

## I Remember, Peeter Vilms

Able-bodied adults all but disappeared once we were settled in Hoover Village, so it was left to my brothers to return me after my teary flights from the Child Care Center's nursery-cum-language-school. It was the summer of 1949; I was five, and had never been separated from family. But there were others in the same straits, I noticed, and that helped, no matter if many of them spoke no Estonian whatsoever. I remember large circles of kids sitting cross-legged on the floor, echoing in unison the teacher's "Say fork!" as she held up a fork, and "Say knife!" when it was the knife's turn.

Large groups of different peoples living in close proximity, strong communal overtones and an undercurrent of transience all seemed quite normal to us, because in the villages of Seabrook we were all refugees, regardless of the various directions from which we'd come. What was new was that all our parents now worked for C.F., and we kids spent a lot of time all mixed together, outside our clans. Perhaps this explains why I don't remember any particular difficulty making friends and learning the new language. Day Camp at Parvin Park: in my lunch box, a bologna and radish sandwich on rye; in Sam Mukoyama's, a seaweed-wrapped rice ball with a sour cherry in the center. We both had oranges and chocolate milk.

Peeter Vilms, Seabrook School '58  
Bridgeton High School '62  
Harvard College '66

