

Lesson 1: What is an Alabama Veteran?

Part 1: World War One and Alabama's Role

Part C: The War and its Effect on Alabama's Economy

Vocabulary Words: economy, estimate, rural, military bases, ammunition

Before the war, Alabama's main **economy** was growing, selling, and buying cotton. Alabama had an **estimate** of 81,972 people who grew cotton on 3.7 million acres of small farms. After workers harvested the cotton, others worked in factories to make items from the cotton. Some people helped to transport the cotton to other places. For example, England bought large quantities of cotton from Alabama.

The war affected Alabama's economy in many ways. England stopped buying cotton from Alabama because it had to make materials that were needed for the war. At the same time, from 1910 to 1916, the boll weevil destroyed almost all of the cotton in Alabama. About 85,000 people in the **rural** areas of Alabama were without work so they moved north to cities like Chicago and Detroit to find work in factories that were making war materials.

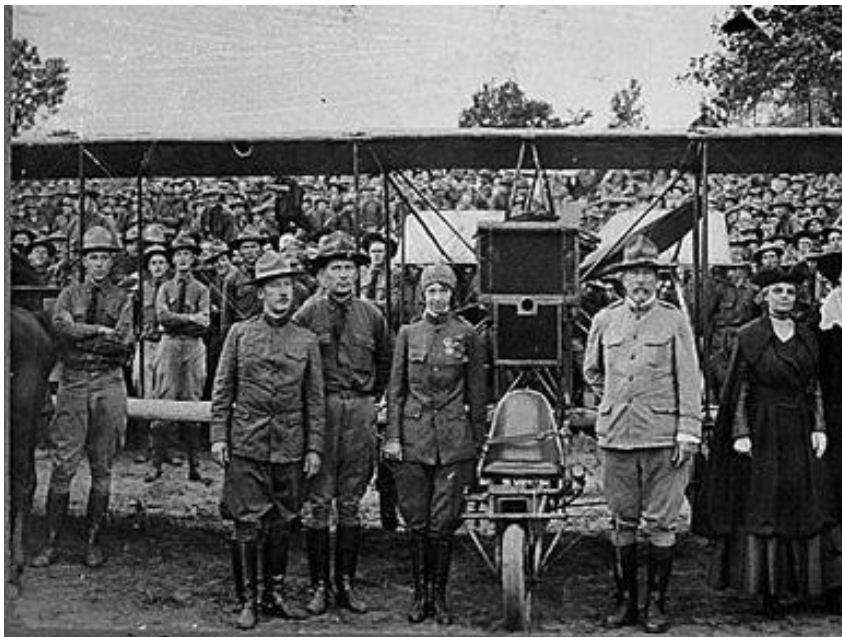


The United States created new jobs in Alabama after it entered the War in 1917. It opened military bases to train soldiers at Camp Sheridan, Taylor Field, the Aviation Engine and Repair Depot No. 3 in Montgomery and Camp McClellan in Anniston. The Aviation Engine and Repair Depot No.3 was later renamed Maxwell Field after Lieutenant William C. Maxwell, an Alabamian killed in an aircraft accident in the Philippines.



Lieutenant William C. Maxwell is pictured at left.
Picture courtesy of the **Encyclopedia of Alabama**

Ruth Law was a famous female pilot who flew to Camp McClellan during the War. She was called, "Uncle Sam's only woman aviator" because she wore a regulation army aviation uniform and promoted the war effort by dropping Liberty Loan "bombs" from her plane.



Aviator Ruth Law at Camp McClellan in Calhoun County, Alabama.

Picture Courtesy of the **Encyclopedia of Alabama**

After the United States entered the war, more new jobs were created throughout Alabama. Mobile became an important shipbuilding city. Birmingham became a leader in the production of iron and steel. Muscle Shoals built two plants to supply nitrates for **ammunition** and explosives. A dam was also built to provide electricity for the plants. The economy in Alabama grew strong once again as the opportunities opened for people to make, sell, or buy products.

Vocabulary Words

1. **Economy:** the economy stands for the way the people in a town, state, or country make, sell, and buy goods or services. In Alabama in the early 1900's, people grew cotton and sold it to other people who made cloth from the cotton. They sold the cloth to many other people who made clothes and other things. Everyone made money by buying and selling cotton. This was the economy of Alabama. A good economy meant the farmers were growing enough cotton so that everyone made enough money to take care of their families. A bad economy meant the farmers had trouble growing enough cotton so fewer people had enough money to take care of their families.

In The Story: World War One caused a change in the economy of Alabama because people in other countries did not buy as much cotton that was grown in Alabama.

2. **Estimate:** to figure out an answer that is not exact but is close to the exact answer.

In the Story: an estimate was made about how many people in Alabama were growing enough cotton to take care of their families. In 1910 the government hired people to count the farmers growing cotton. This is called a Census. It is difficult to count exactly every single person growing cotton. But it is possible to count enough people to get a good idea of the number of people growing cotton. This is an estimate.

3. **Rural:** the countryside rather than the town

In the Story: people left rural Alabama for the big cities; this means they were living in the countryside where houses were not close together and they were usually living on farms.

4. **Military Base:** a place that is owned by the military; people in the military live there and go to training classes. Military equipment is also stored there. The United States has military bases in United States and also in other countries. One really big base is Maxwell Airforce Base or Maxwell Field. The airplanes are also kept on this base.

In the Story: the United States needed to train more soldiers at the beginning of WW1 so they opened more military bases in Alabama.

5. **Ammunition:** a weapon, such as a gun or a bomb or a rocket, uses ammunition. The weapon can fire or scatter or drop or detonate the ammunition as a bullet, shot, shrapnel, shell, rocket, or bomb

In the Story: During World War One, the United States needed to make bullets and explosive devices for the soldiers to use. Alabama built two places to make nitrates that were used to make the bullets and explosives.