

WHAT  
HAPPENED

Andrew  
Jackson Higgins  
incorporated  
Higgins  
Industries at 1755  
St. Charles Ave.  
on Sept. 26, 1930.

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Andrew Higgins first came to Louisiana to work in the logging industry.

## Andrew Higgins, according to Dwight D. Eisenhower, was the man who won World War II for the United States.

Higgins developed shallow draft boats for use on the Gulf Coast. He convinced a reluctant military to try out his workboat and later modified it with a front ramp in what became known as the Higgins boat. Otherwise known as the LCPV, for landing craft, vehicles and personnel, the amphibious boats were used in every major amphibious operation in the European and Pacific theaters, including Normandy on D-Day. Higgins also produced PT boats, supply vessels and other specialized craft.

In 1938, Higgins had a single boatyard employing fewer than 75 workers. By 1943, he had seven plants with more than 25,000 workers, including whites, blacks and women. It was the first integrated workforce in the city. The factories turned out 20,000 boats, including 12,500 LCPVs for the military.

Plants operated on sites including St. Charles Avenue, City Park Avenue, the Industrial Canal, Michoud and Bayou St. John.

After World War II, the business faltered. Higgins died in 1952, and the business was sold to New York Ship in 1959.

In 1964, Eisenhower told historian Stephen Ambrose that Higgins' efforts "won the war for us. If Higgins had not designed and built those landing craft, we never would have landed over an open beach. The whole strategy of the war would have been different." Ambrose would later develop the concept of the World War II Museum in New Orleans, in part because of Higgins' contribution to the war effort.



At the height of production, Higgins employed an integrated workforce of more than 25,000. Some are shown here taking a lunch break on a torpedo



An LCPV under renovation at the World War II museum.



After the war, Higgins never reached the same level of success.



Bayou St. John, where Higgins tested boats, was one of seven locations the company operated during World War II.