



## Tankers, Oilers, and Tugs: Brunswick Marine Construction Corporation

**B**runswick Marine Construction Corporation was one of the city's oldest businesses. The shipbuilding and repair facility built mostly fishing and recreational vessels until it received a contract from the U.S. government for ships to be used in World War I. It is more well-known, however, for the ships it built during the second World War.

In 1942, the U.S. Maritime Commission was busy awarding contracts to shipyards along America's coasts to bolster both the Merchant Marine fleet and the U.S. Navy. Brunswick Marine received contracts to build tankers, oilers, and quick cargo ships. Due to the influx of work, the local newspaper reported that the shipyard would be busy building ships until 1944 at the earliest. In fact, it would have to expand its current operations to fulfill the contracts.

Brunswick Marine worked at its existing facilities throughout 1942, while also starting construction of a larger shipyard to the south. The six bays of the new South Yard were to be used in the construction of the cargo vessels known as Liberty Ships. Brunswick Marine Construction Corporation laid the keel of the first Brunswick Liberty Ship, the *SS James M. Wayne*, on July 6, 1942.

In the meantime, construction of other vessels never ceased. Between November of 1942 and February of 1943, Brunswick Marine delivered four tugboats to the U.S. Maritime Commission. Despite the shipyard's successful delivery of other vessels, the Maritime Commission decided to transfer the contract for Liberty Ships to the J.A. Jones Construction Company of Charlotte, North

Carolina. Jones already had a record-breaking Liberty shipyard in Panama City, Florida. The *SS James M. Wayne* launched one month later on March 13, 1943.

Brunswick Marine continued its shipbuilding program throughout World War II, constructing smaller ships such as tankers, oilers, and tugs. While these were not the largest ships launched in Brunswick, they were still an important contribution to the war effort.

This month's image shows the launching of YO74, a yard oiler for the U.S. Navy, on May 23, 1943. It was the first of Brunswick Marine's contributions to the Navy fleet, and the fifth vessel they launched in Brunswick since the declaration of war.

Our monthly images on this page are from the vast archives of the Coastal Georgia Historical Society. The Society's mission includes the "administration, restoration and maintenance of historic facilities and resources ... preserved as a living part of the historical and cultural foundations of our coastal community." Society facilities include the St. Simons Lighthouse and Museum, the A.W. Jones Heritage Center, and the Maritime Center (formerly the U.S. Coast Guard Station). To learn more about the Society, its diverse programs, and the benefits of Society membership, please call (912) 638.4666, or visit [www.saintsimonslighthouse.org](http://www.saintsimonslighthouse.org).