

Page 1
“Rosie the Riveter” Lucretia Jane Tucker Information:



Table of Contents:

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page(s)</u>	<u>Description</u>
I	2-3	Story about Lucretia Jane Tucker in a <i>Rosie the Riveter</i> Publication
II	4-5	Story about Betty Tucker in a <i>Rosie the Riveter</i> Publication
III	6-8	<i>Rome News-Tribune</i> article, dated July 4, 2010, about Lucretai Tucker & other Rosies
IV	9-11	<i>Another recent news item</i> about Lucretia Tucker & other Rosies
V	12	Photo: Just-launched Liberty Ship made by Lucretia or a family member.
VI	13-14	July 15, 1944 issue of the “Sou’Easter” employee newspaper, showing Iris Tucker & other Rosies
VII	15	April 1, 1944 issue of the “Sou’Easter” employee newspaper, showing Lucretia Tucker & other Rosies

World War 2

Home Front Memories

by Lucretia Jane Tucker
Rome, Georgia



Jane at age 17 in 1944

World War II followed close on the heels of The Great Depression. In fact, very little recovery had taken place in my hometown, Lineville, Alabama, when the war began in 1941.

My mother, like most people during the 1930's, had struggled to support her family. So when news came from our cousin in Savannah, Georgia, that women were being hired to replace men in the work force, we were on our way to becoming "Rosies."

In June 1943, my mother, my sister, and I boarded the train to Savannah. Every seat was taken by the troops. Seeing this large number of men (boys 17-19 years old) leaving home for the battlefield made us know the war was real. Our luggage became our seats for the 15-hour trip.

Two weeks after arriving in Savannah, we were em-

Liberty Ships - Supplies / Men

ployed as welders at Southeastern Shipyard! I remember how shocked I was to learn that the hourly wage was \$1.20. To a 16-year-old who had been earning \$1.00 per day in the Lineville 5 & 10 cent store, this was unbelievable.

I recall the feeling of being shunned by "the locals." For women to take a man's job, even though the men were gone to fight, was not acceptable to many of the people. The general idea was that women weren't strong enough physically, and that women should not wear men's clothing. Well, we just rolled up our shirt sleeves, tied up our long hair with a bandana, and said, "We can do it."

As a teenager, I learned some valuable lessons. The U. S. government needed money for war supplies, and everyone was encouraged to buy War Bonds. Every pay check, I purchased a War Bond. An \$18.75 bond matured to \$25 in ten years. When I returned to high school and college, these bonds helped with expenses.

A second lesson came from having contact with people from many different states. Living in Alabama during the 1930's, I had never known a person from "the North." In Savannah, our social life revolved around the military bases, Hunter Air Base and Fort Stewart. Doing our patriotic duty - keeping the troops entertained - introduced me to boys from many states. These boys were friendly, kind, and treated us like ladies in every way.

Recently, I read the following quote posted in the Rosie the Riveter World War II/Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond, California:

You must tell your children, putting modesty aside, that without women, there would have been no Spring in 1945.

I am overcome with awe by this statement. As a 16-year-old, I could never have imagined that the 10 hours per day, 6 days per week of hard work was this important. How thankful I am that God allowed me to be a part of this fight for freedom.

Wk too
dangerous
too emotional
Not enough
Mechanical
Skill
We could be
a distraction
to the men
taking a
man's
job (head of house)

Dangerous

By 1944 37,000 defense Worker M+F
Show DVD Killed

Rosie the Riveter

*by Betty Tucker Taylor
Orange Beach, Alabama*



Betty at age 18 in 1944

World War II was raging when I graduated from high school during 1943 in Lineville, Alabama. My mother, sister, and I made the momentous decision to leave Lineville.

We packed our belongings and went to Heflin, Alabama, to catch the train to Savannah, Georgia. We pulled into the big station in Savannah and I was so awed by the station and all the mass of people coming and going, that I was ready to catch the next train back to the homey confines of Lineville.

Housing was scarce in wartime Savannah but we found an apartment. The next order of business was to apply for jobs at Southeastern Shipyard. We were sent to welders' school and graduated in six weeks as first class welders, at a pay rate of \$1.20 per hour. Our first assignment was work-

Page 5

ing in the yards welding on Liberty Ship parts.

They asked for volunteers to go up on the ways and weld, so I volunteered. My job was to weld on the overhead and the innerbottom in the Liberty Ship itself. We were required to keep a bandana on our hair at all times. My welding equipment had to be adjusted by a machine down on the ground. In order to do that, you had to climb down and back up a ladder on the side of the ship. If you did not get it adjusted right, you had to go all the way back down again. One day, I almost lost my fingers while leaning over the side of the ship looking for the machine. A whole bulkhead being put down by a crane came down right where my fingers were.

There was another close call when I stepped on a loose board and almost fell down the hole of the ship. Some men grabbed me and kept me from falling to the bottom of the ship. Several people were killed and others were seriously injured due to mishaps. I decided to quit several times, and finally went to the office and told them I wanted to quit. They told me that I could not quit, as this was an essential defense job.

The ship was not complete when launched. It was taken to wet dock for finishing. I helped launch a ship and watched it slide down the ways. They would let women watch, but you better not get on the ship when it was launched, as it was considered bad luck.

We would go home at night after work and grate potatoes to put on our eyes to draw the burn out caused by welding. My sister and I would take a shower and go out with friends. Our dates were boys in the Army Air Corps at nearby Hunter Field. It was always night when they left in their planes for overseas duty. They would fly low over our apartment and rev their engines to tell us goodbye. We never saw them again.

As things wound down during 1945, we were given our releases. Those were certainly exciting times!

In Search of the Past: Local Rosie the Riveter wants others to tell their stories



Jane Tucker strikes a Rosie the Riveter pose.



Jane Tucker talks about her experience while working during World War II.

"I'm 83 years old now. I would appreciate if you would check and find out that I was truly there... and that I did my part... to the end. And add my name to the women who did their part also."

A quote at the Rosie the Riveter / World War II National Historical Park

Page 7

By her own admission, Jane Tucker's memory is not what it used to be. At 83 years old, she takes a few minutes to remember details from her past. But she is willing to make the effort of remembering and retelling. It's important, she says, important that people know that she and women just like her helped win a war.

Jane is a member of the American Rosie the Riveter Association (ARRA) and is trying to inspire other Rosie women to tell their stories before it's too late.

For information about how to preserve your story in the ARRA archives, go online to www.rosietheriveter.net.

WHAT IS ARRA? The American Rosie the Riveter Association is an organization established to honor the contributions of women workers on the home front during World War II and to promote patriotism and responsibility among all Americans.

WHO MAY BELONG? **Women** whose work was designed to contribute to the war effort (including women who did volunteer work) **and their female descendants** are eligible for active membership. **Spouses and male relatives** may become auxiliary members.

Women in occupations today that, prior to World War II were considered to be "men's work" may join as **21st Century Rosies**.

Women who performed the work are known as **Rosies**. Their female descendants are known as **Rosebuds**. Male auxiliary members are known as **Rivets**. A woman is eligible for membership as a **Rosie** if her work or volunteer services occurred during 1941-1945 and consisted of **any one** of the following:

1. Employment of any sort in an industry or government agency that was directly related to the war effort, **or**
2. Employment (or self-employment) in a capacity usually held by a man, thus releasing a man for military duty, **or**
3. Participation on a sustained basis in one or more volunteer activities related to the war effort.

Page 8

Jane says while thousands of women worked during WWII, helping to build many of the airplanes and ships that were instrumental in winning the war, few are living today and even fewer are willing to talk about their part in the effort.

She recently attended the association's meeting in Nashville, Tenn., and after seeing how few Rosies are left, she felt compelled to keep their stories alive.

She worked 10 hours each day, six or seven days each week at \$1.20 an hour. She welded for two years. At first the work was merely another job to pay bills and debts, but as the war wore on, Jane began seeing that her contribution and that of the women working along side her was a major factor in the allied victory.

One of the reasons Jane thinks some women are reluctant to speak of their experiences working during WWII is that simply recalling that period may be difficult for some.

"We were shunned by many people at the time," Jane said. "We took men's jobs and we wore men's clothes. Some of us smoked in public. Women just didn't do that at the time so many of us were treated poorly."

By the time the war ended, Jane was proud of the work she and other Rosie the Riveters had done all across the country. She doesn't remember exactly what happened when the news came that the war was over.

"It would have been in the afternoon, wouldn't it?" she says as she tries to remember that day. "I don't recall a celebration at work. But I'm sure in downtown Savannah people were in the streets like they were at Times Square in New York."

Jane simply wants the women who contributed to the war effort to be remembered and celebrated. Many gave their lives in the name of national defense and still have gone unrecognized, she said.

She encouraged the families of any local Rosies to help their loved ones join the American Rosie the Riveter Association. But more importantly, she encouraged them to recall and share their stories.

"Just tell your story, all that you can remember," Jane said. "The new generations need to know what you did for this country. There aren't too many of us left."

[print](#)

Women of WWII honored at ceremony

by Ellison Langford

08.17.10 - 04:00 am



Mary Shiver worked to win World War II by squeezing inside the tail of an airplane at Darr Aero Tech in Albany. Shiver, at 19, was the smallest employee, so during one repair job, they lowered her by her ankles inside the jet and she tightened the screws.

"There was plenty of old men around," she said. "I figured they'd help me if I got stuck. I was young and foolish and didn't know any better."



Shiver got a job at the airfield after her husband was hit by a train while driving a Dr. Pepper truck. Shiver worked to support

her parents, daughter and niece.

"She kept us from starving," said her daughter Jean Kidney.

Shiver was one of about a dozen local women honored at a "Rosie the Riveter" gathering at The Village at Maplewood Clubhouse Monday afternoon.

The ladies munched peanuts and sipped lemonade with an old-fashioned daintiness that made it difficult to imagine some of them had once welded warships.

However, not all the Rosies aided the war effort by suiting up and punching timecards in factories.

Mitzi Sipp traded in a cheerleading uniform to spend a summer

hauling in a harvest.

Sipp said she left her home in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., during the summer before her senior year of high school to pick peas, string beans and potatoes on Long Island.

"We wanted to help the war effort," Sipp said of the group of about a dozen girls who joined the Farm Cadet Victory Corps.

Sipp said she was accustomed to farm life after having worked on a dairy as a nanny. However, some of her friends were not so familiar.

"One of my friends, who was very smart, I thought, and attractive, she went out looking for individual peas," Sipp recalled.

Sipp recalled heading into town on Saturday nights to go roller-skating. She said by the time she and her girlfriends arrived, there was always a large group of local boys waiting to help them put on their skates.

Not all men were as welcoming of the Rosies.

[Jane Tucker](#), a former welder who organized the gathering, said she and her peers were shunned by the men who worked in their Savannah shipyard.

However, Tucker said the atmosphere between the women there was almost like that of a college sorority.

"All of these were young women from farms, from small country towns," Tucker said. "And so we bonded with them."

Though wearing the thick, heavy welding uniform was stifling during the summer, Tucker said she enjoyed her work.

"We really had a sense of what we were doing," Tucker said. "It was my first time remembering a sense of patriotism and trying to help."

Tucker arranged the gathering to give women who were an

indispensable part of the war effort a chance to tell their stories.

"I think it's important for the Rosies to hear other peoples' stories, and to realize how they contributed," she said.

Tooken Cade was not so enthusiastic about her first job writing checks for the government to people who wanted to renovate their businesses to help the war effort.

"I liked it just fine, but it was monotonous and didn't pay well," Cade recalled. "So I looked for another job."

Cade got a new volunteer position at the Detroit USO helping take photos for servicemen to send back to their loved ones.

One day a sailor came in to ask what they were doing and asked Cade to be in a picture with him. She told him that was against the rules, but she eventually gave in.

"He was pretty adorable," Cade said.

Three weeks later, he proposed. They were married for 38 years until he died of a brain tumor at age 61.

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Liberty
S.E. Shipyard
Savannah, GA

Iris Tucker, Betty, Jane Tucker
Helped build

1943-1945

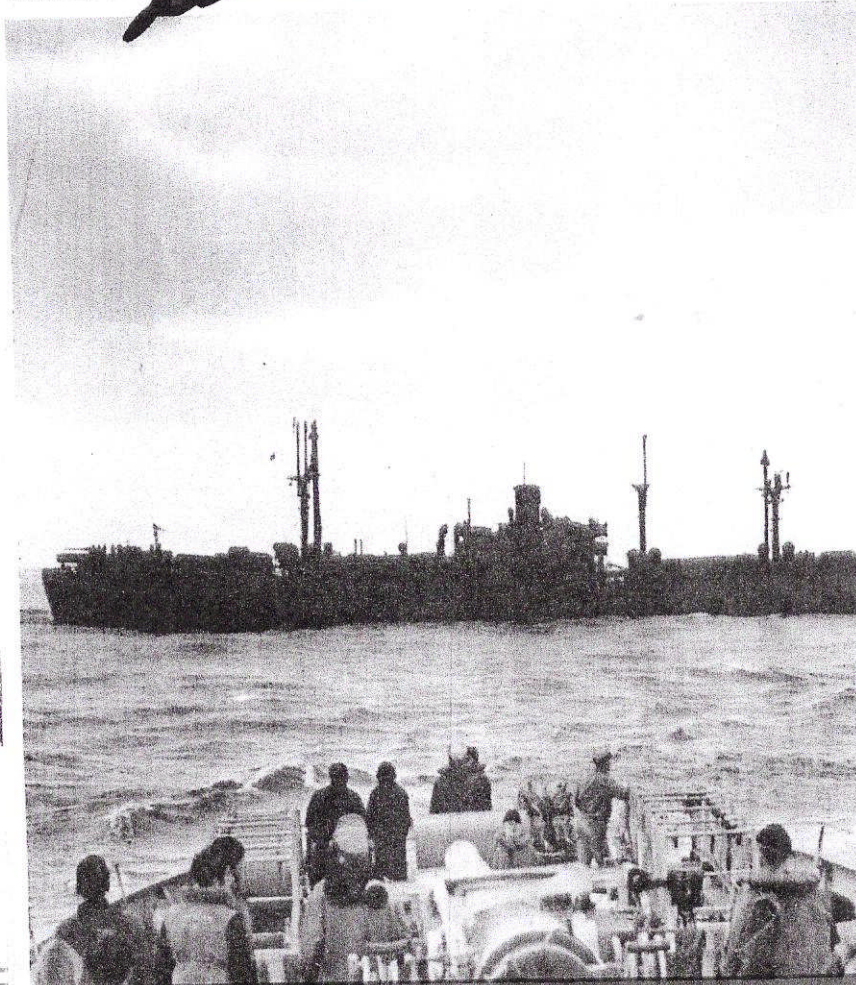
61

SOU'EASTER

Volume 2

22

Savannah, Georgia • July 15, 1944



IN THIS ISSUE:

Pin-Up Girl No. 2... Miss Rigger

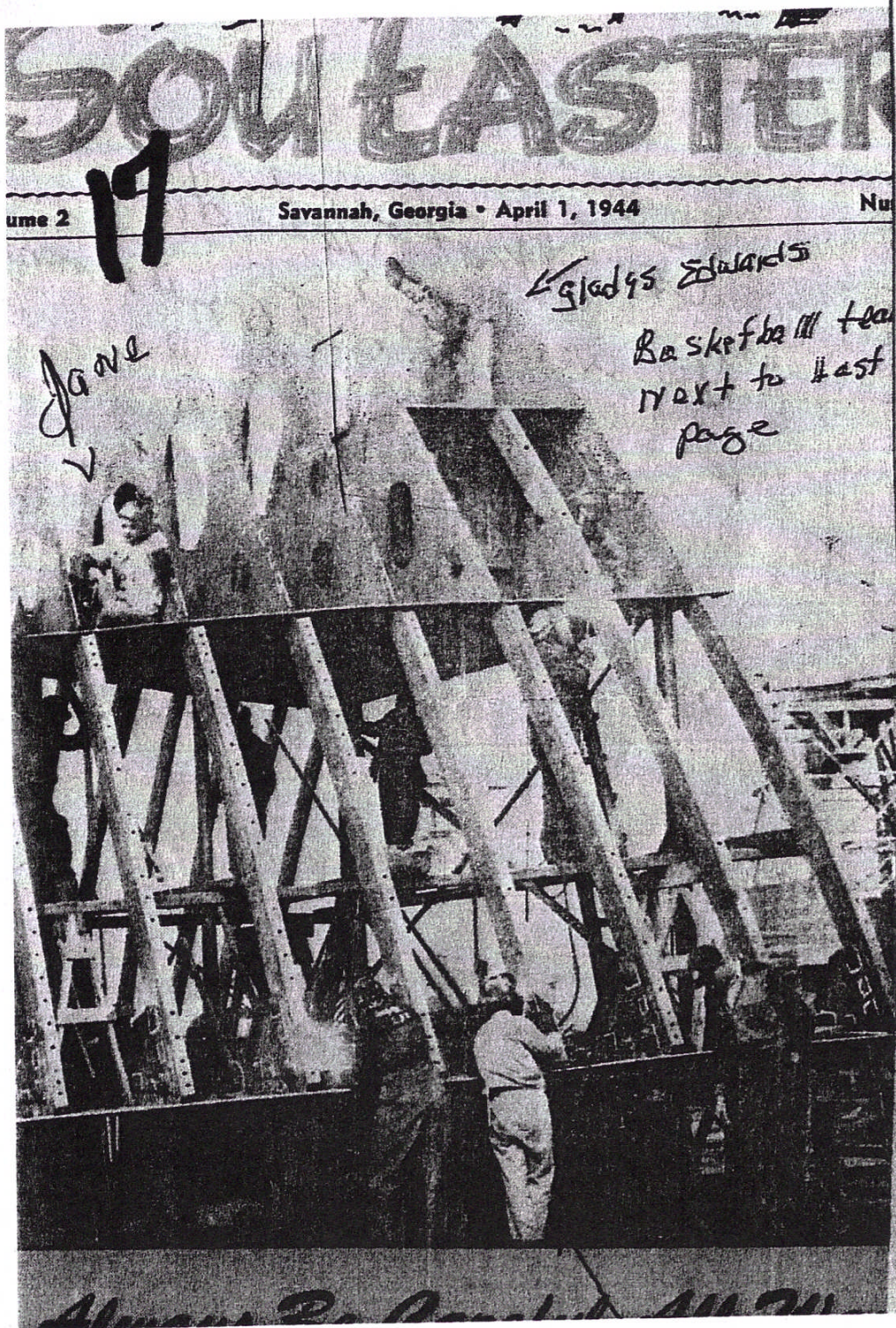
Eight by Fore (peak)

CAN YOU PICK OUT the three sisters in this group of welders posed in front of a fore peak? They are in the bottom row, left to right, EDITH ARP, RUTH ARP JACKSON and BLANCHE ARP EDGE. The lone male, who appears to be edging away from his feminine coworkers, is JIMMIE SMITH. Top row, HAZEL BLAND, RUBY WILSON, MARY ECKHOFF and IRIS TUCKER.

The Arp sisters have been with us 14 months. Their father, G. W. ARP, and brother, B. L. ARP, are in the Wet Dock Labor department.

July 15, 1944





Working on forecastle Deck