Guide to the

Cities Service Refinery Photograph Collection

1943-1944

1.67 linear feet

Collection Number 252

Prepared by Kathie Bordelon
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CITATION: The Cities Service Refinery Photograph Collection, Collection No. 252, Box number, Folder number, Archives and Special Collections Department, Frazar Memorial Library, McNeese State University.

Archives and Special Collections Department
Frazar Memorial Library
McNeese State University
Historical Sketch

The Lake Charles American Press featured a “Cities Service Refinery Section” in the May 26, 1944 issue to mark the official beginning operation of “the world’s newest and most modern oil refinery.” According to the article, the refinery would operate at a rate that would “supply daily aviation gasoline for 1,000 bombers on the London to Berlin run.”

In addition to the production of aviation gasoline, a separate part of the refinery produced butadiene, the material used in the production of synthetic rubber. Also under construction at this time was a copolymerization plant that would utilize the butadiene to make the synthetic rubber. Both these plants were owned by the Defense Plant Corporation, with the butadiene plant being operated by Cities Service and the copolymerization plant being operated by Firestone Tire and Rubber Company.

Covering over 600 acres along the Calcasieu Ship Channel, the refinery was designed by the M. W. Kellogg Company and built in record time by over 15,000 men from almost every state in the Union at a cost of over $90,000,000.

Ads placed in the American Press issue express the area’s feelings on the refinery’s contributions to the country’s war efforts. One ad stated that the completion of the refinery marked “another seven-league step forward to Victory.” Another congratulated the two great industries, Cities Service and Firestone, for supplying “the needs of our brave fighting forces” and for bringing “an earlier victory and a lasting peace to our own great nation.”

The first booklet in the collection contains a foreword obviously written for those dignitaries touring the plants during its dedication ceremonies. It states:

Today, June 1st, 1943, you have seen under construction a symbol of the power and will and accomplishment of free men under a Democracy in time of war. As a guest of Cities Service Refining Corporation, you have toured and inspected its Lake Charles Refinery now nearing completion - a refinery being constructed with the speed symbolic of the Nation’s all-out war effort but nevertheless incorporating the world’s most advanced methods and equipment for the production of aviation gasoline and butadiene.

The company has welcomed this opportunity to have you view its work, and hopes that this folio of pictures and other data will help keep this day before you.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of 20 photograph booklets dated from February 1943 to March 1944 showing the construction progress of the butadiene plant. The first booklet also contains photographs of part of the construction of the basic refinery.
## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Photograph booklets (Feb. 1943-March 1944) and <em>American Press</em> “Cities Service Refinery Section” May 26, 1944</td>
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