

WASC 2283

WAI 623



Augusta

arsenal and the establishment of the Confederate Powder Works under the command of George Washington Rains. The powder works, one of the largest in the world, was housed in buildings extending two miles along the Augusta Canal. In its three years of existence, the plant manufactured 2,750,000 pounds of gunpowder. The deep sentiment for the Southern cause was evident when church bells from New Orleans, Charleston, Savannah, Augusta, and other Southern cities were melted down and made into four brass cannons at the Augusta Arsenal. By 1863, the city had become one of the major military supply sources for the Army.

While the activities at the arsenal and powder works expanded, Augusta also became a medical center. Originally serving only as a hospital for wounded soldiers passing through, more and more men were sent to Augusta for treatment as the war progressed. The Presbyterian, Saint Patrick's Catholic, Saint John Methodist, and Saint Paul's Episcopal churches were used as hospitals. The Sisters of Mercy and the ladies of the city volunteered for nursing duties. As the multitude of those requiring care increased, so did the need for more food and supplies. Citizens strained to provide resources, and shortages became even greater.

In North Georgia, William Tecumseh Sherman had destroyed Atlanta and began his march through the state by November 1865. At the time, it seemed obvious that Augusta with its vast powder works and as a military supply center would be one of his targets. By Thanksgiving, thousands of Augustans were digging fortifications around the city, while ten thousand troops from Wilmington under the command of Gen. Braxton Bragg arrived as reinforcements. Sherman's march continued to the sea, but the general bypassed Augusta to take Savannah on December 25, 1865. Augusta fortified itself a second time when Sherman left the Coast. By February 8, 1865, however, it was again evident that the city was not going to be Sherman's target as his troops advanced on Columbia. By cutting off the two armies of the Confederacy from its supply center at Augusta, there was no need to destroy the city. Its factories and powder works were lost to Southern armies.

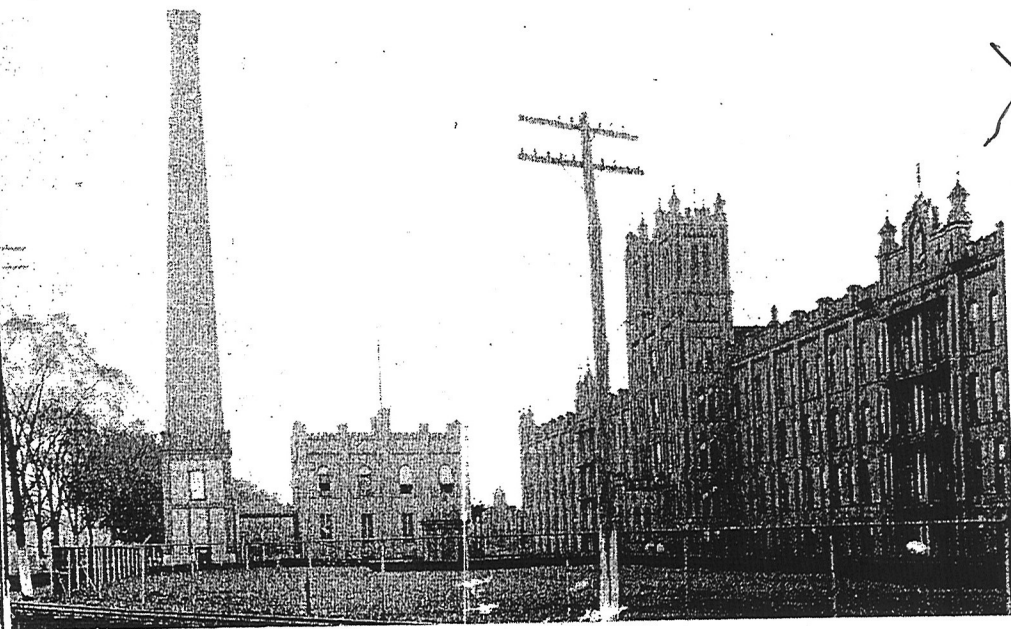
Locally, the war ended May 3, 1865, when Brevet Maj. Gen. Emory Upton of the United States Army came to the city to receive the surrender of the arsenal from Capt. W. H. Warren, acting for Colonel Rains. Federal forces occupied the city, and Maj. Gen. John Pope established military rule for the first time in Augusta's history. In spite of the financial difficulties facing everyone after the fall of the Confederacy, the Georgia Railroad transported home free more than 100,000 paroled Confederate prisoners. By 1868, reconstruction and military rule were ended, and Henry R. Russell was elected mayor. In 1869, he was succeeded by J. V. H. Allen, who brought discipline and order to the city through the reorganization of the police force.

Building on the Past: 1870 to 1900

THE YEARS of the Civil War and Reconstruction were only an interlude in Augusta's progress. Earlier industrial development had prepared a solid basis to which the city could return easily in the postwar period. Augusta, after the Civil War, was little changed. There were no battle damages, and the city was under the control of the Reconstruction government only for a short time. The period from 1870 to 1900 was marked by a rapid industrial growth.

Several factors contributed to this progress. When the city acquired the site of the Confederate Powder Works in 1872, local civic leaders anticipated that it would develop into a manufacturing complex. The enlargement of the Augusta Canal in 1875 during the administration of Mayor Charles Estes, however, was the major factor that led to the building of several new cotton mills. The availability of a large amount of capital, both from northern and local sources, an abundant supply of cheap labor, and the necessary power to operate the mills thrust Augusta into an industrial expansion much ahead of other cities of comparable size. The organization of the Enterprise Factory in 1872, the Sibley Manufacturing Company in 1880, and the John P. King Manufacturing Company in 1882, boosted an already growing textile industry and provided profits and dividends that ranged from 18 to 24 percent. Between 1880 and 1890, manufacturing in Augusta increased 580 percent—leading the South in percentage of increase.

Not only did the cotton mills flourish, but they gave rise to a number of supportive industries and related services. The railroads expanded to ship the manufactured products, and several foundries provided the parts to keep the machinery in operation. All of this raised the number and buying power of local wage earners who frequented the thriving mercantile establishments on Broad and connecting streets.



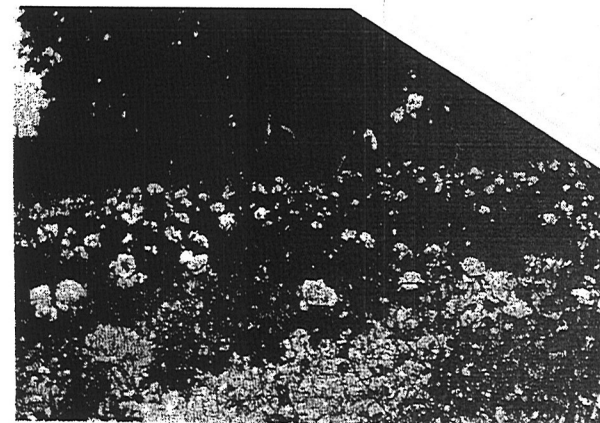
SIBLEY MANUFACTURING COMPANY, one of Augusta's largest textile mills, derived its power from the Augusta Canal. The large chimney in front of the building is all that remains of the Confederate Powder Mill which supplied the Confederate armies during the Civil War. The Sibley Mill owned fifty acres of nearby land upon which the company operated tenements for the workers. (RCHS)

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BROAD STREET at the Campbell (Ninth) Street intersection looking southwest offered the shopper a variety of selections—a "painless dentist," a snack at the Imperial Cafe, tobacco at the confectionery, or a trim at the barber shop. (Anderson)



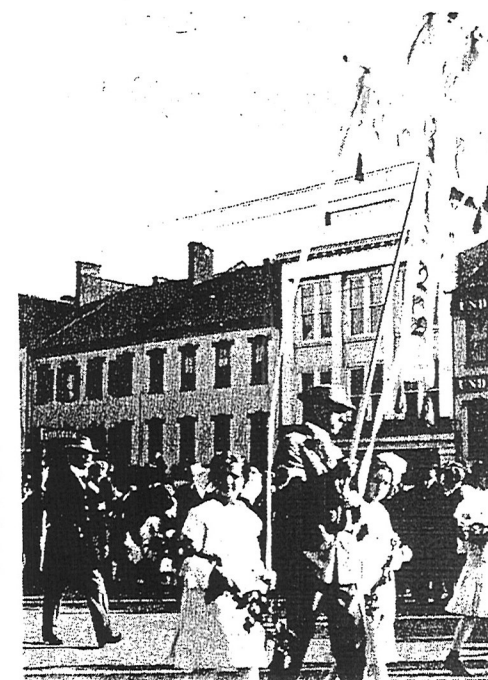
COTTON PRODUCTION was not the only use for local soil. Following the fall harvest, hay stacks dotted the countryside. Truck farms, cattle, orchards, and nurseries were also part of the local economy. (RCHS)

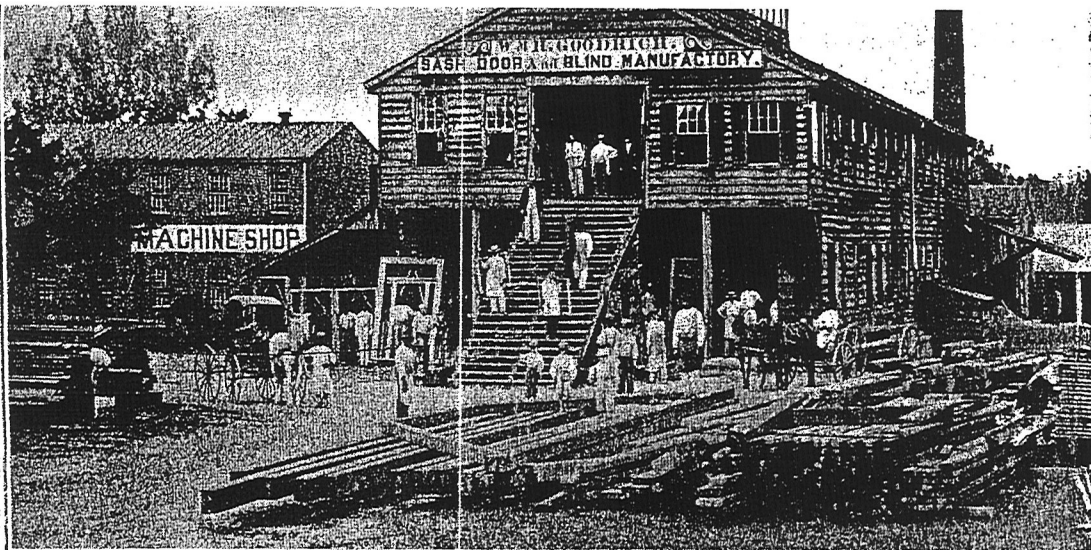


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THE BEGINNINGS OF FARM MECHANIZATION allowed much more land to be cultivated, but the human element—the laborer—was still essential for successful farming. This early reaper was a sharp contrast to the mule-drawn plow. (RCHS)

A SUNDAY SCHOOL PARADE marched along Broad Street. Young flower girls dressed in white flank the men carrying religious banners. Parades, so much a part of the community life then, became less and less frequent after the Second World War. (AC)





WILLIAM H. GOODRICH operated a sash, door, and blind factory at 187 Reynolds Street in the 1860s and 1870s. Starting out in the early 1840s as a carpenter, Mr. Goodrich built a large, successful business. (RCHS)

own problems, especially as they related to slavery. After Abraham Lincoln was elected president in November, Augustans were not of a single opinion, but there was already talk of secession and war. Not only were many individuals advocating this stance, but several military units were anxious to take up arms immediately. When the news of South Carolina's secession from the Union on December 20, 1860, reached the city, Mayor Foster Blodgett called a town meeting at City Hall to discuss the South Carolina stand. The sentiment of the moderates prevailed at this gathering, but the secessionists met separately and passed a resolution which was presented to the legislature as the official position of the citizens of Augusta and Richmond County. Augustans did unite later, and in the election held for local officials on January 5, 1861, all the candidates advocating immediate secession were elected. Even as the talk of living as a divided union went on, Augusta and the rest of the Confederacy began preparation for war.

Of immediate concern was the presence of federal troops at the United States Arsenal on the outskirts of Augusta. Even though they were isolated, for a few days life at the Arsenal went on as usual. To avoid a clash, if possible, Gov. Joseph Brown personally came to Augusta to take possession of the Arsenal in the name of the state. After an uneasy negotiation, with 800 soldiers from various local units standing by, Capt. Arnold Elzey surrendered to Governor Brown on January 24, 1861. In accord with the terms, the store

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of arms was left, and the federal troops were assured safe passage. York. The surrender was friendly, and the federal troops and local militia visited each other during the days while passage by way of Savannah was being arranged. "The Battle of Augusta" was over; the surrender took place without the firing of a single shot. While this easy victory was deceptive in some ways, it was indicative of how Augusta would be untouched by the cannon balls and mortar fire of a shooting battle.

Mobilization activities were everywhere. Many Augusta and Richmond County boys donned the Confederate grey and became "Johnny Rebs," as company after company left for duty in Florida, Virginia, and throughout the Confederacy. Before the war was ended, two thousand had left for the battlefields. Of these, 292 were killed or died in service.

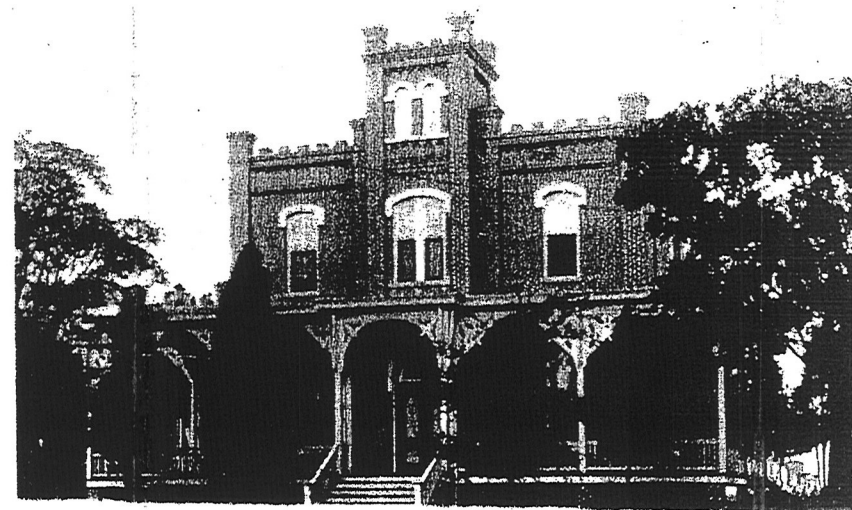
In spite of shortages, the war generally brought prosperity to the city. The cotton mills and other factories produced many essentials for the Confederacy. The Augusta Factory, one of the largest textile mills in the South, produced an average of 20,000 yards of cloth a day, most of which was sold to the government.

The Confederate pistol factory eventually settled in Augusta after it had been driven from city after city by the invading Union forces. By 1863, the Confederate government was establishing factories of its own as existing plants operated by private enterprise could not supply its needs. Augusta became a center for the clothing needed by the soldiers. Confederate uniforms made locally kept 1,500 women busy sewing. The city had a shoe factory, served as a food supply center, and was a primary rail center for much of the supplies from this section of the South.

Yet, the most significant war efforts in Augusta were the expansion of the

AUGUSTA

THE ARSENAL HOSPITAL located on Rains Road within the military complex, served more as a dispensary and short-term facility than a comprehensive health care center. (RCHS)



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