

World War II Posters: Artists Rally Support for the War Effort

During World War II, many American artists contributed to the war effort by creating artwork for posters that would help galvanize public support for Federal programs, such as rationing and civilian defense. Two prominent illustrators, Frances O'Brien and Ernest Hamlin Baker, collaborated on a series of woodcut posters for the Putnam County Defense Council in New York. They signed the posters with a pseudonym combining letters of their first names, "Francerne." O'Brien was known for her portraits of notable people, often used for the covers of *The Saturday Review of Literature* magazine. Baker, who had illustrated World War I posters, was working exclusively for *Time* magazine by 1939. He eventually illustrated more than 350 *Time* covers.

The civilian defense theme of the "Francerne" poster shown here would have resonated with the residents of Coastal Georgia. Even before the attack on Pearl Harbor, there was growing concern that the Axis powers had developed long-range bombers that could cross the Atlantic Ocean. A civilian arm of the U.S. Army's Ground Observer Corps was formed to

provide volunteer airplane spotters, trained to identify and report enemy aircraft. Thousands of observation posts manned by hundreds of thousands of volunteers were established along the East and West Coasts. Glynn County locations included Arco, the Brunswick Country Club, the King and Prince Hotel, and the Sea Island Administration Building.

This poster is one of seven acquired by the Coastal Georgia Historical Society for their World War II collection through a generous donation by the late Dr. Irwin R. Berman. His gift makes it possible to exhibit original posters on a rotating basis at the World War II Home Front Museum. The "Francerne" poster will be on display until the end of the year.

