Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front
National Historical Park

Richmond, California

Self-Guided Auto Tour

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front
National Historical Park

The City of Richmond and the National Park Service are glad you visited your park. Our mission is to tell America's stories through the places where they occurred.

If you have stories of America's World War II home front, or have documents, objects or other materials about the period, we hope you will join us in preserving them for future generations.

You can contact us by writing:

Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park
Station A
PO Box 336
Richmond, CA 94808

General Information by Phone 510 232-5050.

Please visit our website at www.nps.gov/rori to find out the latest information on the park.

Directions to the Rosie the Riveter Memorial:

From Oakland/San Francisco:

- ☆ Interstate 80 East.
- ☆ Exit to I-580 West towards Richmond/San Rafael.
- ☆ Exit Marina Bay/South 23rd Street.
- ☆ Turn left (over freeway overpass), drive approx. .5 mi.
- ☆ Turn right onto Regatta.
- ☆ Turn first left at Melville into the parking lot of Marina Bay Park.

From Sacramento:

- ☆ Interstate 80 West.
- ☆ Exit on Cutting Blvd., drive approx. 1 1/3 miles.
- ☆ Turn left on 23rd Street.
- ☆ Turn right onto Regatta.
- ☆ Turn first left at Melville into the parking lot of Marina Bay Park.

How to get to Interstate 580 freeway from sites in the park:

From the SS *Red Oak Victory*

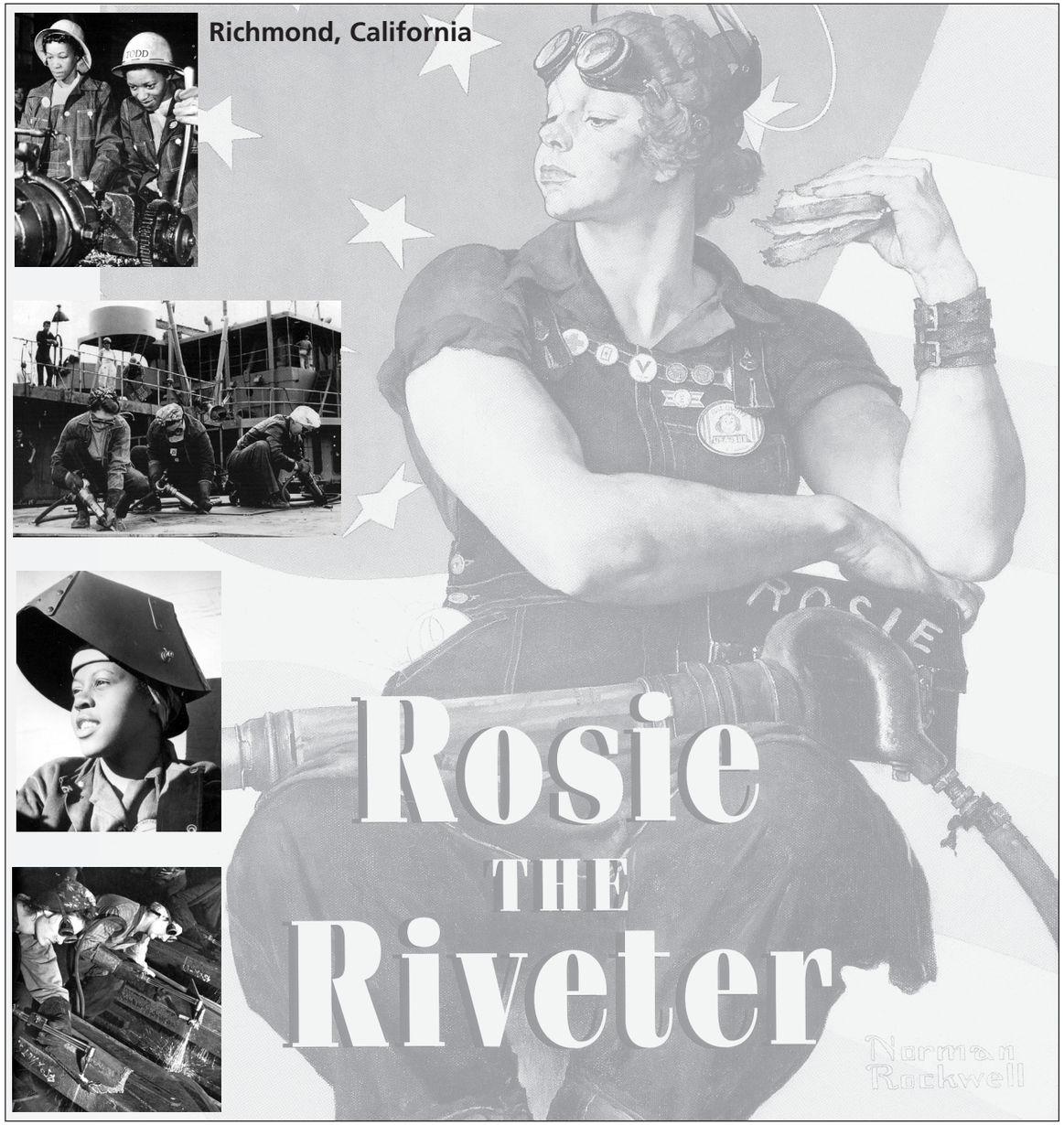
- ☆ Follow exit signs out of Shipyard No. 3.
- ☆ Go straight up Canal Blvd.
- ☆ Get in the right lane for 580 West and the left lane for 580 East.

From the Rosie the Riveter Memorial

- ☆ Leave Marina Bay Park via Mellville and turn right onto Regatta Way.
- ☆ Turn left onto Marina Bay Parkway.
- ☆ Stay on Marina Way Parkway and you will reach the on-ramps for 580. For 580 West, get in the right lane and enter the freeway. For 580 East, cross over the freeway and stay in right lane.

Front cover photo credits: Norman Rockwell image of Rosie the Riveter provided by Curtis Publishing, Operating a bolt cutting machine, Library of Congress; Chippers at work, National Archives; Richmond Shipyard welder, Oakland Museum of CA -- Dorothea Lange Collection; Women cutters at work, Detroit Historical Museum -- Margaret Bourke-White

Auto Tour concept by Rick Smith; layout by Jean Boscacci; map by Barbara Butler *April 2009*



Welcome to the park! In partnership with the City of Richmond, Contra Costa County and numerous others, we are excited to share the stories of the American WWII Home Front. The structures and sites that make up Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park are important touchstones for those stories. The stories of women and minorities in the work force; the advent of day care and pre-paid medical care; changes in national demographics and impacts on America's urban and rural environments are all stories to be heard in the buildings and sites of this national park in Richmond, California.

The park is still under development, but several sites in the park are available to you now. We plan to open other sites as the park develops. Enjoy your driving tour!

Martha J. Lee, Park Superintendent

SAFETY AND WEATHER/COMFORT TIPS

Many of the park sites are located in industrial areas, keep your eyes open for big trucks, trains and other equipment. Walk and drive defensively.

Climate can vary from mild and warm to windy and chilly at any time of the year. The Bay Area is known for its microclimates which can change dramatically. Visitors should bring layers including a wind jacket. Wear sensible, sturdy walking shoes.

Portable toilets are located at Rosie the Riveter Memorial in Marina Bay Park and primitive flush toilets are available on board the SS *Red Oak Victory*.

The park sites and the areas around them are accessible for wheelchairs, except the SS *Red Oak Victory*. A steep gangway leads from the dock to the deck of the ship.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide begins at the Rosie the Riveter Memorial in Marina Bay Park. Each page has the directions from your current location to the next location. If you get lost, refer to the center map. None of the sites are more than a few miles from each other.

The pictures in the guide offer a past and present view of the places you are visiting. Information about each site accompanies the pictures.

The self-guided tour will take one hour to four hours to complete depending on the pace you set and if you take a tour of the SS *Red Oak Victory*.

On your map you will note that the national park includes Barbara and Jay Vincent Park and Lucretia Edwards Park. Visiting these sites will add about a half hour to your visit.

Enjoy your visit and let's get started!

THE PARK'S STORIES

The World War II Home Front is a significant chapter in America's history. Fully engaged in winning World War II, Americans worked toward a common goal in a manner unequaled since. The victory of WWII could not have occurred without them. Women affectionately known as "Rosies" changed America.

Richmond, California played a significant and nationally recognized part in the World War II Home Front. Richmond was home to over 56 war industries, more than any other city of its size in the United States. The city grew nearly overnight from 24,000 people to 100,000 people, overwhelming the available housing stock, roads, schools, businesses and community services.

Oakland Museum, Dorothea Lange Collection

Richard Scurlock, Schomberg Center Collection

"Common Purpose/Disparate Experience" – The United States of America had a common purpose during World War II – winning the war. But the experience of that purpose was not the same for all. Saying the nation was "united" is incorrect. Gender and racial discrimination continued to exist and caused unrest and major inequities. The park stories will relate how the nation came together to help defeat a great darkness, but continued to have shadows of its own while doing so.

"Shedding Light on America's Promise" – The promise of our nation's founding documents – the promise of liberty and justice for all – increasingly saw the light of day. While America spent its lifeblood in defeating tyranny overseas, it increasingly dealt with its own hypocrisy at home. New opportunities for women and people of color were created. Positive steps were taken in the areas of equality.

"The Home Front and Total War" – The entire nation was mobilized, for the first time in America's history, to achieve a common purpose – victory. In no other American war, before or since, had society been organized to such an extent. "Total War" resulted in the government reaching into and regulating the nation's everyday life and culture. "Total War" resulted in tremendous changes to American government, industry, society, and culture.

"America Today – the Home Front Legacy" – Many elements of today's society are the legacy of the World War II home front effort: pre-paid medical care, public supported child care, major demographic shifts and the resulting impact on the urban and rural America.

American family structure, the role of women and people of color in society, the struggles of the labor and the civil rights movement should play a significant role in discussions of the impacts of the Home Front on our country.

❶ The Rosie the Riveter Memorial

commemorates the hundreds of thousands of women who worked to ensure victory in World War II

Directions to the Rosie the Riveter Memorial:

From Oakland/San Francisco:

Interstate 80 East; Exit to I-580 West towards Richmond/San Rafael; Exit Marina Bay/South 23rd Street; Turn left (over freeway overpass), drive approx. .5 mi; Turn right onto Regatta; Turn first left at Melville into the parking lot of Marina Bay Park.

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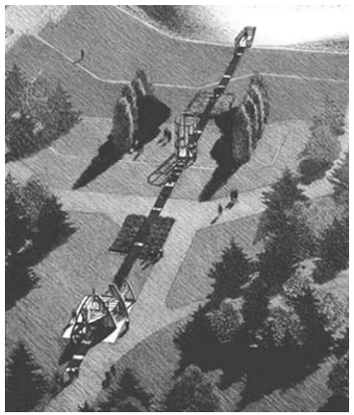


Rosie the Riveter Memorial design by: Cheryl Barton and Susan Schwartzenberg

Artist's conception of the memorial by Christopher Grubbs

Visitors at the memorial, NPS photo

During WWII, thousands of men and women worked in this area everyday, in very hazardous jobs. Actively recruited by Kaiser, they came from all over the United States to swell the population of Richmond from 20,000 to over 100,000 in three short years. For many of them, this was the first time they worked and earned money. It was the first time they were faced with the problems of being working parents – finding day care and housing. As you read the quotes from the "Rosies", you will find how their lives were forever changed.

Three years before the national park was created, the City of Richmond initiated the Rosie Memorial to celebrate this important aspect of their community's history.

The effort was initiated by then-Councilwoman Donna Powers. It grew under Project Director Donna Graves to become the first national tribute to home front American women. It became the inspiration for the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park.

The design uses abstracted forms from Liberty ships in sculptures reminiscent of the prefabricated parts assembled by shipyard workers. Meant to draw parallels between the acts of constructing ships and reconstructing memories, the Memorial's form is that of a vessel in the process of being built. Sculpture, landscape elements, photographs and words combine to weave history, personal recollections and cultural memory into a work that situates women as fundamental actors in a dramatic historical period.

Memorial dedication, October 14, 2000, NPS photo

This Memorial is the touchstone of the national park here in Richmond. The Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park is unique in that the National Park Service owns no properties. The structures and sites within the park are owned by the City of Richmond, Contra Costa County or are in private ownership.

The park's success in telling this important National story depends on partnerships and on your help and support. The City of Richmond, Contra Costa County, the non-profit organizations and private owners have made a great start and are committed to make this park a great success. We need the public's help and support to be successful – we need your voice. Please help us realize the dream of this park. The Rosie the Riveter Memorial was a grass roots effort by the public. Help us make sure the whole park has the impact and quality of the Rosie the Riveter Memorial. Get involved in our planning processes and voice your ideas.

WWII Kaiser Shipyard #2

WWII Kaiser Shipyard #2 is now the park, memorial and yacht harbor before you. The four Kaiser shipyards of Richmond produced over 747 ships from 1941 to 1945, more than any other shipyard location in the United States. These shipyards operated twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Shipyard # 2, 1942, National Archives

Shipyard # 2, today, Richmond Redevelopment Agency

★ marks the memorial location

❷ Ford Assembly Plant

(Sheridan Observation Point)

Directions:

Ford Assembly Plant, Richmond Museum of History Collection photo

- ☆ Exit the Marina Bay Park parking lot the way you came in.
- ☆ Turn left off Melville onto Regatta Blvd.
- ☆ Turn left onto Marina Way South.
- ☆ Turn right onto Hall Avenue.
- ☆ Turn left onto Harbor Way South and continue all the way to the end of the road and park in the lot at Sheridan Observation Point.
- ☆ As you face the water, the brick building to your left is the Ford Assembly Plant.

above: Visiting officials outside Ford Assembly Plant.
below: "Rosies"preparing tanks for overseas shipment.
Richmond Museum of History Collection photos.

Designed by famed architect Alfred Kahn, the Ford Assembly Plant produced cars until the advent of WWII. To ensure America prepared for total war, President Roosevelt banned civilian automobile production during WWII. This Ford Assembly Plant assembled 49,000 jeeps, but its "claim to fame" was becoming one of only three tank depots in the entire United States. Every combat vehicle used in WWII was processed by one of these three depots. Here the finishing touches were put on 91,000 tanks, half-tracks, armored cars and other military vehicles destined for combat.

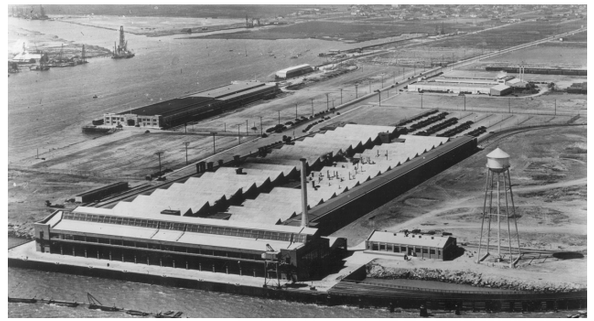
Federal military authorities and private industry began to work closely together on a scale never seen before in American history. This laid the groundwork for what became known as the "Military-Industrial Complex" during the Cold War years. This Assembly Plant was one cog in that mobilization of the "Arsenal of Democracy" and a historical part of what is today's industrial culture of the United States.

Ford Assembly Plant today.

The City of Richmond has repaired and prepared the Ford Assembly Plant for use. Title to the building has passed to Orton Development and portions of the building will be accessible to the public in the next two to three years. The National Park Visitor Center will relocate into this building at that time.

NPS photos.

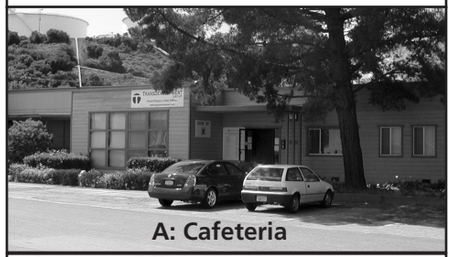
Artist's concept of a possible future scenario of the Ford Assembly Plant.



Historic view of the Ford Assembly Plant.

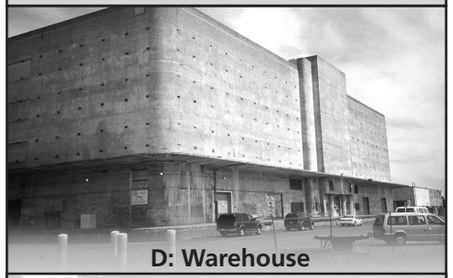
Your next stop is directly across the channel to your right as you face the Bay, the SS *Red Oak Victory* and historic Shipyard No. 3, today an active Port for the City of Richmond, NPS photo.

Shipyard No. 3 buildings as indicated on map.

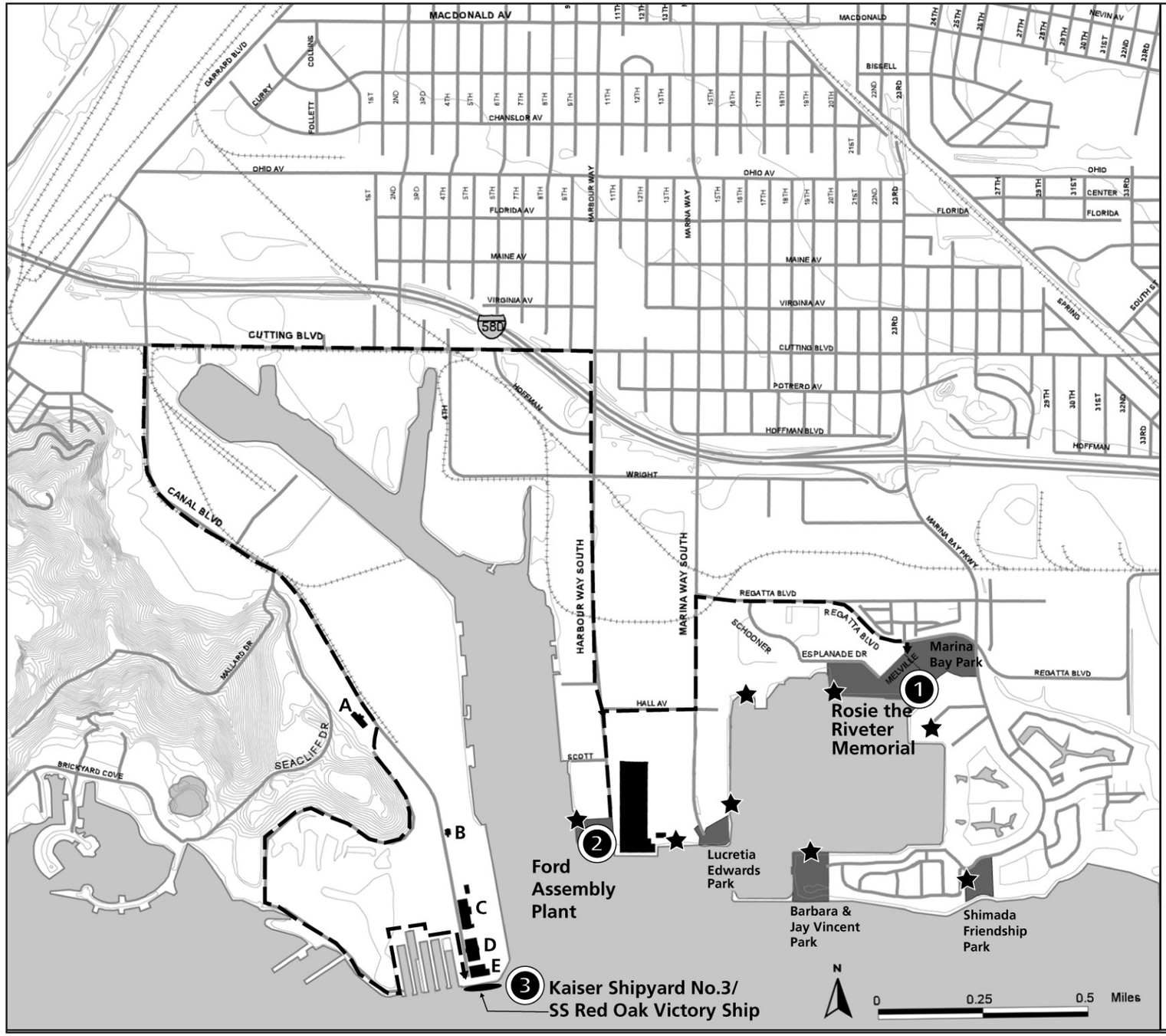

A: Cafeteria

B: First Aid Station

C: Machine Shop


D: Warehouse

E: Paint Shop



Rosie the Riveter / World War II Home Front

National Historical Park

Legend

- 1 The Rosie the Riveter Memorial
- 2 Ford Assembly Plant
- 3 Kaiser Shipyard No. 3/ SS Red Oak Victory Ship
- Driving Route
- Park Sites
- Historic Structures
- Exhibits

PWRO
National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior
May 2008

❸ Shipyard No. 3 & SS *Red Oak Victory* Ship

Directions:

- ☆ Leave Sheridan Observation Point, returning up (North) onto Harbour Way.
- ☆ After the freeway overpass, turn left onto Cutting Blvd. and go 1 mile and turn left onto Canal Blvd.
- ☆ Follow Canal into Shipyard No. 3.
- ☆ Follow the SS *Red Oak Victory* signs as the roadway winds through the shipyard. You will eventually see the ship.
- ☆ Park and go aboard the SS *Red Oak Victory*, a ship built in WWII in the Kaiser Shipyards.
- ☆ Do not stop your car along the route once you enter the shipyard. It is a working Port and not open to walking visitation. You may observe the historic structures from your car as you drive to the SS *Red Oak Victory*. Once you reach the SS *Red Oak Victory* parking area, you may exit your car and board the ship. You may NOT walk into the closed areas of the Port. Due to "September 11th" security measures at Ports, you could be arrested if found on foot in closed areas.

As you drive to the SS *Red Oak Victory*, you will see the remaining historic buildings of WWII **Shipyard No. 3**. These include the cafeteria, first aid station, forge, machine shop, warehouse and paint shop. You will able to also glimpse the 5 drydocks where the ships were assembled. Henry Kaiser applied mass assembly line techniques to building the ships.

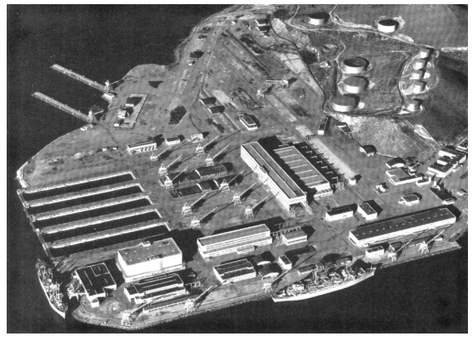
Over 747 ships were built in the four Richmond Kaiser Shipyards during WWII. Prior to WWII it would take approximately one year to build ships of this size. By 1945, the average time for construction was less than one month, and in Shipyard #2, the SS *Robert E. Peary* Liberty ship (shown on the right) was constructed in under 5 days.

This production line technique, bringing pre-made parts together and moving them into place with huge cranes and having them welded together by "Rosies" (actually "Wendy the Welders" here in the shipyards) allowed unskilled laborers to do repetitive jobs requiring relatively little training to accomplish. This not only increased the speed of construction but also opened up jobs to women and people of color.

SS *Robert E. Peary*, Richmond Museum of History Collection.

Women and people of color entered the workforce in jobs before denied to them. However, they still faced unequal pay, they were shunted off into "auxiliary" unions and still had to deal with day to day prejudice and inequities. During the war, there were labor strikes and sit-down work stoppages that eventually led to better conditions. As one African American Rosie commented about the progress of labor and civil rights during this time, while huge gains had to wait for the post-war civil rights moment, the Home Front did, "begin to shed light on America's promise."

Artist's concept of a possible future scenario of Shipyard No. 3.



above: Richmond Shipyard welder, FDR Museum photo.
center: Shipyard No.3 during WWII, Richmond Museum of History Collection.
below: afternoon shift change in 1942, Oakland Museum of California - Dorothea Lange Collection.

The SS *Red Oak Victory* Ship

is owned by the non-profit Richmond Museum Association. They are currently restoring the ship with volunteer help. A donation of $5 per person is appreciated. Open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays (hours subject to change). Exploring the ship on your own can take from thirty minutes to two hours. For further information please call (510) 237-2933 or check the web site: www.ssredoakvictory.org.

Take the time to talk to the volunteers on board the ship. If you are lucky enough to find one who actually served on Merchant Marine vessels during the war, find out what that life was like - ask them how they felt to be on board ships built by women. The real interesting stories about the ship are not its length, width and storage capacity, but the human stories of the people who built them and sailed on them.

The SS *Red Oak Victory* was built in Richmond Kaiser Shipyard #1. It was launched on November 9th, 1944. One of the few Liberty and Victory Ships to be actually transferred from the Merchant Marine to the US Navy, the SS *Red Oak Victory* served as an ammunition ship in the South Pacific during WWII. She also served in the Vietnam and Korean Wars.

The SS *Red Oak Victory* being constructed, Richmond Museum of History Collection.

Many Rosies have recounted how important they felt their jobs were in welding these ships together and how careful they were in doing it. They realized their husbands,' brothers,' and sons' lives depended on the cargos delivered by these ships. Victory and Liberty ships were not supposed to be long lasting vessels - but the SS *Red Oak Victory's* welds are still intact after over sixty years!

As you explore the ship, imagine assembling this entire ship in about two weeks. Picture the cranes moving huge pieces into position, the welding torches arcing and sparks flying, the noise of the machines, motors, the shouting, hundreds of men and women moving about, the excitement.

Then think about all the things that had to happen to make the construction of this ship possible - developing new techniques of construction and concentration of resources, moving masses of workers to coastal cities, finding housing for the thousands swelling the cities, creating new attitudes to allow day care for working mothers, establishing the new idea of pre-paid medical care to keep workers on the job, and changing societal norms to allow women and minorities into jobs denied them previously, while at the same time wrestling with the issues of integration and civil rights. That is the full story of the WWII Home Front.

The SS *Red Oak Victory* today at Shipyard No. 3, NPS photo.

Park Sites not yet open to the public

The following sites in the park are not yet open to the public and are either in private ownership and/or are still in operation. While visiting these sites is not allowed at present, they represent important stories of the WWII Home Front.

Kaiser Hospital

NPS photo

More American workers died in Home Front accidents then US soldiers killed on WWII battlefields. This was true up to the invasion of Normandy in June of 1944.

Henry J. Kaiser realized that only a healthy work force could meet the deadlines and construction needs of wartime America. He instituted a revolutionary idea, pre-paid medical care for workers, which soon expanded beyond workers. For many workers, this was the first time they had seen a doctor. Today, pre-paid medical care is central to American culture - it is a legacy of the WWII Home Front.

Maritime and Ruth Powers Child Development Centers

NPS photo

Employing cutting edge educational techniques for their time, the Maritime and Ruth Powers Child Development Centers opened during WWII and allowed mothers to join the Home Front work force. Built as temporary structures to fulfill a war time need, these centers have been in continuous operation since that time.

Day care as we know it today started in places like this. Revolutionary for its time, day care has become an accepted norm.

Atchison Village

NPS photo

Oakland Museum of CA, Dorothea Lange Collection

The huge explosion of workers coming to live in cities like Richmond, caused intense strain on city infrastructure. One of these strains was the severe lack of housing. Workers arriving in these rapidly expanding urban centers were forced to find what they could. They slept in all night movie houses, shared "hot beds" (where three people used one bed, each getting an 8 hour stretch), or just camped out.

In response to this need, government and industry combined to construct communities all over the nation that included housing, schools, fire/police stations, child care facilities and other amenities. Atchison Village was one of them. These were highly sought after and company managers were the most likely to be able to procure housing in Atchison Village.

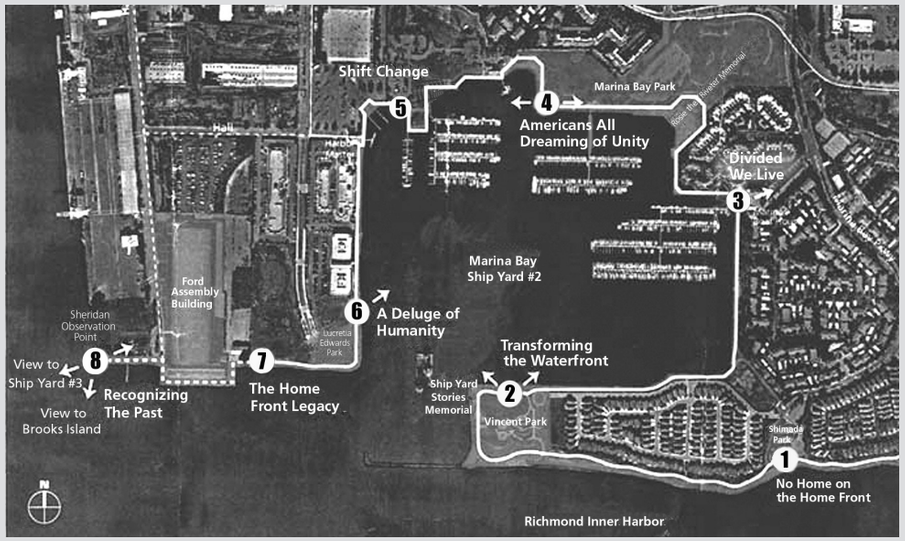
Due to discrimination, people of color fared very poorly in gaining housing. They often lived in shacks, in the crates that brought the raw materials to the city, in trailers, or in automobiles. They and other lower income earning workers were lucky when they were able to move to barrack-like dormitories constructed for the mass of WWII workers.

Today, Atchison Village is a collection of privately owned houses managed by a cooperative of the homeowners. While most of the dormitories and other low income housing of WWII are gone, Atchison Village, built as permanent housing, remains.

Optional: Take a Walking Tour

Directions:

- ☆ Each of the parks on the map below has parking. Find one you like and take the time to stretch those legs and enjoy some of the best views of the San Francisco Bay Area.
- ☆ You could walk the entire length of the park's water front which would take about 2 hours, or just enjoy a piece of it depending on the amount of time you have.
- ☆ The titles on the map below are the titles of the eight educational art exhibits along the Bay Trail.



Map, City of Richmond; photos of exhibits, Donna Graves

Bay Trail, NPS photo

Bay Trail/Esplanade

With 20 miles of Bay Trail now in place, Richmond stands out as having more Bay Trail than any other city on this planned 500-mile hiking and biking route encircling the San Francisco Bay Area.

There are interpretative exhibits along the Bay Trail. Some are located at various parks along the trail. You can refer to the map for those locations.

Rosie the Riveter Memorial / Rosie the Riveter Park

The memorial, dedicated on October 14, 2000, is a sculpture that symbolizes the framework of a Liberty ship. Photographs and text panels incorporated into the sculpture give an overview of the history of the "Home Front. Quotes from "Rosies" and a World War II timeline are incised into the granite walkway of the memorial.

Barbara and Jay Vincent Park

This park sits on a breakwater in front of Marina Bay that was originally constructed for Kaiser Richmond Shipyard No. 2. It is home to a monument that interprets World War II experiences of shipyard workers. Tremendous views of the Ford Assembly Plant and Shipyard No. 3.

Shimada Peace (Friendship) Memorial Park

Commemorates friendship between the City of Richmond and its sister city, Shimada in Japan.

Lucretia Edwards Shoreline Park

Named for a local champion of open space, this park commemorates the other San Francisco Bay Area Shipyards. Explore and you will find exhibits that will show you where the other shipyards in the Bay Area were located.

Sheridan Observation Point Park

In addition to being a major stop on the driving tour, you can get out and walk around to see the interpretive art exhibit and views of the Santa Fe Shipping Channel, a major port for the City of Richmond and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Rosie the Riveter Memorial, NPS photo

Barbara and Jay Vincent Pak, NPS photo

Sheridan Observation Point Park, NPS photo