



(Above) Aerial Photograph of Wilson Dam Village #2, Muscle Shoals, 1949 (University of Alabama, Historical Map Collection, Online)

The TVA in Muscle Shoals

Besides music, the Shoals area is also known for work completed by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), including the Wilson Dam, U.S. Nitrate Plants, and the worker villages that accompanied TVA projects. The TVA was tasked, among other things, to mine the mineral deposits. The minerals found in the valley are useful for the manufacture of fertilizers, which were essential in reviving the depleted topsoil of agricultural fields, increasing crop production. The nitrate plants were supported by villages specially constructed to house workers for the dam and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The construction of Wilson Dam was prompted by World War I, and the nitrate plants began in 1918. The valley's minerals were used to produce nitrate, needed



(Above) Wilson Village #2, Homes, 1937; Records of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Record Group 142; National Archives and Records Administration – Atlanta (Right) An Advertisement for Shoals City, which May Have Been Wilson Dam Village #2 or Another Proposed Town near Muscle Shoals' U.S.N.P.#2 (Florence Times, Friday, September 6, 1918)



(Above) Community Buildings at Wilson Village #2, 1937
(Below) A Typical Garage at Wilson Village #2, 1937
(National Archives and Records Administration)



for explosives for the war effort. The war was quickly concluded and the U.S. Nitrate Plant No. 2 (U.S.N.P.#2) – on the east side of Sheffield, to the north of Muscle Shoals – sat idle until 1933 when it was turned over to the TVA. The TVA used the plant for the production of fertilizers with the objective of helping farmers with depleted soils.

The plant also prompted the building of workers' housing. What was called Wilson Dam Village No. 2 accompanied the plant at the northeast corner of present-day 2nd Street and Woodward Avenue. The village had approximately 160 houses in a two-part neighborhood plan. With both the Great Depression and World War II over, the village was no longer needed and by the 1950s, it no longer existed. Some of the paved streets of Village No. 2 are still visible in current aerial photographs.

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KEY

- COMMUNITIES
- CEMETERIES
- CHURCHES
- PLANTATIONS
- SCHOOLS
- OTHER

* Indicates a Historical - Non-Extant Resource