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**Abstract Title:** African American Labor and Recreation in WW II era Wilmington

**Abstract Description:** World War II brought an economic boom to Wilmington, North Carolina. The North Carolina Shipbuilding Company, the Atlantic Coast Line railroad, and other wartime industries were major contributors to Wilmington's boom, but not the only ones. The Armed Forces expanded existing bases and training facilities in the region or built new ones. The growth of the Wilmington work force, which included both White and Black workmen, as well as women, created a housing crisis. The unprecedented influx of Servicemen and women spurred a large demand for recreational facilities such as USOs and Red Cross facilities to cater to the needs of all races. This social upheaval happened on top of ongoing African American struggles for access to the regional waterways and coastlines carried over from the early days of Reconstruction. The interplay of these multi-faceted events left visible markers in Wilmington's present as well as its history.