Launching of
THE ROCK HILL VICTORY
BETHLEHEM-FAIRFIELD SHIPYARD, INC.
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
To Our Sponsor:

You have played an important part in maintaining that time-honored tradition of the sea—the christening of a new ship. We of the Bethlehem-Fairfield Shipyard are proud to add your name to our long list of sponsors. The vessel which you have christened has a mission to fulfill of helping to bring early and complete Victory over the enemies of our country.

To the mariner a ship is endowed with many of the attributes of a human being. The ceremony in which you played the leading role marked the transformation of an assembly of steel and other materials into a ship—representative of the product of man’s skill and ingenuity that has been identified with much of his high adventure since the beginnings of recorded time.

You can rest assured that the vessel you sponsored will acquit herself creditably whatever the future may hold for her. The skillful and conscientious workmanship of the men and women of Bethlehem-Fairfield has built her strong and true, well fitted to meet the challenge of the sea in its rampant moods.

We were happy indeed to have you as sponsor. May the photographs in this album help keep alive your memory of this occasion.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Vice President and General Manager
Night View showing No. 2 outfitting pier with Victory ship in the foreground
### VITAL STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Ship:</th>
<th>S.S. &quot;Rock Hill Victory&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of Launching:</td>
<td>April 6, 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of Launching:</td>
<td>3:45 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor:</td>
<td>Miss Ann Carothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rock Hill, South Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting Sponsor:</td>
<td>Miss Laura Jean Rouch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rock Hill, South Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keel Laid:</td>
<td>February 15, 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Time:</td>
<td>50 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way No.:</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47th Victory Ship launched</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Victory Ship launched this month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>461st Ship Launched</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operators for S.S. &quot;Rock Hill Victory&quot;:</td>
<td>U. S. Navigation Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More ships have been built at Bethlehem-Fairfield for war service than in any other yard in America</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA

Rock Hill with a population of over 20,000 is located in York County. Rock Hill derives its name from a small flinty hill in the vicinity and began existence in 1858 merely as a depot on the new Charlotte-Columbia and Augusta railroad, now a part of the Southern Railway. For several years there was not a building near the depot. Gradually country stores, grog shops and railroad buildings began to appear. By 1861 the village was still nothing more than a sprawling country crossroads, center for shipping local products—chiefly cotton. Wagons bearing bales of cotton for Northern mills came in for miles around. In 1879 the population had increased to 4,000. In 1892 the City of Rock Hill was incorporated and about that time the foundations were laid for the permanency of the city when bonds in the sum of $60,000 were voted, together with valuable donations of land, etc. to secure what is now Winthrop, the State College for Women, one of the larger institutions of higher learning in the South. During the War between the States, Rock Hill became a point of transfer for Confederate troops and military supplies.

Rock Hill boasts the following industries: One of the South's largest bleacheries—printing and finishing; cloth, yard and rug mills; hosiery mill; truck and bus body manufacturing; chemicals; food delicacies, bottling plant, foundries.

The city government is the Commission-Manager type—a Mayor and four councilmen being the legislative group. The city owns and operates its own water and lights plants at reasonable rates. Taxes and gas rates compare favorably with cities in the South. Rock Hill has a well-arranged system of health and sanitation. Twenty-five police officers staff a well-organized fire department.
The Bethlehem-Fairfield Yard, Bethlehem’s mass-production yard for Liberty and Victory cargo ships, was founded early in 1941 to build fifty of the two hundred ships called for by the original emergency shipbuilding program of the U.S. Maritime Commission. On the property leased for the yard were four ways, built during the first World War. The work of reconditioning these ways and building additional ones (there are now 14) moved swiftly and at the same time fabrication and sub-assembly equipment was installed in a former carbuilding shop, about two miles away.

The first keel was laid on April 30, 1941, forty-three days after the signing of the contract. This ship, the Patrick Henry, first Liberty ship to hit the water, was launched on September 27, 1941, and was delivered December 30, 1941. Less than three months later it had delivered a cargo of vital war materials to a highly critical war area over one of the longest of supply routes.

Soon after the Bethlehem-Fairfield Yard was organized, the urgency of the need for ships vastly increased. The yard sprang into being to do a large part of the job of building “a bridge of ships.” More and more contracts were awarded the yard until the grand total added up to 384 Liberty Ships, 30 LST vessels and an undisclosed number of Victory Ships. All contracts for building Liberty and LST vessels have been completed.

A few figures will show how the yard rose to the needs of the hour. Though the original contract called for building fifty ships in two years, the fiftieth ship was
delivered approximately 16 months after the contract was signed. One hundred Liberty ships and thirty LST’s (tank landing ships) were delivered in approximately the time originally allotted for fifty Liberties. 192 Liberty ships were delivered in 1943. Time from keel laying to delivery was reduced from 244 days for the first ship to an average of less than 30 days during the period of peak production on Liberty ships.

Many of the production methods which made possible America’s phenomenal wartime shipbuilding performance originated in this yard.

The working force was built up from a nucleus of a few skilled supervisors to approximately 47,000 at the peak, almost entirely by training men who had never before worked in a shipyard.

With the easing of the shipping crisis the yard shifted over, during 1944, to the production of Victory ships, that can carry war cargoes faster and will be more suitable for postwar commerce.

In full production
A Victory Ship is Born

The bottom is laid

Bulkheads are erected, starting amidships

The ship takes shape

Two days before launching
Men and women from all walks of life build ships at Bethlehem-Fairfield
Remember the launching crew members who waved to you from the ship's bow as she slid down the ways?
During a 10 hour run on Chesapeake Bay the ship is subjected to numerous severe tests, such as an endurance run at top speed, quick stop, full speed astern, anchor test, steering test, etc. She must perform as specified by the U. S. Maritime Commission before delivery to that agency for operation assignment.
Autographs
GUESTS

Miss Laura Jean Rauch - Acting Sponsor
Mr. J. J. Rauch
Mr. & Mrs. H. R. Waite
Miss Carolyn Waite
Mrs. John Stapleton
Miss Emma London