembly line. It's quite a sight for them to put all these wings and everything together like you were doing a toy thing. When they're all lined up over there getting ready to. . . .*

**TS:** When you supervised say thirteen to twenty-five, does this include the counter sink workers and the riveters?

**BW:** *No, mine was counter sink only.*

**TS:** So you're supervising all those that are doing the counter sink.

**BW:** Right.

**TS:** Or would you say the people who are counter sinking? Would that be right? Is that good English?

**BW:** *[chuckle] Or sinkers.*

**TS:** What would they call them? Did they have a title?

**BW:** *Just a counter sinker.*

**TS:** You would be a counter sinker.

**BW:** Yes.

**TS:** All right. I understand that this was men and women that you were supervising?

**BW:** Right. Mostly men though because there was a greater amount of men there than women.

**TS:** How unusual or how typical was that to have women who were supervising men on the assembly line?

**BW:** Very bad. [chuckle]

**TS:** Not too many were there?

**BW:** No, no, and they did not like it. Oh, mercy.

**TS:** They didn't?

**BW:** No, no, I had three strikes against me to start with. Like I told you, I didn't know I was a Yankee until I got here. I was much younger than they. The men would have a wife and three or four kids. There I would be, eighteen years old. They didn't care for that. If a new job came in, they'd hand me some new blue prints to check. I would have to prove by doing. I couldn't just tell them, well, let's do this this way. I would have to actually do it to show them that I knew how before they would do it.

**TS:** They just automatically assumed you didn't know how until you showed them that you did.

**BW:** Well, they weren't against me. It was just that I was a woman; "You're a woman and you should be home doing the pots and pans and cooking cornbread."

**TS:** [chuckle] So there weren't very many women in supervisory jobs then?

**BW:** No. I didn't know of any others except Sylvie and I that were on the assembly. I don't know how many they probably had as far as the secretary and the office workers and this, that and the other. It was just more or less this is your space. Do it and that's it.

**TS:** So you didn't pay that much attention to what other people were doing.

**BW:** No, you didn't run around and say, "How's your department doing today?"

**TS:** Right, you minded your own business. But still this had to be very rare for you to be supervising men.

**BW:** Right.

**TS:** Probably not many in the whole plant who were doing that. But Sylvie had men under her supervision too?

**BW:** Yes. And she was on down on the fuselage, though she wasn't in my department.

**TS:** What part of the fuselage did she work on?

**BW:** Up at the nose.

**TS:** Up in the nose section?

**BW:** Yes. In fact, I think in that picture we were looking out her window.

**TS:** Oh, I see, right. So you are in the nose section for the picture to be taken.

**BW:** Yes.

**TS:** Now, what did she do in there? She's just working on the fuselage, I guess, isn't she, finishing that nose section?

**BW:** She had to make sure that these beams were set straight and fastened in the way they're supposed to be.

*Oral History Source Sheet 1: Betty L. Williams*

**TS:** I understand that in places like the nose section they used a lot of women because the men were sometimes too big to get in there comfortably. Had you heard that before?

**BW:** *That's mostly on the fighter planes.*

**TS:** Not so much true on the B-29's?

**BW:** *Yes, you could get Elvis in there. [chuckle]*

**TS:** It looks like there's a lot of room in there. How long were you in the supervisory job? It's at least a year, wasn't it that you were supervising?

**BW:** *I guess it'd be in the year and a half until I left. After my husband got killed I left and went back up to Indiana for awhile. Then when I came back that's when they were closing Bell down. I didn't see any point in going back to work for that little bit at the time.*

*Interview with Betty L. Williams (BW), conducted by Thomas A. Scott (TS), Sunday, 22 October 2000, Cobb County Oral History Series No. 73, KSU/45/05/001 Kennesaw State University Oral History Project, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

**Oral History Source Sheet 2: Ernestine J. Slade**

*Mrs. Slade worked at the Bell Bomber Plant during World War II and describes being an African American woman at that time.*

**KK:** Now when did you go to work in between all of these eight children that you had?

**ES:** *I always managed somehow to work. And having children, it was necessary to work. And when I started working out at Bell Aircraft, he was working on the day shift.*

**KK:** At Bell?

**ES:** *Uh-huh. And I worked at night.*

**KK:** So you coordinated your child care?

**ES:** *Yes. And my oldest children were old enough to kind of help, you know, see after each other.*

**KK:** Now what kind of work did you do before you went to Bell Aircraft? **ES** Housekeeping and laundry work. **KK** And did you work for people here in this area?

**ES:** *In Marietta?*

**KK:** Uh-huh.

**ES:** *Yes, I did.*

**KK:** Did you work always for white people or different people?

**ES:** *I worked for white during that time.*

**KK:** How did you like that work?

**ES:** *I enjoyed it because my grandmother had taught me how to do the laundry work. What I did was, I would stretch curtains -- do you know anything about it?*

**KK:** No.

**ES:** *Putting curtains on stretchers and you would charge so much for each pair. And I would do linens because you could get a little more money for doing linens than you could for just doing a whole wash. Although I've done the family wash, too, but my specialty was washing and stretching curtains and doing the linens, the tablecloths and things like that -- that's special work.*

**KK:** Did you work for more than one family or did you work for just one family at a time?

**ES:** *Well, in that laundry work I could do work for more than one family.*

.....

**KK:** So what a big change, then, from you doing laundry and being more or less self-employed, to going to work at a big company like Bell Aircraft. Tell me about -- how did that come about?

**ES:** *Well, I tell you, I had been working for this family of people helping them. And I was always one who wanted to make as much money as I could possibly make to help carry on the family. And I worked for this family of people I'm going to tell you about off and on for eight years. It was a little difficult when Bell first came here for a person who had a regular job, a domestic worker, to get on. Because, see, like they had an understanding or had discussed or didn't want to take nobody's help away from them, especially a person who was working for, you know, a well-to-do family.*

**KK:** So you mean the rich, white people had an agreement with Bell that --

**ES:** *If you went there, and you were working for one of these well-to-do families, you could not get on at Bell easily. And you made so much money at Bell -- much more money at Bell than you could make working for a permanent family. So me and my friends, we didn't go to the employment office here in Marietta. We went into Atlanta to the employment office. And that's how I got hired. Then I came back, and I told this lady that I had been working for, they hired me that day,*

*Oral History Source Sheet 2: Ernestine J. Slade*

*told me when I could start to work. So that weekend, I told her. I said, "Now I'm going to start working at the Bomber Club" -- that's what we called it. Well, naturally, she didn't like it, but she didn't fuss too much about it. And I said, "I'll be leaving you." And so I went on that Monday morning to work out at Bell.*

**KK:** So she wasn't very happy about that?

**ES:** *She wasn't pleased about it at all, huh-uh. She asked me what was I going to do when the war was over and the plant would be closed down. "Had you thought about you're going to need somewhere to work?" I said, "Well, I'm sure I'll find something."*

**KK:** So you were confident you had enough skills you could find a job?

**ES:** *Well, I had always been able to find work.*

.....

**KK:** Now when you went to Bell, what kinds of job openings were there and what led you to the job that you took?

**ES:** *I can tell you what I did. It was something like the finishing department where they sent all parts that went into the airplane, regardless of how small they were, through some kind of treatment process. We would clean those parts, and they would put it in a machine and then some kind of solution and what-have-you. I don't know whether it was strengthening or just to be sure it was clean or what. And then sometimes, after they had got a part of the plane completed, we'd go inside of that plane and clean it all in the inside. Those long parts to the plane, sometimes we'd have to take something like steel wool and rub them; and then they would put them through this process I'm telling you about. And the little, bitty pieces like that, we had in the buckets, we'd drop them in. They'd put them through this process.*

**KK:** Did you work Monday through Friday?

**ES:** *Yes, yes, I did.*

**KK:** From like nine to five?

**ES:** *No, I went on the evening shift.*

**KK:** Because your husband -- that's right, your husband was working days.

**ES:** *Yes. We would go in around 11:00 or 11:45 and work until -- now my older children had started to school. And see, I'd get here early enough to see that all was well with them and that their clothes and everything were on properly and so forth, and they could get to school without being late.*

**KK:** Uh-huh. So you went to work at what time, then?

**ES:** *I think it was around 12:00, 12:45.*

**KK:** Was that noon or at midnight?

**ES:** *At night -- midnight. KK Midnight?*

**ES:** *Uh-huh. KK And then you worked until about 8:00 in the morning?*

**ES:** *That's right.*

**KK:** So when you came home then, some of your children were just getting up and getting ready to go to school?

**ES:** *Yes. I'd come in from work, do my cleaning, do my wash and my laundry work, wash the children's clothes, iron whatever needed to be done, then I would lay down and go to sleep. And when they would come in the afternoon, I'd get up and do their dinner, fix their meals for them, and have that ready for them so they could eat. Then I'd lay down again and take another little nap before going to work at night. I'd comb the girls' hair at home for the next day, and I put*

*stocking caps over their heads so their hair would stay nice, and give them their bath and get them ready for bed and get them in the bed before I'd leave.*

**KK:** I see. Did they leave for school before you got home in the morning, then?

**ES:** *No, no.*

**KK:** But you didn't have time to do all of that?

**ES:** *I lived right over there just above the school. They could get to school in three or four minutes, you know.*

**KK:** I see. Was your husband a big help at home?

**ES:** *Yes, he was very helpful.*

**KK:** So he helped you with the chores around the house? It wasn't as divided as some people talk now, where the woman does all the housework and the man works outside of the home. Did you all work together?

**ES:** *Well, see, he couldn't do much toward helping me in the mornings because he went to work on the morning shift. But we managed, you know. We had an understanding and we managed.*

**KK:** How much money did you make at Bell, do you remember?

**ES:** *Oh, Lord. It was like a million dollars, my first paycheck -- it was about 33 or 34 dollars. I can't tell you the exact amount.*

**KK:** For one week?

**ES:** *For one week.*

**KK:** And what had you been used to being paid?

**KK:** Ten -- seven and ten dollars a week. **KK** Now it sounds like a very small amount, but at the time, was that enough money for you?

**ES:** *It wasn't enough, but we had to manage, you know. No black woman made a whole lot of money. I remember some of our neighbors and friends used to work for five dollars a week.*

**KK:** What would a white woman make at that time compared to that?

**ES:** *You know, I don't rightly know.*

**KK:** But a lot more?

**ES:** *But it would be some more, it was a difference.*

**KK:** When you went to Bell, do you think black people and white people were paid the same for the same jobs?

**ES:** *Well, you know, I'm not sure about that. But I did hear them say that there was a difference -- it was a difference in the salaries, but more than what they had been used to making.*

**KK:** So as a black woman, you made more than you had made before, but you didn't necessarily make as much money as a white woman at Bell?

**ES:** *That's right, that's right. Uh-huh.*

**KK:** Well, that was about three times what you were used to making.

**ES:** *Yes.*

**KK:** I can see that that was a lot of money.

**ES:** *Big money, big money -- I tell you. And I was proud of it.*

**KK:** Where you worked in your unit at Bell, was that all black women working together?

**ES:** *No, black and white worked together.*

*Oral History Source Sheet 2: Ernestine J. Slade*

**KK:** So the plant was not segregated at that time?

**ES:** *Not to an extent, no.*

**KK:** I'll bet that some jobs weren't available --

**ES:** *For blacks.*

**KK:** Right.

**ES:** *Well, you know not, no.*

**KK:** Some of the women that I've talked to that worked in secretarial services, for example, there were no black women --

**ES:** *That's true, that's true.*

**KK:** What kinds of jobs were available for black women at Bell?

**ES:** *Well, just they worked in the cafeteria.*

**KK:** Serving food?

**ES:** *Helping to prepare the food.*

**KK:** And cooking?

**ES:** *Uh-huh. Some of them had a little better job than I had and a better paying job. Because I can't say how much, I don't remember now how much.*

**KK:** But there were certain jobs that were available to you, but there were others that were not available to you?

**ES:** *Indeed so, indeed so.*

**KK:** And you said your husband worked in janitorial. Did he do that by choice or was that because he was a black man and that was limited?

**ES:** *Well, I think -- now I'm not -- when he went to apply for work there he was able to get what was available at that time. I know the majority of the black men worked in janitorial.*

**KK:** They did?

**ES:** *Uh-huh.*

**KK:** That's hard to understand now.

**ES:** *Yes, it is.*

**KK:** It's hard to accept. ES Oh, yes, it is.

**KK:** You must have been a strong woman from your years at the work that you did for these wealthy white families. You must have been physically strong --

**ES:** *I was.*

**KK:** -- especially having eight children. So did you have any trouble adapting to the physical labor at Bell?

**ES:** *No, no.*

**KK:** It doesn't sound like it.

**ES:** *No, no -- none at all.*

**KK:** What did you wear to work every day?

**ES:** *Slacks -- I wore a blouse and pants.*

**KK:** Not a uniform?

**ES:** *No, but all the ladies working in my department, we were required to wear slacks and blouses.*



**KK:** Was that new for you?

**ES:** Yes, indeed so.

**KK:** What did you think of that?

**ES:** Well, I was glad to have work. It was just quite all right.

*Interview with Ernestine J. Slade (ES), conducted by Kathryn A. (Kitty) Kelley (KK), 28 April 1992, Cobb County Oral History Series, No. 28, KSU/45/05/001 Kennesaw State University Oral History Project, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

### Oral History Source Sheet 3: Ruth Asbell Ivey

*Mrs. Ivey worked as a secretary at the Bell Aircraft plant in Marietta during World War II. The interview focuses primarily on her experiences during that time.*

**KK:** Now did you come to Atlanta right after your business school experience?

**RI:** Yes.

**KK:** How did you happen to do that?

**RI:** Well, I had a friend there, a girl that I had been in school with. She said, "Let's go to Atlanta." Now Mother and Daddy were not very happy about this. "Let's go to Atlanta and get a job with Bell Aircraft." And I said, "Doing what?" "Well, you know, whatever." So we got on the bus, and we came to Atlanta. I wouldn't have wanted my little girl to do it, but anyway -- we came to Atlanta. It was in Atlanta somewhere when we knew where to go for interviews and tests and whatever and did whatever was necessary. Then we went back to Athens, and then we were notified. She didn't stay very long. We came back and went back to work. But the thing about it was, you have to have a place to live. So somewhere along the line, and I couldn't tell you to save my life how I heard about this -- right on the corner of Peachtree and Fourteenth Street -- it's not there anymore. There is a Gorin's Ice Cream or something there [now]; but there was a great, great, big, big, big house, which was a boarding house. Just the typical boarding house, I guess. And somewhere -- and it may have been from information when we took the tests and did the stuff, I don't know -- but somehow or other that was a place that was recommended. So we got a room there. As I said, she wasn't very happy, and she didn't stay very long. But anyway, I stayed for about two and a half years.

**KK:** Now how much money did you have in your pocket when you arrived in Atlanta?

**RI:** Well, very little. I don't know, but it couldn't have been very much, because we didn't have very much money. I'm sure that Mother and Dad wouldn't have let me come off without having enough to be sure I could get here and get back and have something to eat and whatever. I was talking to my sister-in-law this morning. I said, I was trying to think how much money we made. I didn't live very long there in town. Well, I lived there maybe six months; I don't know. And it was really kind of a nice place to live, because it wasn't very far down to Tenth Street. There was the movie, and there was the -- I mean, it wasn't like it is now. It was entirely different.

**KK:** Was it well chaperoned? Was it proper for a young girl to live in a place --

**RI:** Yes, it was quite proper. Everything was very proper. I mean, the people who ran the thing -- boy, you behaved or you probably would have gotten thrown out.

**KK:** Who ran the place?

**RI:** You know, I don't remember. I couldn't tell you to save my life. But, as I said, everybody -- they were all working girls.

**KK:** All the girls lived there -- no men?

**RI:** All girls. I don't think there were any -- I cannot recall if there were any men there at all. I think there were all girls. And, like I said, everybody behaved very well. I don't recall there ever being any problem of any kind.

**KK:** Do you remember how much it cost to stay there?

**RI:** No, I don't. I'm sorry, but I don't.

**KK:** Did it feel expensive to you or was it reasonable to you?

**RI:** No, it must not have, because I managed. Of course, I had to have transportation. See, I was working out at Marietta; so I had to have transportation, I had to have food, and I had to have -- you know, to pay. So I got along okay. I never got in any real trouble with money. When at first, I came out on the streetcar -- you know, there was a streetcar?

**KK:** Yes.

**RI:** *I mean, it was pretty good transportation. And then after I had been working awhile and got acquainted with some people, then I rode with somebody who drove.*

**KK:** In a private car?

**RI:** *Yes, right.*

**KK:** Did other girls that were living in that boarding home work at Bell Bomber also?

**RI:** *Yes. Some of them did, and some of them worked at other places in Atlanta. One that I remember -- I can't remember her name -- but one of them worked on one of the newspapers in Atlanta. And some of them were going to school, taking some kind of courses and living in Atlanta -- just various and sundry things.*

**KK:** Were you more excited about coming to Atlanta or to Bell Aircraft?

**RI:** *Oh, well, probably about coming to Atlanta. I mean, it was a big city; and I had only been to Atlanta a couple of times in my whole life.*

**KK:** So you were adventurous?

**RI:** *Yes, I was. Also, it was real exciting to have a job and have some money.*

**KK:** After growing up in such a large family, how did it feel to be on your own?

**RI:** *I think I was always a little independent, probably. I mean, in spite of the fact I was the youngest, I think I was a little independent. And, of course, the older ones were gone; and there were just Mother and Dad and me -- and well, Henry until he went in the Navy. But I lived probably there at Fourteenth Street for about six months -- I can't remember exactly. But then a very, very good friend who worked in the same office that I did at Bell, she and her folks lived out on Peachtree Hills Avenue, just off of Peachtree Road at Peachtree Creek. We spent a lot of time together, and I spent a lot of time at her house. Eventually, I guess, her folks decided if I was going to spend time there, they just asked me to move in. They already had the house full. I don't know why [they invited me], because they had five children at home -- one who was married and their married son's wife was there part of the time. But anyway, I moved in with them and lived there in that family as a member of the family. Well, as it turned out, then eventually this girl married my brother. So she became my sister-in-law, still my dear sister-in-law. Like I said, she lives in Norcross and we don't see each other a lot.*

*Interview with Ruth Asbell Ivey (RI), conducted by Kathryn A. (Kitty) Kelley (KK), April 21, 1992. Location: Ivey residence, Acworth, Georgia, Cobb County Oral History Series, No.22*

*KSU/45/05/001 Kennesaw State University Oral History Project, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

### **Oral History Source Sheet 4: Thomas V. Bockman**

*During World War II, Mr. Bockman was an engineer at the Bell Aircraft plant in Marietta, Georgia.*

**TB:** But it was funny. As soon as the war in Japan was over, they shut this B-29 program down in Marietta. Now they may have continued at some of the other places. I can't even remember what they did for us, but I am sure they gave us a couple of weeks severance pay and turned us loose. But that draft board was after us. Within two weeks we had to go down and talk to them. The next thing you knew I was in the Armed Forces and gone from there even though I had one child at that time and another one on the way. But that was just the way it was.

**TS:** *When the plant closed down was this about August?*

**TB:** Yes. It was late August. I think we stayed on there to clean up everything until about the middle of September. I think at least the engineering department did. I am sure that they had a contract to finish a certain number of airplanes, but it could be reduced. These contracts with the Air Force, the Air Force always had the prerogative to cut them off, and I think that's what they did. Now that was up in the high echelons of the work. I don't know exactly how they did that, but I am sure they just curtailed the program right then. They turned a lot of people loose.

**TS:** *It's very, very sudden.*

**TB:** Yes. You could see the handwriting on the wall though, because when the war was over in Europe, these B-29s were actually supposed to go to the Pacific with a few going over to Europe. Of course, the one's that were over in Europe, they were able to bring them back. So they really didn't need as many as they thought they would.

*Interview with Thomas V. Bockman (TB), conducted by Thomas A. Scott (TS), Tuesday, 17 December 1998, Location: Bentley Rare Book Gallery, Kennesaw State University. Cobb County Oral History Series, No. 53, KSU/45/05/001 Kennesaw State University Oral History Project, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

## Oral History Source Sheet 5: Richard W. Croop

*Mr. Croop worked for the Bell Aircraft Corporation in Buffalo and Marietta during World War II.*

**RC:** I just had a room.

**TS:** *Who owned the house?*

**RC:** Evelyn. I've forgotten her last name. She's still alive, I believe.

**TS:** *And, so, she cooked the breakfast?*

**RC:** She cooked breakfast. She rented all the rooms. There were several rooms in the house, and they were all rented.

**TS:** *So, you were on your own for the other meals. Did you eat your lunch at the plant?*

**RC:** We did. We had a little wagon. They hauled it in with a horse at first. Then they got some tractors. Little skids they called them. And that was our meal.

**TS:** *This is before they had actually opened up the cafeterias at the plant?*

**RC:** They didn't have any cafeterias at that time.

**TS:** *Who is it that's bringing in the food?*

**RC:** I never knew, sir. Some restaurant was making it. Catering service.

**TS:** *What kind of food did they have?*

**RC:** Simply southern food. A lot of people found it hard to get used to. Like I didn't know what grits were, but I loved them. I thought you put cream on them like cream of wheat. I got caught in a lot of traps like that. I loved it though.

**TS:** *I guess collards and greens and things like that.*

**RC:** Oh, I loved them. We loved them.

**TS:** *So, they brought in southern vegetables and ham?*

**RC:** That's right.

**TS:** *So, you ate high-on-the-hog?*

**RC:** Certainly did. I think I put on about twenty pounds.

**TS:** *Do you have any recollection anymore about how much it would cost to buy a lunch like that?*

**RC:** Oh, maybe a dollar.

**TS:** *Did it? That much?*

**RC:** We usually ended up at the hot dog stand, Varsity in Atlanta. Remember Flossy at the Varsity? They had a man who jump on the back and recite the menu. It was really cute. Flossy Mae they called him.

**TS:** *Flossy Mae?*

**RC:** Yes, he was a colored man.

**TS:** *And so he jumps on your car and gives you the menu?*

**RC:** He'd show you where to park and give you the menu.

.....

**TS:** *You know, the Bell Aircraft Plant hired mainly southerners to work in the plant. How did those of you from the north get along with those from Marietta?*

*Oral History Source Sheet 5: Richard W. Croop*

**RC:** We got along great. We had a little problem with instruction. But, once you showed people how to do something, they'd do it right. I don't think we lost many airplanes because of poor workmanship.

**TS:** *The people down here had never built anything like an airplane.*

**RC:** Well, it was all strange. A lot of people didn't know what a drill or drill motor or rivet gun was. They'd never seen rivet guns.

**TS:** *A rivet gun would be pretty specialized as far as they were concerned*

**RC:** They weren't well read as far as that was concerned. They had no way to find out.

**TS:** *So, the people that came off the farms, they really couldn't read and write very well.*

**RC:** They had it very rough. We had several schools to teach them how to read and write. All they wanted to do was have a chance to learn. They wanted to learn.

**TS:** *These schools that you're talking about, were they in the plant?*

**RC:** They were in the plant. We had to have cashiers to sign their name. They would sign their name and put an "X." I think they started for about thirty cents

**TS:** *The cashiers paid them in cash.*

**RC:** The cashiers paid them in cash. Most of them didn't have bank accounts. They'd have trouble cashing their checks. Let's put it like that. They were not use to checks. Everybody dealt with cash down here at that time.

**TS:** *So they didn't get a pay check. They got a pay envelope with cash.*

**RC:** That's right. That's exactly right.

**TS:** *Would you say most of them were illiterate who were coming to work in the plant?*

**RC:** Yes. I felt sorry for them. It wasn't their fault. They had no schooling to speak to most of them maybe second or third grade. They wouldn't sign their name. That's why we put an "X" on them. Then they cashed the check with the cashier. They very seldom took it out of the plant. They cashed it with the cashier, because I think government wanted checks. You don't know the government like I do.

**TS:** *So when you were teaching them how to do the jobs, you basically had to tell them how, instead of giving them an instruction manual.*

**RC:** We had to show them how to use drills, how to use rivet guns, and how to lay out. It was very hard for them to lay out rivet patterns, because we went in thousandths of inches, and it had to be exact. Most of this stuff was done by the men from Bell Aircraft to begin with. We taught them eventually to program an outfit. Nice thing about it, if they didn't know, if they didn't get it the first time, they'd always come back and ask you. We didn't scrap much stuff due to mistakes, because they were not afraid to ask. They didn't want us to think they were dumb. It was just that they didn't have the knowledge in their background.

**TS:** *The South just wasn't heavily industrialized.*

**RC:** No, all you had in Atlanta was Sears and Rich's and a couple of department stores. It was a small town compared to today.

**TS:** *Well, it's really a remarkable story that the plant could be as successful as it was. I don't believe there was ever a plane that crashed in testing or delivery.*

**RC:** I never heard of the first one till they got in service. I never heard of the first one being lost. Like I say, it is amazing how most of the plant was built by local people. They learned very fast. They put up the walls. The people progressed real quick.

**TS:** *You were telling me a little earlier about the time cards. Would you tell me that story again?*

**RC:** We initiated the time card like they did in New York. They were supposed to punch in when they get there. Some people would punch in on Monday and keep it in their tool box until Friday and punch out. We had a lot of confusion, because they were supposed to punch it everyday. It's just one of those things.

**TS:** *I guess that's the kind of a mistake you only make once.*

**RC:** That's right. Punch it everyday. Once you told them, they done it.

**TS:** *Was there any resentment, you think?*

**RC:** There was a lot of resentment at first. We overcame it, , because here we are-a bunch of Yankees, as they called us, [who came] down here and told them what to do. But we were careful when we told them what to do. Not in a nasty way, but we told them in a friendly way. In fact, we told them we were showing them what to do. We weren't telling them what to do. They were not taking orders. They did not want to be ordered by a Yankee. We would show them what to do and how to do it, and at the end everybody was grateful. They were all grateful, and they were glad of the money they were making. A lot of places couldn't afford [to compete with Bell's pay scale]. There were people working for ten to fifteen dollars a week, six days a week. There for a while, all the people in Atlanta--they were giving us a lot of static, because they were hiring them. That was big money to the people, and they were glad for it. They were very loyal, and the biggest part of our help was ladies and young girls. It was remarkable what they done. Remarkable what the people learned, because they never heard of a rivet gun, drill motor, electric motor, milling machine, or lathe. It's all strange stuff to them, but they grasped it very quickly. Like I said, if we showed them once and they didn't get it, they weren't ashamed to ask us a second time. Which meant everything, because every piece of material meant a lot. It was hard to get material at that time. [We had airplanes] sitting there on the floor. We had no engines for them, and the P-40, Boeing 29s--there was a big demand for them, and I've seen maybe eight or ten airplanes just waiting for engines so long. Allison would not furnish the engines. It took a month after we got the engines to per-fab them, run them up, and check them up. It's wonderful what people done. I was fortunate. I got a good education. It was be compulsory in the North at that time. It should be compulsory. Everybody should be able to read or write. No disrespect to anyone. The people couldn't read and couldn't write. Their signature was usually an "X". Because we don't realize in the North. We didn't realize what the people had in the South. It was a wonderful experience.

*Interview with Richard W. Croop (RC), conducted by Thomas A. Scott (TS), Kennesaw State University, and Hugh M. Neeson (HN), Director, Bell Aerospace Operations, Lockheed Martin Tactical Defense Systems. Sunday, October 28, 1998. Location: 4670 Hadaway Road, Kennesaw, GA. Cobb County Oral History Series, No. 51, KSU/45/05/001 Kennesaw State University Oral History Project, Kennesaw State University Archives.*

# Five

## Life at the Bell Bomber Plant

### **Objectives:**

- Synthesize and consolidate knowledge of the Bell Bomber Plant gained from secondary sources, photographs and oral histories.
- Analyze the impact that the establishment of the Bell Bomber Plant in Marietta, Georgia, on the individuals that worked there during World War II.

### **Materials needed:**

Pens/pencils and paper.

### **Instructions:**

1. Review the information, conclusions, and analyses from activity 2, 3, and 4 as a class.
2. Instruct the students to write a written response to one of the following three prompts:
  - Imagine you were working at the Bell Bomber Plant in World War II. Write a letter to a family member describing your life and working conditions. Use details of the oral histories, photographs, and secondary sources to inform your letter.
  - Imagine you are a newspaper reporter during World War II. Write a newspaper article about the Bell Bomber Factory, describing the factory, the people you meet inside, and the transformation that this plant has contributed to the Marietta and Cobb County areas.
  - Imagine you are a photographer during World War II. Describe what photographs you would take at the Bell Bomber Plant, including parts of its operation, the people, their activities and lives, and the surrounding area. Explain your answers.
3. Ask the students to plan their written assignments, and during this process, share their possible answers and ideas with a partner or in a small group to gain feedback and new ideas for their piece.
4. After the students have written their assignments, have volunteers explain what they wrote and justify their answers.
5. Use this discussion opportunity to answer any further questions about the Bell Bomber Plant and ensure that the class fully understands the history of the Bell Bomber Plant and how it impacted both the people that worked there, the local area, and also the local area and the state of Georgia.



# Six

## Women in Georgia during World War II

### Objectives:

- Understand the experiences of women in Georgia during World War II.
- Analyze primary sources to draw comparisons between the experiences of women in different industries throughout Georgia.

### Materials needed:

Computer with Internet access, whiteboard, projector, paper, pens/pencil.

### Instructions:

1. As a class, watch clips from Jane Tucker's oral history interview ([http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/educators/legacy\\_workers.php](http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/educators/legacy_workers.php)). Jane worked in the Savannah Shipyards during World War II.
2. Ask the students to answer the following questions about Tucker's speech:
  - Why did Tucker join the workforce in Savannah, GA?
  - What work did Tucker do in Savannah, GA?
  - What differences did Tucker note between her previous work and her work in the Savannah Shipyards?
  - What were the conditions like for Tucker while she was working?
  - How did working in the Savannah shipyards impact Tucker after the war?
  - How does Tucker describe male attitudes towards women in the workforce?
3. Ask students to share their answers with the class and discuss these answers as a class.
4. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to discuss the similarities and differences between Tucker's experience at the Savannah Shipyards and the individual women studied in activity four (Oral Histories 1–3) from the Bell Bomber Plant.
5. Ask each group to present their findings to rest of the class.
6. As a class compare and contrast these findings with the examples of Katherine O'Grady and Mildred Chatalian.

Katherine O'Grady Oral History:  
[http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII\\_Women/Grandma.html](http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/Grandma.html)

Mildred Chatalian Oral History:  
[http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII\\_Women/Adventure.html](http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/Adventure.html)
7. Read and discuss these two women's experiences of World War II in Rhode Island as a class, draw a Venn Diagram of the women's experiences, and brainstorm possible reasons for the differences between the experience of women in Georgia and elsewhere in the United States.

# Seven

## The Growth of Industry in World War II Georgia

### Objectives:

- Understand and analyze the growth and importance of different industries in Georgia during World War II.
- Identify the similarities and differences between different companies and industries in Georgia during World War II.

### Materials Needed:

Computers with Internet access, projector, whiteboard, pens/pencils, and paper.

### Instructions:

1. Divide the class into groups of four students and assign each individual within the group one of the four companies: Coca-Cola in Atlanta, GA; Chevrolet in Atlanta, GA; the Lombard Iron Works Company in Macon, GA; and the James A. Jones Construction Corporation in Brunswick, GA.
2. Using either computers in the classroom or the media center, have each student research the growth and development of each company during World War II. They should answer the following questions:
  - When did this company come to Georgia?
  - Why did it choose the operation location that it did?
  - What did this company produce during World War II? How did this help the United States win the war?
  - What impact did the growth of this company have on the surrounding towns and areas? (e.g. population size, economic impact, building, etc)
  - How many people worked at this company? What was their experience like?
3. Possible resources for this information may include:
  - <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org>
  - <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>
  - <http://www.georgiahistory.com/>
  - <http://www.gpb.org/wwii>
  - <http://www.jekyllislandhistory.com/wwii.shtml>
4. Discuss the students' research as a class and develop a large map of the state on the whiteboard locate each company and record essential information, such as number of workers and economic production.

# Eight

## Similarities and Differences

### Objectives:

- Analyze the different companies that flourished in Georgia during World War II and compare them to the Bell Bomber Plant.
- Understand the impact that the growth of these companies had on the state of Georgia.

### Materials Needed:

Computers with Internet access, projector, whiteboard, pens/pencils, and paper.

### Introduction:

1. As a class, construct a grid on the white board of the five industries discussed and analyzed thus far on one axis: the Bell Bomber Plant, Coca Cola, Chevrolet, The Lombard Iron Works, and The James A. Jones Construction Company. On the other axis include the following categories: Number of Employees, Money Made, Money Spent, Materials Output, % of women workers, % of Minority Workers.
2. Have the students fill in the grid to establish a comparison of these companies during World War II.
3. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to brainstorm possible reasons for the similarities and differences shown on the grid.
4. Ask each group to research possible reasons for these differences, including the location where they were situated, who was in charge of the company, and what they produced. Possible resources for this information may include:

<http://www.nww2m.com/2011/08/coca-cola-the-pause-that-refreshed-2/>

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org>

<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>

<http://www.georgiahistory.com/>

<http://www.gpb.org/wwii>

<http://www.jekyllislandhistory.com/wwii.shtml>

5. Instruct each group to present their answers to the class, and discuss their conclusions as a group.

# Nine

## Richard Russell and Carl Vinson

### Objectives:

- Analyze and understand the importance of Richard Russell and Carl Vinson to the state of Georgia and some of their major initiatives during World War II.
- Debate the importance of each individual over the other.

### Materials Needed:

Computers with Internet access, projector, whiteboard, pens/pencils, and paper.

### Instructions:

1. Ask the students what they know about Richard Russell and Carl Vinson.
2. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group either Russell or Vinson to research. Possible resources include:  
<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-514>  
<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-1391>
3. During their research, each group should construct a timeline of the individual's life, highlighting the important contributions that each individuals made to Georgia and the United States. The students should place particular emphasis on and give additional details for the years 1941-1945 when the United States was in World War II.
4. Have each group identify 3 events or factors that they think make Russell and Vinson important individuals in Georgia and the nation during World War II. They should justify their selections. The students should emphasize Vinson's role as the father of "the two-ocean navy" and Russell's role in strengthening the United States military while in the senate.
5. Create two columns on the whiteboard, one for Russell the other for Vinson, and have the students fill in their reasons why each individual was important in Georgia during World War II.
6. Discuss as a class the actions of both Russell and Vinson during World War II and emphasize their impact they had on Georgia's change and growth. Ask the students if they found any connections between these two individuals and the five companies that were analyzed earlier in the teacher's guide.

# Ten

## Impact of World War II on Georgia

### **Objectives:**

- Understand and analyze the impact of World War II on Georgia
- Synthesize information about industries, companies, and people to make an informed analysis about the impact of World War II on Georgia.

### **Materials Needed:**

Computers with Internet access, projector, whiteboard, pens/pencils, and paper.

### **Introduction:**

1. Review the material previously covered about the Bell Bomber Plant, the growth of companies and industries in the state during World War II, and the importance of Richard Russell and Carl Vinson in state and national politics.
2. Brainstorm ideas as a class about ways that World War II impacted the state of Georgia. Write class suggestions on the whiteboard.
3. Instruct students to write a response paper analyzing the impact of World War II on Georgia. They should use the information that they have previously learned to justify their analysis and arguments.
4. After the students have researched and written their papers, ask students to share their analyses with the class and compile another list based upon the students' presentations.
5. Compare the two lists on the whiteboard and conclude by asking the students if they know anyone who lived in World War II in Georgia. Ask those students to take the class' lists and ask that person if they agree or disagree with the list, and what changes they would suggest making.

## **Resources for Teachers: K-12 Educational Programs**

The mission of the Museum of History and Holocaust Education is to support K-12 students and teachers in the study of World War II and the Holocaust. Our programs are free and flexible, and you can customize a program to fit your school's specific needs. We offer:

- Field Trips to the museum
- In-School Programs
- Traveling Trunks
- Traveling Exhibitions
- Online Teacher's Guides
- Summer Workshop for High School Students
- No Place for Hate Art and Writing Contest
- Professional Development Workshops
- On-Site Events

To reserve a program, or for more information, contact us at **470-578-2083** or by email at **[mhheeducation@kennesaw.edu](mailto:mhheeducation@kennesaw.edu)**.

### ***The Legacy Series***

The Museum of History and Holocaust Education's *Legacy Series* oral history program uses filmed interviews to preserve the experiences of Holocaust survivors, World War II veterans, and home front workers living in Georgia. Through our website, you can find short video clips excerpted from these filmed interviews, in which the individuals share their World War II and Holocaust experiences. We encourage you to use these in your classroom to support your teaching about World War II and the Holocaust, and to help your students meet history face to face.

**[historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/educators/legacy\\_series.php](http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu/educators/legacy_series.php)**



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