

Utah's Small Arms Ammunition Plant during World War II

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LIKE A GIGANTIC ELEVATOR, World War II lifted the state of Utah from the depths of depression to the heights of prosperity. During the war, the federal government expended between \$600 million and \$650 million on buildings and equipment at military installations, and more than \$240 million on the construction of buildings at privately operated defense plants. Between 1940 and 1945, payrolls in the counties of Box Elder, Weber, Davis, Tooele, Utah, and Salt Lake jumped from about \$100 million to almost \$250 million, and population rose from 300,000 to 350,000. The impact is all the more impressive when one notes that the day before Hitler attacked Poland (September 1, 1939), 40,000 people were on Utah's WPA payrolls, and the Salt Lake City Commission debated the "wisdom of employing a supervisor for a WPA project at \$10 a day when 'we can get all we want at \$150 per month.'"¹

Second only to the Geneva Steel plant in construction cost was Salt Lake City's Utah Ordnance plant, also called the Remington Arms plant.² Used since World War II for diverse purposes, the Utah Ordnance plant makes an interesting study in the effect of federal defense spending on an underindustrialized region.

¹ Salt Lake *Tribune*, Aug. 15, 1945; Charles W. Gray, "The Growth of Manufacturing in the Mountain States, 1939-1947, With Special Reference to Colorado and Utah" (Master's thesis, University of Colorado, 1949), 94.

² The Geneva plant cost \$203 million to construct, and the Utah Ordnance plant \$19 million: *ibid.*

During 1940 and 1941, the army and navy found small arms ammunition in extremely short supply. Both army and war department officials urged the ordnance department to open new plants, because it was not manufacturing enough even for target practice. Construction of small arms ammunition plants was given A-1-a priority in May, 1941, and the war department drew up plans for three plants.³

In April, 1941, Governor Herbert B. Maw, who was indefatigable in seeking the introduction of new industry into the "Beehive State," went to Washington. Together with Utah's congressional delegation, Governor Maw met with war department and other high administration officials and with President Franklin Roosevelt in an attempt to get a small arms ammunition plant for Utah. There was some concern about the available labor supply in the state, but Governor Maw pointed out that within a 40-mile radius of Salt Lake City were 23,000 employables. Maw and Senator Abe Murdock were encouraged when the president told them that he planned not only to place the ammunition plant, but also a pig iron plant, in Utah.⁴

In June, 1941, Senator Murdock announced, after another series of conferences with war department officials, that the federal government would probably authorize the construction of a small arms plant. He expected the facility would mean the investment of "millions" and the employment of "thousands" in the depression-racked state.⁵ Several days later, the war department announced that it would construct a \$30 million installation at Salt Lake City to manufacture .30 and .50 caliber small arms ammunition for the army stationed along the Pacific coast. Governor Herbert B. Maw opined that this plant, the largest constructed in Utah to that time, would "go a long way in solving the state's unemployment problem."⁶ In letters to Murdock, Maw said that: "Hundreds of people are singing your praises as well as those of your associates who worked with you."⁷

Just why had northern Utah been selected as the site for this facility? The reasons were the same as those which prompted the government to locate a vast industrial and military complex there during

³ Harry C. Thomson and Lidda Mayo, *United States Army in World War II, The Technical Services, the Ordnance Department: Procurement and Supply* (Washington, D.C., 1960), 195.

⁴ Anthony T. Cluff, "The Role of the Federal Government in the Industrial Expansion of Utah During World War Two" (Master's thesis, Utah State University, 1964), 40-42.

⁵ *Tribune*, June 7, 1941.

⁶ *Ibid.*, June 11, 1941.

⁷ Correspondence cited in Cluff, 43.

the war. The Salt Lake area had a large available supply of working men and housing facilities. The site presented geographical, transportation, and strategic advantages not found in other places considered. In addition, there was an ample water supply and ground for a target range nearby.⁸

The land which the government selected for the factory was in western Salt Lake City, between 900 and 2100 South and Redwood Road and 7400 West. Of the 5,000 acres purchased for the facility, more than half belonged to Salt Lake City as tax-deed land, another indication of Utah's poverty; and the city commission, happy to see the plant come in, conveyed it to the government for \$1.00. The war department purchased the remaining land from private citizens at a cost of \$300,000.⁹

Local groups had hoped that a combine of Utah contractors would secure the prime contract for the plant, which the government constructed on a cost-plus-fixed-fee basis; but the Denver firm of W. G. Broderick and David G. Gordon closed the deal. The company announced, however, that it would hire labor on the local market and purchase materials from local business people. The government chose the firms of Smith, Hinchman, and Grylls of Detroit, and R. J. Tipton of Denver, to design the 211-building layout.¹⁰

Construction began July 22, 1941, with the building of thirty movable frame field offices. As the company said, it purchased most of the materials used in the plant and subcontracted much of the construction such as cement and millwork on the local market. The payroll continued to rise throughout the summer and autumn, and on December 1, 1941, about 7,000 employees worked on building the plant. This was more than one-sixth the number which had been on Utah's WPA payrolls in 1939. On December 6, 1941, the day before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the construction passed into its final phase.¹¹

⁸ *Tribune*, Jan. 25, 1942. Among other defense installations constructed in Utah during World War II were: Hill Air Force Base, Wendover Air Force Base, Kearns Air Force Base, Clearfield Naval Supply Depot, Tooele Ordnance Depot, Dugway Proving Grounds, Deseret Chemical Depot, Utah General Depot, and Ogden Arsenal. Reasons for the construction of these installations on "the Wasatch Front" are presented in a series of articles by the present writers in the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXI-XXXIII (1963-1965).

⁹ *Tribune*, July 17, 24, Dec. 5, 11, 1941; Sept. 17, 1945.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, June 17, 19, July 3, 19, 21, 1941.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, July 23, Aug. 1, 7, 13, Sept. 19, Oct. 4, Nov. 18, 28, Dec. 1, 7, 12, 19, 1941; Jan. 5, 1942. See also Table I.

The 211 buildings at the Ordnance plant were not of the wood and tarpaper variety so common at rushed defense jobs. Rather, Broderick and Gordon built a layout of permanent structures with concrete, steel, and brick. Among other things, the layout required 7,471 tons of structural steel, 60,000 cubic yards of concrete, 2.3 million bricks, 4.8 million board feet of lumber, 1.1 million square feet of insulation, and 325,425 square feet of roofing.¹²

The construction was not undertaken without some difficulties. A fire on December 6, 1941 (the day before Pearl Harbor!), damaged several thousand dollars' worth of property. Disputes arose over the dumping of sewage into canals near the plant and over the routing of trucks hauling gravel to the site. After a P.T.A. committee protested that children's lives might be endangered by the trucks, the commission ordered rerouting to avoid accidents. In spite of such incidents, the accident record at the project was exceptionally good.¹³

The buildings which Broderick and Gordon constructed at the plant cost the government \$18,974,607. To this must be added other improvements such as the railroad spur tracks laid to the site by the Union Pacific, Denver and Rio Grande Western, Western Pacific, and Bamberger railroad companies, and the sanitation arrangements. Despite a tax levy, for which the Salt Lake City commission received special legislative approval, the city of Salt Lake did not have enough money to construct the water mains leading to the plant; and the army had to advance \$135,000.¹⁴

On August 14, 1941, the war department announced that the Remington Arms Company, Inc., of Bridgeport, Connecticut, would operate the plant. The government appropriated \$11.1 million for the purchase of machinery, ranging from hand tools to twenty-ton presses, for the plant, and approximately \$50 million for the operation of the plant for one year. In September, L. E. Therian, assistant superintendent of the service department of Remington Arms, set up offices to begin public relations work in the Salt Lake area. The company began operations less than six months after the contractor broke ground for the buildings, and on March 2, 1942, the war department accepted the first shipment of ammunition. In the meantime, the

¹² *Ibid.*, Sept. 19, 1941; *ibid.*, Empire Progress Edition, Jan. 25, 1942; J. R. Mahoney, "Wartime Economic Changes and Postwar Industrial Readjustment in Utah," in Ora Bundy, compiler, *After Victory: Plans for Utah and the Wasatch Front* (Salt Lake City, 1943), Part I, p. 73.

¹³ *Tribune*, Aug. 22, 27, Dec. 9, 27, 1941.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, June 10, 12, 13, Aug. 2, 3, 8, Oct. 1, 1941; Aug. 24, 1946; Gray, 92.

Remington company had taken employees from Utah to Denver, and Lake City, Kansas to train them for supervisory and other key posts at the Salt Lake plant.¹⁵ Remington had the difficult task of recruiting and training more than 10,000 employees from a non-industrial area where experienced factory workers were almost unknown.¹⁶

Unlike many of the defense installations in Utah, the Remington Arms plant was not designed primarily to repair and service materiel which had already been manufactured. The facility was designed for the manufacture of .50 caliber armor-piercing, tracer, and incendiary ammunition and .30 caliber ball, armor-piercing, and tracer bullets. This was the type of ammunition used in the M-1 rifles and Browning automatic rifles carried by every dogface soldier, and in the .50 caliber machineguns used to support them. The company was successful in its operations at Salt Lake City, and in August, 1943, the government presented its Army-Navy E award for excellence in the production of high-quality ammunition.¹⁷

The manufacturing process at the plant was basically like that of the old-fashioned blacksmith, though machines instead of the old anvil and hammer were used. The cartridge case was punched into shape, then tempered and reshaped. After an inspection, the cartridges were assembled from the component parts. Armor-piercing and tracer ammunition required more production processes than ball-type ammunition, but the basic operations were similar. Finished ammunition was weighed and gauged before shipment.¹⁸

The plant had a powerful effect on the labor market and industrial potential of Utah. Remington Arms, with government funds, trained about 15,000 Utah workers in assembly-line procedures, industrial techniques, mechanical trades, and technological skills which created a potentially important pool of mechanics and technicians for post-war Utah. The plant, both during the construction and operating phases, boosted wage scales in the Salt Lake area. As early as October, 1941, local competing employers complained that the high wage scales at the plant made it difficult to compete. L. E. Therian of the Remington company explained in March, 1942, that the company had a

¹⁵ For a general view of the operations of the Utah Ordnance plant, see Alden Hatch, *Remington Arms in American History* (New York, 1956), 272; *Tribune*, Aug. 15, Sept. 9, 1941, Jan. 25, 1942; June 10, 1943. Generally, the plant was called a \$30 million facility, because both the buildings and machinery cost that much.

¹⁶ Thomson and Mayo, 195-196.

¹⁷ *Tribune*, July 31, Aug. 24, 31, Nov. 5, 1943.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, June 26, 1943.

TABLE I. NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES AT THE UTAH ORDNANCE PLANT, 1941-1955

Date	Occupant	Approximate Employment
August, 1941	Broderick and Gordon Company	1,200
September, 1941	Broderick and Gordon Company	4,000
December, 1941	Broderick and Gordon Company	7,000
July, 1942	Remington Arms Company	10,000
August, 1943	" " "	10,000
December, 1943	" " "	5,000
November, 1944	Ogden Arsenal	1,300
August, 1945	" " "	1,800
January, 1947	George A. Fuller Company	1,000
1955	Salt Lake Industrial Center	3,000

SOURCES: Salt Lake *Tribune*, Aug. 13, Sept. 19, Dec. 1, 1941; Aug. 31, 1943; Nov. 4, 1944; Aug. 26, 1945 Jan. 11, 1947; Elroy Nelson, *Utah's Economic Patterns* (Salt Lake City, 1956) 203.

job to do for the war effort and it had set wage scales high because of the need for skilled craftsmen. Even though the wages were higher than average for the Salt Lake City area, he pointed out they were still lower than those of the Denver and Kansas City areas where the company had other plants. Colonel Duncan G. McGregor, the commanding officer of the plant, observed that stenographers in his department who were paid by law at civil service rates had "helped boost the pay scale for stenographers locally."¹⁹

This impact came partly because of the large number of workers employed at the plant. In July, 1942, the plant reached its peak employment of 10,000 which it retained through November, 1943. This was about seven per cent of Utah's entire 1940 labor force. The effect of this plant, together with other Utah defense activities, becomes apparent when one notes that in November, 1943, when the plant began to close down, the Salt Lake area had become one of "acute manpower shortage."²⁰

This plant was important not only because of the absolute numbers hired, but because of the increase in employment it meant to the state. The plant accounted for 85 per cent of the increase in the number of employees in all manufacturing in Utah between October,

¹⁹ Mahoney in Bundy, 73; *Tribune*, Oct. 11, 1941; March 26, 1942. For a list of the wage scales paid the construction workers at the plant, see *ibid.*, Aug. 12, 1941.

²⁰ *Tribune*, Aug. 31, Feb. 7, Nov. 14, 16, Dec. 6, 1943; Elroy Nelson, *Utah's Economic Patterns* (Salt Lake City, 1956), 203. Figures on 1940 employment are computed from Leonard J. Arrington, "The Changing Economic Structure of the Mountain West, 1850-1950," *Utah State University Monograph Series*, X: 3 (June, 1963), 37.

1941, and November, 1942. During the fourth quarter of 1941, the plant had a payroll of \$191,000. By the last quarter of 1942, it paid out \$5.7 million out of a total payroll of \$17 million for all manufacturing in the state. In 1943, it paid almost one-third of Utah's expanded manufacturing payroll of more than \$67 million.²¹

The effect of the plant was much broader than its economic impact would indicate. A number of women were brought into the labor market for the first time, changing the pattern of living in a great number of families. The plant allowed the Salt Lake citizens to feel that they were part of the war effort by doing essential work and contributing to defense bonds. The company added to the artistic life of the community by sponsoring community concerts, including a performance by Yehudi Menuhin at Kingsbury Hall on the campus of the University of Utah. Employee groups sponsored bathing beauty contests and presented plays and variety shows, all of which enriched the cultural life of Salt Lake City. The plant also published a newspaper which allowed budding amateur journalists an artistic outlet.²²

Reduced requirements of ammunition became evident in 1943, and the government decided to close six small arms plants and reduce production rates by one-third at most of the others.²³ In November, 1943, the government announced that it would shut down ammunition production in Salt Lake City on January 1, 1944. It was expected that, owing to the labor shortage, the workers would have no trouble finding other employment. When it became clear that the war was moving toward a successful completion, it was this very labor shortage, according to General Lucius D. Clay, which prompted the closing of the plant. There was later talk of reopening the facility, but such rumors were scotched because the 6,000 workers who would have been needed to run the operation were not available. Nevertheless, there was some effect on the economy when the plant closed. Salt Lake City merchants noticed that Christmas shopping in December, 1943, fell slightly "but noticeably, as successive shifts of workers were laid off at UOP." ²⁴

During December, the plant underwent steady dismantling, until on December 16, only 5,000 employees remained on the staff. The war department allocated materiel from the plant to Hill Air Force

²¹ Cluff, 45.

²² *Tribune*, Dec. 19, 1941; Jan. 25, Feb. 7, 21, Sept. 16, Nov. 18, 1942; Jan. 19, Feb. 7, Aug. 4, 15, Sept. 11, 12, 13, 18, Nov. 25, Dec. 19, 1943; Feb. 10, 1944.

²³ Thomson and Mayo, 218.

²⁴ *Tribune*, Nov. 16, 24, 28, Dec. 16, 22, 23, 1943; Jan. 1, Dec. 5, 1944.

Base, Fort Douglas, Utah General Depot (now Defense Depot Ogden), and other defense installations. By January 1, 1944, only a small maintenance crew and guards were left at the once-booming site.²⁵

Between January and May, 1944, the plant remained on caretaker status with only a small staff. When in May, the installation, minus most of its expensive ammunition manufacturing machinery, was designated as the Salt Lake branch of the Ogden Arsenal. The Salt Lake *Tribune* commended the war department on utilizing the idle facility and hoped that "some permanent use can be found for it in the postwar period."²⁶

Under the arsenal, the installation functioned principally in reclaiming used war materiel. One of the first jobs which it undertook was the repair and renewal of jeeps. The army transferred the famous four-wheeled vehicles in long convoys from the arsenal. Employees at the plant then took them apart piece by piece, coded the usable parts, and stored them as spare parts for other usable jeeps. This operation constituted a saving to the war department over the amount which it might have derived from selling the vehicles as scrap. Later, all sorts of war materiel from "windshield defrosters to gun stocks" were taken to the plant for "repair, reclassification and reshipment to fighting forces overseas." By November, 1944, the plant was reclaiming five boxcar loads a day at a cost to the government of about 20 cents per pound. Had the army purchased the goods from manufacturers, it would have paid more than 50 cents per pound for similar materiel.²⁷

It was at first predicted that the army would employ about 600 persons at the plant; but by November, 1944, 1,300 workers passed through the gates. In August, 1945, 1,800 were employed there. By October, 1945, the plant had operated for almost 1.8 million man-hours with only one lost-time injury.²⁸

In August, 1945, American soldiers began to occupy Japan; and shipments of surplus war materiel poured back to the U.S. Reclamation of this material continued at the plant until May 1, 1946, when the Utah General Depot took over the phase-out operations. The army transferred all materiel except the war surplus to Tooele Ordnance Depot (now Tooele Army Depot). At that time, some of the build-

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Dec. 8, 16, 22, 1943; Jan. 1, 1944.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, July 15, Nov. 26, 1944; Aug. 24, 1946.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Aug. 18, Sept. 17, Nov. 4, 1944.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, July 12, Nov. 4, 1944; Aug. 26, Oct. 28, 1945. See also Table I.

ings at the plant were closed up and others divided among the various agencies which were to occupy them until their sale by the government. The veterans' administration regional office moved into the former administration building, and the war assets administration occupied two of the largest buildings, where one of the biggest bargain basement sales in Utah history took place.²⁹

Sales of surplus materiel had begun before the arsenal turned the plant over to Utah General Depot for disposal. As early as August 12, 1945, three days after the bomb fell on Nagasaki, the arsenal announced the sale of scrap metal, cables, screens, buckets, rubber hoses, canvas, and other goods at the plant.³⁰

On July 2, 1946, Joseph S. Willes, war assets administration regional director, announced a contract with the George A. Fuller Company, a New York firm, to handle the sales of surplus war materiel. The plant was to serve as headquarters for the sale of \$200 million worth of materiel stored at Utah General Depot, Clearfield Naval Supply Depot, and the Ordnance plant itself. Neil Horgan, a Salt Lake businessman, was appointed project manager for the Fuller company. In preparation for the sales, ten acres of floor space at the plant were turned into a huge display and sales room. Dining, housing, and shopping facilities were arranged for buyers, and a credit department was opened.³¹

On August 15, 1946, the first of fifty-five gigantic sales began. Priorities were allocated in descending order to World War II veterans, state and local governments and nonprofit organizations, and retailers and wholesalers. Other private citizens were ineligible to purchase. Sale items included bedding, clothing, hardware, restaurant and hotel equipment, plumbing fixtures, machine parts, tractors, automobiles, sleeping bags, typewriters, office furniture, leather goods, and textiles. Some of the veterans waited in line for three days to get a chance at the bargain tractors. At one sale, a Beverly Hills war veteran purchased 10,000 bars of toilet soap for \$570. Down-filled sleeping bags sold at \$4.50 to 6.00 each.³²

The Fuller company employed more than 1,000 persons at the plant to fill its contract in which the government had programmed the sale of \$150 million worth of goods. By March 15, 1947, when the

²⁹ *Ibid.*, April 25, May 2, Aug. 24, 25, 27, 1946.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Aug. 12, 1945; Jan. 27, 1946.

³¹ *Ibid.*, July 3, Aug. 7, 1946.

³² *Ibid.*, Aug. 15, July 3, Aug. 19, Sept. 9, 18, 24, Oct. 4, 13, 23, 26, Nov. 19, Dec. 16, 1946; Jan. 22, 26, 1947.

Fuller company returned operations to WAA, it had sold more than \$103 million worth of war surplus materiel at a return of just over \$21 million to the Treasury, and collected a sales charge of 1½ per cent. During the sales, more than 30,000 buyers came from forty states and several foreign countries and the company sent over 320,000 catalogues to advertise 52,000 items.³³

These large-scale operations could not have gone on without some controversy. In May, 1947, after the sales had ended, the house expenditures subcommittee undertook an investigation into the company's operations, but apparently nothing ever came of it. Some critics stated that the Fuller company had charged exorbitant fees for its services. Another complaint was that several of the company's veteran employees purchased sleeping bags on company time. Twelve of the employees were dismissed for not returning the bags.³⁴

After the Fuller contract ran out, WAA continued to run a "GI country store." Already from its Ordnance plant headquarters, WAA had sold the Geneva Steel plant, which was its largest single sale to that time. Afterward, WAA continued to sell such facilities as 500 beehive coke ovens in Carbon County. In June, 1947, the three Utah surplus points, Utah General Depot, Naval Supply Depot, and Utah Ordnance plant, still carried \$97 million worth of goods. This was more than was located in Los Angeles, Seattle, or Portland, and only \$3 million less than in San Francisco. Bargains ranged from ridgetop skis for \$3.71 to fur and quilted-down flight jackets for \$7.18. Sales finally ended December 13, 1947, though some odd-lot purchases were made after that time.³⁵

In August, 1946, the war department notified Utah Representative J. W. Robinson that it was going to declare the plant a surplus facility and sell it through the WAA. Numerous firms showed an interest in the plant, and on January 30, 1948, the government opened bids for the entire facility. R. C. Elliott, a Salt Lake woolgrower, and Jack Golden, a Santa Monica industrialist, submitted the high bid of \$1.5 million. John M. Wallace, president of Walker Bank and Trust Company, acting for a group of Salt Lake City businessmen, offered \$720,000; and Premier Sales, Inc., of Salt Lake City bid \$500,000.³⁶

None of the bids were acceptable, and all were rejected. The Elliott-

³³ *Ibid.*, Jan. 11, 13, March 19, 1947.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Jan. 28, 30, Feb. 1, May 2, 3, 1947.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Aug. 19, 1946; Sept. 10, Dec. 13, 30, 1947; *Tribune Magazine*, Sept. 21, 1947.

³⁶ *Tribune*, Aug. 24, 1946; Sept. 26, 1947; Jan. 31, Feb. 1, March 14, 1948.

Golden bid had made no provision for the sale of the building occupied by the veterans' administration to that organization. The Wallace bid had offered to sell the building to the VA for \$1 and another building to the state of Utah for use as an industrial school for the same amount. Both bidders offered to negotiate over the price. Senator Elbert D. Thomas and Representative William A. Dawson recommended that WAA negotiate with the two highest bidders. The WAA decided to open negotiations after it was reported that WAA officials had told Wallace to make only a nominal offer because the WAA would negotiate.³⁷

After the decision to deal had been reached, it appeared that perhaps the plant might not be sold at all. During 1947, President Truman had met Communist aggression in Greece and Turkey with the Truman Doctrine; and on February 28, 1948, a coup d'état had toppled the Czechoslovakian government. President Truman placed the plant on the list of those which would be reopened in case of a major conflict.³⁸

The conferences continued despite the European flareup, and on April 20, 1948, the final bids were submitted. The Wallace group, consisting of Wallace, Leland Swaner, a prominent Salt Lake financier, and Harold H. Bennett, vice-president and general manager of Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution (ZCMI), and vice-president of the Bennett Paint Company, submitted a bid of \$1.62 million. The Elliott group offered only \$978,000. The Wallace combine expected the existing railroad facilities to make the plant a valuable industrial property, and a number of firms had already planned to take space in the plant should the government accept the Wallace bid. The VA regional offices were to remain no matter what happened.³⁹

On May 14, the WAA announced that it would sell the plant to the Wallace group with no recapture clause in the contract. This meant, of course, that the Wallace combine could acquire an unencumbered title to the property. On July 15, 1948, the sale was officially closed with the presentation of the key to Wallace, Swaner, and Bennett. Leland S. Swaner was named manager of the newly created Salt Lake Industrial Center, and the group announced it had made arrangements to dispose of 90 per cent of the major buildings to the Associated Food Stores, Imperial Upholstery, Utah Wholesale Grocery,

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Feb. 1, March 14, 26, 1948.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, April 6, 9, 1948.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, April 21, 1948.

Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution, and the presiding Bishop's office of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.⁴⁰

The Utah Ordnance plant, which cost the government nearly \$19 million to construct, had sold for less than nine per cent of its original worth. Through the facilities of the plant, the government had managed at one time to employ one-quarter as many people as were on Utah's WPA payrolls in 1939. Whereas Utah's insured unemployment in 1938 had stood at 5,943, or 9.8 per cent of the labor force, by 1942 this had dropped to 1.5 per cent.⁴¹ Through the plant the government had disposed of about \$200 million worth of surplus war goods at about 20 per cent of cost, to businessmen, veterans, local governments, and nonprofit organizations. In addition, the industrial training given in the plant had boosted the number of Utah residents with valuable technical skills. The immediate effect of the Ordnance plant had been to raise Utah wage levels and provide business for local enterprises. A longer-run effect was to create a reservoir of goods, industrial plants, and skills upon which the people of Utah could draw after the war.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, May 14, 18, 22, June 23, July 16, 1948.

⁴¹ Cluff, 45.