Savannah Shipyard Co. records

Descriptive Summary

Repository: Georgia Historical Society
Creator: Savannah Shipyard Co. (Ga.)
Title: Savannah Shipyard Co. records
Dates: 1940-1992
Extent: 1.45 cubic feet (3 boxes, 4 folders, 2 oversize folders)
Identification: MS 1659

Biographical/Historical Note

Savannah Machine and Foundry of Georgia originated in 1914 as a marine repair business by the name of Forest City machine and Foundry Company. Over the years it was reorganized several times; in 1929 it emerged as the Savannah Machine and Foundry (SMF). In 1941, SMF contracted with the U.S. Department of the Navy to build three minesweepers. The Savannah Machine and Foundry located their new shipyard on the Savannah River, off North Lathrop Avenue, between the Colonial Oil Co. and the Southern Cotton Oil Co. SMF constructed facilities for shipbuilding and shops for repair and maintenance.

The first minesweeper keel was laid in November, 1941, and was launched in 1942. The minesweepers were constructed entirely of welded steel. Several of the minesweepers were built for the British navy as part of a U.S.-British collaboration. As a result of the Navy contract, SMF president Walter L. Mingledorff was able to petition the federal government for funding to construct a permanent graving dock (dry dock) at the shipyard. The $2 million graving dock opened in October, 1933, and was the only commercial graving dock on the Atlantic coast south of Baltimore. In August of 1944, SMF was contracted by the Navy to design and build submarine rescue ships. The first of these welded steel vessels was launched in 1945.

By the end of the Navy contracts, SMF had constructed 25 minesweepers and 4 submarine rescue vessels. At their peak of production, the shipyard employed between 2,800-3,300 people. During this time, W. Lee Mingledorff, Jr. served as vice-president and shipyard manager. Late in the war, SMF also began producing steel girders, trusses, conveyors, gray iron, brass and aluminum, and could handle almost any type of heavy machine repair or construction. After World War II, SMF continued manufacturing these types of products in addition to their marine repairs service. The shipyard was also involved with the post-war "Operations Zipper" to deactivate and preserve Navy ships.

In 1971, the name of the company changed to Savannah Machine and Shipyard. The name changed again in 1980, to Savannah Shipyard Co. By 1985, a company called Sayler Marine Corporation occupied the former Savannah Machine and Foundry location.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of papers and photographs from the Savannah Machine and Foundry (later the Savannah Shipyard Co.), including 1942 cost estimates for building a minesweeper, a few miscellaneous papers, a program from the 1992 launching of a minesweeper built by Intermarine, and an oversized schedule of World War II production. The collection is arranged into two series: papers and photographs. The photographs series is divided into six subseries: Navy contract ships; ships and barges; shipyard views; miscellaneous and unidentified jobs; people, and official Navy publicity photographs.

Boxes and folders containing photographs are noted as "VM" (visual materials) in the collection inventory.

Index Terms
Business records.
Dry docks--Georgia--Savannah--20th century.
Estimates.
Minesweepers--Production control.
Mingledorff, R. E.
Photographs.
Savannah Shipyard Co. (Ga.)
Shipbuilding--Georgia--Savannah.
Ships--Maintenance and repair.
Shipyards--Georgia--Savannah--20th century.
Submarine rescue vehicles.
World War, 1939-1945--Engineering and construction.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Material was acquired from the grandson of the creating organization's founder.

Preferred Citation

[item identification], Savannah Shipyard Co. records, MS 1659, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

Acquisition Information


Restrictions

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

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Sponsorship

Encoding funded by a 2012 Documenting Democracy grant from the National Historic Publications and Records Commission.

Container List

SERIES 1:: Papers, 1942-1992

This series contains papers from the Savannah Machine and Foundry shipyard, including 1942 cost estimates for building a minesweeper, a few miscellaneous papers, a program from the 1992 launching of a minesweeper built by Intermarine, and an oversized schedule of World War II production.
1. Estimates. Minesweepers, 220' M100-131 (1 boat)
   Minesweeper estimate, includes cover letter to Mr. A.M. Harper of Arthur Andersen and Company (Atlanta)

2. USS Ptarmigan
   3 letters, all relating to contact information for the Sponsor and Matron of Honor and photographs for reunion of the Ptarmigan's crew (1973-1974)

3. Miscellaneous
   2 items, both referring to photographs but neither item was attached to specific photos, so it is impossible to determine which images were referenced

4. Intermarine “Heron” (MHC-52), launched March 21, 1992, 188' x 36' beam, $80+ million (they mentioned Heron AMS-18 built by SMF?). Program for launching

5. Schedule of World War II production

**SERIES 2:: Photographs, 1940-1973**

This series consists of six subseries: 2.1, Navy contract ships; 2.2, ships and barges; 2.3, shipyard views; 2.4, miscellaneous and unidentified jobs; 2.5, people; and 2.6, official Navy publicity photographs.

**SUBSERIES 2.1:: Navy contract ships, 1941-1946**

This subseries contains photographs of Navy contract ships, usually including images of the individual ship, the launching ceremony and the sponsors, and the ship headed into the water. These photographs are arranged by the working number given to each ship by SMF-the hull number. The name and the second number (usually prefixed by AM or ASR) were assigned by the Navy. AM is the prefix for minesweepers and ASR is the designation for submarine rescue ships. Many launching folders also contain photocopied information identifying the sponsor and other launching participants. Some correlate to photographs in the collection, other refer to photographs not found in the collection. Please note: there were discrepancies regarding information for hulls 12-17, including differing hull numbers, names, and launching dates. Some information on the backs of the photographs did not match information written on the original folders, a list of keel laying and launching dates for all ships built at SMF, or articles in the newspaper. Probably
errors are noted. The most correct information, based on newspaper articles is given at the end of the folder title. The list of keel laying and launching dates for all ships built at SMF was provided by the donor and follows this inventory.

**USS Symbol** (Hull 1) AM 123  
**Online Inventory Contains Digitized Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Keel Laying Date</th>
<th>Launch Date</th>
<th>Ship Name</th>
<th>Hull Number</th>
<th>AM/BAM</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Duplicates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>November 18, 1941</td>
<td>July 2, 1942</td>
<td>USS Symbol</td>
<td>AM 123</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Yes (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>August 15, 1942</td>
<td>September 7, 1942</td>
<td>USS Threat</td>
<td>AM 124</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>January 10, 1943</td>
<td>January 24, 1943</td>
<td>HMS Gazelle</td>
<td>BAM 17</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yes (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>March 10, 1943</td>
<td>May 24, 1943</td>
<td>HMS Magic</td>
<td>BAM 20</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>March 10, 1943</td>
<td>June 27, 1943</td>
<td>HMS Pylades</td>
<td>BAM 21</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
USS *Implicit* (Hull 9) AM 246, launched, September 6, 1943, 5 items

USS *Improve* (Hull 10) AM 247, launched, September 26, 1943, 4 items

USS *Incessant* (Hull 11), AM 248, launched, October 22, 1943, 2 items

USS *Incredible* (Hull 12) AM 249, launched, December 12, 1943, 5 items
	This is probably the USS *Indicative*.

USS *Indicative* (Hull 13) AM 250, launched, November 21, 1943, 3 items
	This is probably the USS *Incredible*.

USS *Inflict* (Hull 9) AM 251, launched, January 16, 1944, 4 items, plus duplicates
	This is actually Hull 14.

USS *Instill* (Hull 15) AM 252, launched, March 5, 1955
	This is probably Hull 16

USS *Intrigue* (Hull 16) AM 253, launched, April 4, 1944, 5 items
	This is probably Hull 17 and was launched April 8, 1944. The original launching was delayed because of flood conditions.

USS *Invade* (Hull 17) AM 254, launched, February 6, 1944, 6 items, plus duplicates
	This is probably Hull 15.

USS *Pochard* (Hull 18) AM 375, launched, June 11, 1944, 17 items, plus duplicates
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fldr</th>
<th>VM Box</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>USS <em>Ptarmigan</em> (Hull 19) AM 376, launched, July 15, 1944, 14 items, plus duplicates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>USS <em>Quail</em> (Hull 20) AM 377, launched, August 20, 1944, 19 items, plus duplicates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>22-23</td>
<td>USS <em>Restart</em> (Hull 21) AM 378, launched, October 18, 1944, 26 items, plus duplicates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>USS <em>Minivet</em> (Hull 22) AM 371, launched, November 8, 1944, 5 items, plus duplicates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>USS <em>Murrelet</em> (Hull 23) AM 372, commissioned, August 21, 1945, 3 items&lt;br&gt;(Please note that these are commissioning photos, not taken during the launching).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>USS <em>Peregrine</em> (Hull 24) AM 373, launched, February 20, 1945, 10 items, plus duplicates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27-28</td>
<td>USS <em>Pigeon</em> (Hull 25) AM 374, launched, March 28, 1945, 17 items, plus duplicates&lt;br&gt;Also includes 2 color photos (circa 1970s, unidentified, possibly the sponsor and a converted USS <em>Pigeon</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>USS <em>Kittiwake</em> (Hull 26) ASR 13, progress picture, 26 items, plus duplicates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>USS <em>Petrel</em> (Hull 27) ASR 14, launched, September 25, 1945, 9 items, plus duplicates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fldr</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>USS <em>Sunbird</em> (Hull 28) ASR 15, launched, April 3, 1946, 11 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>USS <em>Tringa</em> (Hull 29) ASR 16, launched, June 25, 1946, 17 items, plus duplicates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUBSERIES 2.2:: Ships and barges, 1950s**

This subseries contains photographs of other ships and barges. These are photographs of ships and barges that SMF probably repaired, converted, or in some way was involved in construction. However, not all of these photos were identified as repair work or jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fldr</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13

vm_box  Fldr
2  14-  Fireboat, possibly the Richard D. Sutton, circa 1954, 52 items, plus duplicates
16

vm_box  Fldr
2  17  Gulf barge Mohican, 1 item

vm_box  Fldr
2  18  Barge Raymond Demere, Colonial Oil Co., 1956, 15 items

vm_box  Fldr
2  19-  SOCONY barge #32, 46 items
20

vm_box  Fldr
2  21  Unidentified barge (possibly SOCONY barge #32), 4 items, plus duplicates

vm_box  Fldr
2  22  Unidentified ships, 3 items

SUBSERIES 2.3:: Navy contract ships, 1940-1973

This subseries contains photographs including aerial views of the shipyard and interior views of certain buildings, including the machine shop and fab. shop. Construction views of the shipyard are also found in this series. Not all of the photographs are identified or dated. There is also a folder of images of the Southern Cotton Oil Company waterfront.

vm_box  Fldr
2  23  Progress views, 1941-1942, 24 items
     Dated views of construction of the shipbuilding facilities at Savannah Machine and Foundry following initial contract with the Navy.

vm_box  Fldr
2  24  Graving dock, 1940, 1943, undated, 15 items, plus duplicates
     Construction views, and in-use views.
Caisson gate, 1943 and undated, 7 items
Construction views.

Machine shop and fab. shop, 1944, 2 items, plus duplicates
Interior views;

Aerial views of shipyard, 1973, 12 items, plus duplicates

Miscellaneous shipyard views, 20 items
Includes some aerial views of the shipyard, most images unidentified, all undated.

Southern Cotton Oil Company waterfront, 1957, 9 items
This company was located next to Savannah Machine and Foundry on the Savannah River.

SUBSERIES 2.4:: Miscellaneous and unidentified job

This subseries contains photographs of work done after the war. Very few images are identified.

Trailer. Probably a product of the foundry, 2 items

Hunter Air Force Base. Hangar fabrication job, 1953, 10 items

Unidentified miscellaneous jobs, 10 items
SUBSERIES 2.5:: People, 1943-1958

This subseries contains photographs of R.E. Mingledorff, unidentified people, and photos of the Army-Navy "E" award ceremony in 1943.

vm_box
Fldr
3 7
Army-Navy "E" Award, 1943, 3 items, plus duplicates

vm_box
Fldr
3 8
Men. R.E. Mingledorff and an unidentified man, probably a relative, 2 items, plus duplicates

vm_box
Fldr
3 9
People, unidentified, 7 items, plus duplicates

   Includes a photo with a man identified as "B. Rasmussen, 'Benfruit' (1958)."
   All other unidentified and include a crowd of people at the shipyard and several photos of men at a banquet.

SUBSERIES 2.6:: Official Navy publicity photographs, 1942

This subseries contains photographs released to the press in 1942. There is no apparent connection to SMF.

vm_box
Fldr
3 10
Official Navy publicity photos, 1942, 6 items

   Miscellaneous photos release to the press, the last photo is undated.