

I REMEMBER SUMMERS AT SEABROOK AS A COLLEGE STUDENT

In the summer of 1946 I learned my parents had resettled from Gila River Relocation Center to Seabrook, New Jersey. I had two years earlier left them in camp to enter the University of Rochester under the Student Relocation Program. That summer I was no longer living with the family of Dr. Harold E. Nicely, the pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, who had befriended me upon arriving from the camp. I came to visit my parents on a bus from Philadelphia after transferring from the Greyhound bus that came from New York. I remember passing the Seabrook plant in the dead of night with all of the plant lights on and then getting off in front of the Community House wondering what kind of place Seabrook was. My folks then were working the long summer shifts and my mother insisted that I work to earn my room and board for the fall college term.

I became a ample boy on the front platform. (There is a photo of me as a sample boy on file). The raw material receiving function was then supervised by John Ferrillo. I remember he was hospitalized by a tick bite on the neck and when he returned from the hospital his hair had turned white. Later the platform foremen were Charles Nagao on Jack Phillis' shift and Kaoru Kamikawa on Olin Conover's shift. The plant had two shift supervisors during harvesting period. There were 12 hours shifts that rotated from day to night every two weeks. The front platform was a busy place requiring coordinating the crew to receive raw material efficiently. Trucks would be lined up waiting to be unloaded and if it took too long the peas, for instance, would generate heat and spoil. Later a heat unit system of determining the scheduling of planting crops alleviated the delivery of peas above the capacity of the plant to process. The plant capacity was determined by the freezing capacity of the Amerio and bulk freezers. It was determined that a million pounds of peas in a 24 hour period could be processed through the freezing system. Dr. Thornthwaite, who headed up the Climatology Department, had a staff of scientific persons to record the daily weather. They devised and measured the number of heat units in a typical June pea harvesting day. Pea season generally started on the first of June and ended on the 30th of June. They then determined how many heat units it took to grow a pea. They allowed a million pounds of peas to be planted on the first day of planting. They did not allow the next million pounds of peas to be planted until the number of heat units equivalent to a June day passed. This was the key ingredient of how they overcame the long lines of trucks waiting

and rotting of peas. The problem was they used to plant peas on the first good planting day as much as they could. This caused the peas to maturing quantities on June days greater than the plant capacity.

As sample boy my superior was Kaz Kobayashi who reported to Wendell Stamm, the Raw Material Grading Supervisor. The grading area was just behind the front platform inside the plant. There was a grading cage where Francis Ono and Toshi Kobayashi were stationed. My job was to collect samples of the raw material coming onto the platform and bring the bucket of samples to them for grading. Later I remember my future father-in-law, Mr. Sadaichi Hada was also a sample boy (I remember seeing a photo him as a sample boy). Standing on the platform waiting for trucks of peas or lima beans to arrive I could see the trucks being weighed across the street on the scale house scale. (There is a photo of Frank Hemingway sitting at the scale house waiting for trucks) The trucks would drive onto the platform scale to be weighed fully loaded and after discharging their product would return to the scale to be weighed empty. The difference in the two weights was the amount of the product delivered. In those days the peas came on the trucks in lug boxes and as each box was dumped into the bins on wheels. I would scoop a small amount from each box for my sample along with the identification of the Seabrook division or contract farmer delivering the product. These bins we called tubs were then rolled over a hole that led to the dry cleaners below the front platform. After being cleaned the peas of lima beans would then be transported by mechanized, ladled chains to the third floor where they were washed, blanched, separated and sorted.

The peas were graded in at least two ways that I remember. One was by the use of the tenderometer. A predetermined amount of peas were placed in the machine and were crushed to determine their tenderness. The other method was a miniature of the separation that occurred on the third floor. The sample bucket of peas was first weighed then dumped into the miniature blancher and separator. The blancher par boiled the product and stopped the enzyme action which helped the freezing process to keep the product from deteriorating. The separator was a devise of brine solution measured by a hydrometer. The brine density made the peas with high sugar content float and the peas with much starch to sink. The more mature the peas were the higher the starch content. Of course the starch peas weighed more so it was a question of delivering the product at an optimum sugar weight item. We would weigh the separated sample to determine the percentage of sugar peas as a total of the sample. This process determined the price per pound the

contract farmer or Seabrook Farming Corporation division was to be paid. There is a photo of Kaz dumping the product into the system on file. There were 10 divisions all located in southern New Jersey making up the company owned farms that had names such as Central Division, Salem Division, Buckshutem Division, etc. The private farmers located in the three states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware were contracted to grow product for the company through the supervision of the Contracting Department. In those days I believe Ralph Clark and Henry Behnke were in that department. Josie Ikeda manned the radio station that communicated with the divisions and trucks to schedule their arrival at the plant. This was another developed system that leveled the flow of product into the plant thus scheduling harvesting in an orderly manner. I remember later in my career at Seabrook working on a mathematical transportation model using operations research techniques to optimize the delivery from the ten division viners stations. I remember once going to Scott Paper Company to evaluate their transportation model computer system. It was a series of anemometers and dials that resulted in real time answers. (I think there is a photo of Josie at the microphone).

There were several offices: the main office which housed the administrative and sales functions, the factory office that managed the plant, the farms office that Don McAllister and Pete Brothers worked from, the engineering office where Belford Seabrook was VP of Engineering, the Cumberland Warehouse office headed by Harold Emerson where I remember Hank Furushima worked, Housing office which was managed by F. Alan Palmer and included Mayor Fuju Sasaki and Ellen Nakamura, Climatology, which also housed the Soils Lab that Vernon Ichisaka headed and etc.

I remember there was also a side platform scale where product was sometimes delivered. (There is a picture of Richard Nishimura at the scale that was taken about the same time I was a sample boy.) I remember once seeing watermelon being delivered. The water content is so high it is not suitable for commercial freezing, but I was told it was being processed for diabetics. Other fruit were also received there i.e. peaches, blueberries, and strawberries.

I remember the plant had a "music system" to pipe music throughout the plant. The turntable to play the music was just across from the side platform in the factory office. I remember during slow periods going across from the side platform to chat with Michiko Nishiura who was the disk jockey. We were both college students. She was attending Mount Holyoke College. Years later Michi was for some years the costume designer for the Perry Como

TV show and after that she wrote the book Years of Infamy which subsequently earned her three honorary doctorates from Cal Poly University, Hunter College and Mount Holyoke. Her family lived three doors down from our apartment 885 Mac Arthur Drive. Her family consisted of her parents and sister. (Her diary entitled "Things To Remember" with photos is on file. The diary covers the period when she worked for Mrs. Annis Locke at the USO, the United Service Organization that provided assistance and recreation to service men, which later became the Community House under Dorothy Chapman.)

Another summer I worked inside the plant dumping buckets of peas and lima beans into the hopper that fed the packaging machines on the packing line. The packing line supervisors were Dolores Carter and Bill Taguwa on their respective shifts. In lines on the second floor to the packing line area on the first floor. A cowboy chain was a continuously moving chain with a series of hooks on which pails could be put on or taken off. My job was to stand on a platform up to the height of the cowboy chain that ran about ten feet above the floor, take the buckets of peas off the cowboy chain, feed the packaging machine as required and return the empty bucket onto the chain. The one I fed ran 600 carton per minute. The crew consisted of a carton girl who fed blank 10 oz cartons into the Marathon Line. The machine automatically opened the cartons to pass under a rotating circular product feeding device. When the cartons were filled with the proper amount of product the machine automatically closed the boxes. There were girls following with scales to spot check as many cartons as possible for the correctness of the weight. If the weight needed adjusting the feeding was altered. The cartons then went through the wrapping machine that wrapped and heat sealed the wax paper wrapping and label. The cartons then were fed onto a table where a girl slid rows of packages into trays. (Photos of packaging and traying are on file.) These trays were then stacked into racks on wheels by a man at the end of the line. Each rack held 12500 cartons. The line was managed by a red capped forelady or a blue capped 1st class forelady. Female workers wore white caps. All female employees were required to wear blue colored uniforms. Men had no standard clothing except everyone inside the plant had to wear a hat of some kind.

These racks were then pulled by electric carts to the freezing department supervised by Johnny Emmons on one of the shifts (the other shift supervisor slips by mind) where they were placed in Amerio Freezers. (There are a number of photos of employees in front of the Amerio Freezers) One summer I worked in the freezing

department. The freezing time for each product varied. When the product was frozen they were pulled from the Amerio Freezers into the racks on wheels and moved to the casing area. Then the trays of cartons were dumped onto a long table area. A crew of men would be stationed along the table and would open stenciled shipping cases on a bench platform adjacent to the dumping table. They slide the frozen packages into the corrugated cases. (I remember when Yank Sawamura and, I think Harry Okamoto, were waiting for product to come out of the Amerio Freezers they would be using a tablespoon to hammer a silver dollar into a ring to while away the time.) The filled cases then were slid onto a conveyor that fed the case sealer. The cases were stenciled identifying the product. The sealed cases were fed by conveyor through a hole in the wall between what was legally Seabrook Farms Co. and Cumberland Warehousing Corporation on the other side of the wall which was the cold storage warehouse by forklift. They would drive the forklift carrying the pallet out to the Cumberland Warehouse platform where they pulled an overhead cord that opened the large warehouse doors to enter the sub zero cold storage warehouse. (photos exist showing the doors being opened) Inside the warehouse cases were stacked for storage or stacks were broken down for delivery to fill customer orders. (Photos on file of Koyanagi and Hank Furushima and another of Wataru Okamoto. Also an early photo of Jim Mitsui, Don Ippolito, Supervisor Cumberland Warehouse, and crew.)

After receiving my master degree in music literature I worked that summer as a night shift timekeeping and checker supervisor. By that time Richard Nishimura had the responsibility as day shift timekeeping supervisor. Others in the department I remember Carl Holm and Frank Hemingway. There were women who manned a time clock at every operating station and product line. Some timekeepers and checkers that I remember were Toshi Kamikawa, Ruth Toyama, Susie Minakata, Nancy Hill, and Sonoko Iwata. Their job was to clock in the workers at the beginning of the shift, clock them out and in at lunch, and out at the end of the shift. During the work period they were responsible for recording the account number of the job they were on such as pea sorting, peas packing, etc. and to clock and record the change in distribution number each time they were moved to another station. They calculated the elapsed time on each worker's time card. On the packing lines and in the freezer department they also served as checkers to record production figures and individual performance by those workers on the incentive system. At the end of the shift they placed the clocked out time cards in a drawer at the time clock station and made ready to clock

the next shift. I collected the clocked out cards and the completed production data.

My job each night began with the pulling of all of the unused time cards from the racks in the cages. These cards represented those who were absent that day for one reason or another. I then continued with the racking in numerical order the new blank time cards for the next day in the four cages that served as the entrance and exit to the plant. The cards were stenciled with the workers name and badge number. Every worker was given an employee badge at the time they were hired by the Employment Office headed up by Fred Barker at that time. The badge was round, approximately two inches in diameter with their badge number and photograph on it. As the workers arrived to work the recall slip which was of the color and date of that particular shift and approximately two inches in diameter with their badge number and photograph on it. As the workers arrived to work the recall slip which was of the color and date of that particular shift and approximately 3 inches long and 3/8 of an inch wide was taken in exchange for their time card. If they did not have the proper recall slip they were sent into the Scheduling Department headed by Johnny Melchiorre. Frances Ono was working for John by that time. I was responsible for handing out the recall slips on the night shift and also collecting the time cards for the areas not covered by timekeepers at the end of the shifts. The time cards for the previous shifts distribution were calculated and all of the time cards were made ready to deliver to the payroll department the next morning.

Mr. Charles Seabrook, we called "CF", came into the factory office to tour the plant which he did on occasion. CF was the Chairman and founder of Seabrook Farms. He knew everyone of importance in the plant and on the farms. Mr. Scheaffer, the plant manager, who came in every night to check up on things, many times accompanied CF through the plant. Bill Scheaffer, I was told, was a former Hungarian cavalry officer. He often spoke in a very loud voice which frightened many and which I attributed to his being a former cavalry officer.

Near the end of the summer I was planning to proceed with obtaining a doctorate. I had hoped to study with Paul Hindemith at Yale. CF came and sat next to my desk on several occasions to convince me to become a permanent Seabrook employee. His argument was he had never graduated from college, but had received many honorary degrees and traveled all over the world, particularly in Russia. He said, "I have been to places you have never heard and the secret to success is not how many doctorate

degrees you earn but how many doctorates work for you." Being naive I accepted his philosophy and that is how I became a permanent Seabrook employee.

John Fuyuum (Revised) 9/28/94

