SEABROOK EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL CENTER

PRESERVING THE RICH MULTICULTURAL HISTORY OF SEABROOK, NEW JERSEY
FOREWORD

I am honored to write the foreword for the pamphlet commemorating the opening of the Seabrook Educational and Cultural Center. My own relationship with the Seabrook Village dates back to my days as a Professor of History at Cumberland County College. In 1979, I received several grants to conduct oral history projects with New Jersey’s various ethnic communities. One grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission was entitled - "Seabrook, New Jersey; the 'Relocated' - Japanese - American Community; An Oral History of an Ethnic Group." History students from Cumberland County College and I interviewed and taped several dozen former camp internees who resided in Seabrook Village. These tapes covered reminiscences of pre-interment, internment, and relocation experiences.

This oral history project served as a training ground for students, affording them an opportunity to deal critically with both primary and secondary material. It also enabled them to develop some appreciation of the limitations of sources examined and sources created. Doing historical research among the living acquainted the students with the tenuousness of memory, the complexity of motive, and both the irrationality and rationality inherent in people and events.

Needless to say, the material collected has filled a huge and important void in that vital era of United States History.

In his inaugural address, President John F. Kennedy uttered some prophetic and debatable words. "Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans, born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed.""

Certainly one could disagree or agree with his words on the depth of commitment to human rights. After all, had these human rights been respected during WWII, this Center would not exist today.

However, let this Center prove that we can learn from history and never repeat the mistake of relocation camps. Let the Center be a shining example of how things can and must change for the better. Let those who visit the Center develop a greater appreciation for the richness and variety of New Jersey’s Ethnic Heritage. But most of all, let the Center symbolize the accomplishments of people who cared and continue to care.

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The text of this pamphlet, dealing with the "Seabrook Farms: A New Beginning" exhibition was the basis for the descriptive material in the Seabrook Educational and Cultural Center (SECC) museum. The museum was dedicated at the "Peoples Inaugural" supported by a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities and sponsored by the Upper Deerfield Township Committee and the Seabrook Chapter Japanese American Citizens League held at the Upper Deerfield Township Municipal Building, Seabrook, New Jersey, on October 8, 1994.
Seabrook: A New Beginning

For many displaced peoples in the 1940’s and 1950’s, Seabrook provided a place to start life anew.

The people of Seabrook are familiar with hardship, hard work—and hope. Indeed, Seabrook could be called a “global bootstrap village,” where downtrodden yet hardy peoples of diverse cultures were given a chance to regenerate their lives. In many ways, Seabrook’s settlement history is a story of the upheavals of war, particularly, World War II and the subsequent Cold War. Uprooted by powerful national and international wartime events during the 1940’s and extending into the 1950’s, most of Seabrook’s settlers and workers arrived as displaced peoples. Japanese families from the West Coast and from Peru, who were relocated to the interior of the country in 1942 shortly after hostilities broke out between United States and Japan, began arriving in Seabrook in significant numbers from 1944-1946 from wartime internment camps in Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Texas, Utah, Wyoming, and elsewhere. They were followed by streams of refugees from a war-torn Europe—Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Polish, Germans, Hungarians, among others. Adding to the ethnic influx were migrant African American workers from the South, Scots-Irish from Appalachia, and contract farm workers from Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other parts of the Caribbean. Seeking economic and social betterment, they all came to Seabrook attracted by the opportunity for employment at the Seabrook Farms Company, then the largest integrated food processing operation in the world. Most came with just a few possessions, often what they could carry in their suitcases or on their backs, many came speaking little or no English. All came with hope. Whatever their origin, these diverse uprooted peoples encountered an unfamiliar but receptive soil in Seabrook. Although some left after only a few years, many decided to stay. Here they planted their seeds, and their severed lives again took root.

Seabrook and Its Historical Significance

The legacy of Seabrook lies in a once internationally-known frozen food processing plant and the remarkable number of diverse cultures it brought together.

When, in 1930, Charles F. Seabrook began experimenting with Clarence Birdseye (the founder of Birds Eye Foods) with the quick-freezing of fish, meats, and poultry, little did he realize that, by the mid-1940’s, a twenty-three acre Seabrook Farms food-processing plant bearing his name would be producing approximately two million household packages of frozen foods daily, covering thirty-three products from lima beans to blueberries. Today, most Americans have never heard of Seabrook. New Jersey, but many American east of the Mississippi River, particularly of the older generation, still remember Seabrook Farms frozen foods. This generation of Americans grew up eating frozen vegetables and fruits processed in Seabrook. When the Seabrook Farms Company finally ceased operations in 1982 due to financial difficulties and a series of corporate mergers, the main chapter of Seabrook’s commercial history came to a close, but part of the legacy of the once internationally-known plant remains in the village that grew alongside it.
On the one hand, the village of Seabrook is a place of stark contrasts. It is a place where traditional rural America flourished amidst an innovative and scientific agri-business, a place where small-town life became a part of a large-scale mechanized vegetable growing and frozen food processing operation. It is a place where a wide mix of immigrants and other displaced peoples, cast about by the winds of war, clustered together in government-built cinder-block and prefab housing, surrounded by larger and more established communities. On the other hand—and just as important—Seabrook is a place of commonalty, of self-help, pluck, and cooperation. It is a place which reflects America’s multicultural past in miniature, a place offering tantalizing glimpses of early America in the making, a place where diverse cultures embarked and converged, living and working together. At its best, Seabrook is a place where many diverse cultures learned of and from one another, and, in the end, greatly benefited.

The following highlight the historical and cultural significance of Seabrook to the township, the state, and the nation:

- The Seabrook Farms Company, the chief employer of Seabrookers, was once the largest processor of frozen food in the world, an enterprise which, at its peak in 1947, extended over 20,000 acres of land in Cumberland and Salem Counties and employed approximately 5,000 workers, making it, collectively, also the largest vegetable farm in the world.

- The innovations of the Seabrook Farms Company in the food industry—which included scientifically-based scheduling in the planting and harvesting of crops, an overhead and movable system of irrigation, mass quick-freezing of packaged vegetables and fruits—not only introduced Americans “to the frozen food section of your supermarket” but, according to the New York Times, also “helped change the eating habits of the nation.”

- Seabrook residents and workers came from throughout the world, from over 25 countries, making Seabrook during the late 1940’s and 1950’s the most culturally diverse rural area in not only New Jersey but also the continental United States.

- Seabrook residents and workers in the 1940’s and 1950’s spoke over 30 different languages, with some residents being bilingual, even trilingual and quadrilingual. The linguistic diversity also resulted in several pidgin varieties of English (and also of other languages) being spoken in the village and at work.

- Seabrook, by 1947, had the highest concentration of Japanese American residents in the United States; more than 2,500 Japanese Americans from 600 families relocated to Seabrook, the largest ethnic group to work for single employer in the United States at that time.

- Seabrook has attracted national coverage in magazines and newspapers such as Life, Newsweek, Reader’s Digest, National Geographic, Forbes, Business Week, Wall Street Journal, USA Today, New York Times and national and international coverage by the major American television networks and by the Nippon Television Network of Japan.

Seabrook is different and historically special.
The Workplace: The Seabrook Farms Company

"We grow our own, so we know its good, and we freeze it right on the spot."

So goes the once-familiar Seabrook Farms advertising slogan. Yet, behind this simple line lies a complex and technologically innovative workplace that transformed a small regional farmstead into the largest integrated farming and frozen food processing operation in the world, an enterprise in which farm and factory were intricately linked, as if belonging to one continuous assembly line. Helping to make Seabrook Farms a major U.S. food producer in the 1940's and 1950's was a diverse and dedicated workforce.

Through the energy and vision of its founder, Charles F. Seabrook, the Seabrook Farms Company once produced as much as 20% of the nation's frozen packaged food. After incorporation, the company consisted of four separate companies with each handling a different operation: Seabrook Farm Corporation (growing), Seabrook Farms Company (freezing), Cumberland Warehouse Corporation (refrigerated storage), and the Cumberland Auto and Truck Company (transportation). The "Farms" in Seabrook Farms actually consisted of ten separate farming divisions, each headed by a manager reporting directly to C. F. Seabrook and each with its own machines, shops, labor force, fields, and crop schedules. The management of the company later became a family affair, with C. F. Seabrook as chairman of the board and sons John, Belford, and Courtney, serving as president of the firm, vice-president of production, and vice-president of sales, respectively.

In Charles F. Seabrook's view, nothing in the chancy world of farming was to be left to chance. Before any seed entered the ground, a company soil laboratory staffed by chemists and skilled technicians first carefully analyzed the soil for temperature and mineral-water content to determine precisely the kind and amount of nutrients to add. A climatology laboratory affiliated with the Department of Climatology of Johns Hopkins University and applying cutting-edge research determined the best type of seed to sow and the best time for the successive planting and harvesting of crops, right up to the exact day. C. F. Seabrook's vision of "high-tech" farming appeared most visibly in his vast company fields. When snap beans, for example, lacked the proper amount of rainwater, either a stationary overhead or high-pressure movable irrigation system provided the proper amount of moisture, with portable irrigation distributing as much as two inches of water per acre in less than two hours. During the pea harvest season, giant multi-function mechanized winches received truckloads of harvested pea plants, separated and slit open the pods, extracted the peas, and chopped up the vines to be returned to fields as organic fertilizer. During the height of the corn harvest season, specially-designed and time-efficient corn harvesters rolled through the fields, stripping ears of corn off stalks, laying the stalks down on the ground as fodder, and depositing the ears into an accompanying convey of trucks; when darkness fell, the mechanical harvesters continued their march through the fields under a system of portable floodlights that illuminated up to ten acres at a time.

Machine technology and mass-production methods found wide use in the Seabrook Farms frozen food processing plant. By the 1940's, C. F. Seabrook's twenty-three acre processing plant had become a showpiece of modern high-tech agri-business. During the pea season, for example, fleets of trucks hauling in machine-harvested and machine-shelled peas arrived "just in time" to have their raw product weighed, graded, unloaded, and then begin a two-and-a-half-hour journey through the plant to emerge as individually-wrapped packages of quick-frozen peas. Under the watchful eyes of quality control inspectors, the peas passed through flumes equipped with water sprays to cleanse them of residue, through large blanchers that steam-heated them to inactivate enzymes and sterilize the product, through float tanks filled with a calculated density of brine to sort tender young peas from older ones, through automatic packaging machines that deposited measured amounts of peas into household-sized packages, closed the cover, and sealed each package with waxed paper overwrap to prevent moisture-vapor loss. From there, the packaged peas made their way to giant multi-plate
freezers set at -37 degrees Fahrenheit, frozen brick-hard in two hours, and then transferred to a sub-zero 50,000,000-pound capacity frozen storage warehouse to await transport by specially-designed refrigerated trailer trucks and railroad cars to distributors across the United States.

The Seabrook Farms processing plant could not have functioned without the support of its dedicated workers. Many were actively recruited because of the severe labor shortage during and following World II. Some were already long-time residents of the area; some were temporary help—housewives or college students on summer break, migrants from the South, even German prisoners of war. Many long-term workers arrived from wartime internment camps in the United States or from displaced persons camps in Europe, uncertain of their new-found freedom but determined to begin life anew. These workers of diverse cultures and languages, scattered by war, now worked together in the unloading and loading areas, on the sorting and packing lines, or in the frigid warehouses. During the peak summer months, fathers and mothers worked in separate 12-hour shifts, up to 80 hours a week, and, by today's standards, at comparatively low hourly wages with little overtime compensation. If parents toiled so long and hard to help their families begin anew, often postponing or sacrificing personal career ambitions, the subtle message frequently conveyed to children was to do well in school to advance their own lives beyond the lives of their parents. Yet, there were clearly joyous times too—helping a co-worker with a chore, setting a new record on the production line, chatting with friends in the company cafeteria, participating in company-sponsored trips, parties, clubs, and charity events, competing on a company baseball, basketball or bowling team, riding on Seabrook Farms-sponsered buses to see a son or daughter graduate from Bridgeton High School, and, once, even receiving one's wages in silver dollars.

Some highlights of work at the Seabrook Farms Company in the 1940's and 1950's include:

- The Seabrook Farms frozen food processing plant was not only the largest of its kind in the 1940's and 1950's but also had the most culturally diverse workforce of any rural industrial plant in the United States.

- The Seabrook Farms plant had seven separate and distinct processing systems, each handling specific types of produce; the pea and lima bean system, the largest assembled anywhere in the world, ran about 18 million pounds of peas and 20 million pounds of baby limas and fordhook limas in an average season. Among the quick-frozen vegetables and fruits processed at the Seabrook plant were asparagus, broccoli, brussel sprouts, carrots, cauliflower, collards, corn, green beans, lima beans, kale, okra, peas, potatoes, spinach, squash, turnip greens, wax beans, blueberries, boysenberries, peaches, raspberries, rhubarb, and strawberries.

- The Seabrook Farms' war effort included a contract to produce 60,000,000 pounds of processed food, enough for a daily supply of green vegetables for 600,000 men, women, and children for one year; in an effort to conserve the health, energy and time of its employees in production season during wartime, the company ran 24-hour walk-in cafeterias, with coffee, soups, meat and cheese sandwiches being "no limit" and "on the house."

- The Seabrook Farms and its workforce in 1955 received national coverage in Life. Assembled in the front platform area and atop roofs of the plant complex, the entire day-shift of 1,924 plant workers, the office staff, and many of the 996 field workers posed for an historic two-page group photograph.
The People of Seabrook: Cultural Diversity

Seabrook is a rich mix of ethnically diverse cultures.

Probably no other rural area in New Jersey—or in the continental United States—better exemplifies the rich multicultural heritage of Upper Deerfield Township, New Jersey, and our nation than Seabrook. Present and former residents of Seabrook come from not only many parts of the United States but also many parts of the world. Whether arriving as immigrants or migrants, many Seabrookers trace their ancestral roots to Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean. During the 1940’s to the mid-1950’s, the prime years of immigration and migration to Seabrook, Seabrookers created in the farmlands of southern New Jersey a unique “global village,” a rural “mini-United Nations,” a place, surprisingly, more culturally diverse than many urban areas. In the 1940’s, Seabrookers would not have found it all that unusual to witness German prisoners of war eating in the Seabrook Community House cafeteria or Jamaicans playing cricket on the Seabrook School grounds or a Japanese American baseball team competing against an Italian American one. For Seabrook teenagers on a summer bean-picking job, it would not have been out of the ordinary in the 1950’s to work alongside Japanese, Estonian, Latvian, German, Scots-Irish, and African Americans or alongside Puerto Rican and Jamaican contract farm workers from the Caribbean.

For a short period beginning in 1962, the now-demolished farm labor camp behind Chiari Store, which had once housed Puerto Rican workers, became the temporary home of still another cultural group: the Russian “Old Believers,” a dissident Russian Orthodox sect of about fifty members who had been resettled from Turkey.

Among the cultures represented in Seabrook Village or in the workplace were (in alphabetical order):

- Asia:
  Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Korean

- Europe:
  Austrian, Bulgarian, Czechoslovakian, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, German, Hungarian, Italian, Jewish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Scots-Irish, Swedish, Ukrainian, Yugoslavian

- Africa:
  African American

- Caribbean:
  Bahamian, Barbadian, Jamaican, Puerto Rican, St. Kittsian, St. Lucian, Trinidadian
Community Life in Seabrook

Seabrook Village during the 1940's and 1950's exhibited a varied and vibrant community life.

Coming mostly as displaced peoples, Seabrookers had to start anew in not only re-establishing their personal lives but also regenerating their ethnic communities. What sprouted amidst the generally cramped and dreary living conditions and between long hours at the factory was a number of thriving ethnic communities within the larger Seabrook Farms corporate community.

In the 1940's and 1950's, the hub of village-wide activities was the Seabrook Community House, a federally-built and Seabrook Farms-run multi-purpose facility. Located at the juncture of State Highway 77 and Parsonage Road (roughly, the geographical center of the Seabrook plant/village area), the Community House was staffed by a dedicated crew under Dorothy Chapman, a full-time social worker. At its peak, the original red-brick building and its attachments (all part of a larger Administration Building complex once operated by the wartime USO) offered a variety of facilities: a small gymnasium, a billiards and table tennis room, a lounge, several club rooms, a cafeteria, a snack bar, an auditorium, an infirmary, a housing office, and even a small library. Here Seabrookers gathered in their leisure hours to meet with friends, attend English and citizenship classes, pursue arts and crafts, participate in basketball leagues, scouting activities, movie viewings, community and school dances, club meetings as well as assemble for summer day camp and events of special social importance, including marriage receptions and funerals.

To meet spiritual and sociocultural needs, various ethnic groups formed their own churches, which engendered a host of activities. Following this pattern were the Seabrook Buddhist Temple (Japanese), the Seabrook Christian Church (Japanese), and the Northville Lutheran Church (Estonians and Germans). These churches served to not only provide religious education and solace but also help preserve ethnic traditions and celebrations.

Since its founding in 1945, the Seabrook Buddhist Temple (formerly located in the Child Care Center and presently on Northview Road), for example, has organized and promoted classes in the Japanese language, folk dance, judo, various ethnic arts and crafts as well as staging its annual Obon Festival. The Estonians in the Northville Lutheran Church have also been prominent in preserving the cultural life of the village, most notably with their Estonian Choir and folk dance troupe.

Ethnic groups in Seabrook also formed organizations to meet sociocultural and political needs. These organizations include the Japanese American Citizens League, the Estonian Association, the Union of Estonian Freedom Fighters, and the Freedom Lodge 3106 (Seabrook Chapter of the Polish National Alliance). Such organizations not only initiated civic and cultural projects in the community but also served as their ethnic community's political voice on local and national issues.
Working with the Shoemaker Post 95 of the Bridgeton American Legion, the Seabrook chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, for example, sponsored a U.S. citizenship program, the same organization, under the leadership and advocacy of Charles Nagao, also enlisted community support for the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which compensated interned Japanese Americans for property losses suffered at the start of World War II. Under the leadership of Albert Vilms, Leo Virkmaa, and Andy Andresson, the Estonian Association, whose founding members had experienced their former homeland falling under Soviet military domination during World War II, organized annual observances of Estonian Independence Day and many other activities expressing ethnic and political solidarity.

Nothing suggests more of the leisure activities of Seabrookers in the 1940's and 1950's than the ordinary lives of its people. Seabrookers of this period remember the regular trips to the Seabrook General Store to buy groceries, a few hours' work in a backyard vegetable garden or a stop at the village post office, barber shop, or beauty salon, a visit to a friend in the village, perhaps even a trip on the local bus to nearby Bridgeton or distant Philadelphia. Some remember the product-laden vehicles that made their rounds along the streets of Seabrook to deliver or sell their wares—bread, bottles of milk, fresh vegetables, briquettes of coal, blocks of ice, dry-cleaned clothes, popsicles, snow cones, frozen custard, and even tofu. Some Seabrookers of Japanese ancestry remember their grandfathers or fathers playing go (Chinese chess) or karuta (a Japanese card game) or engaging in shinrin (reciting of Chinese poems) or utai (chanting of lines of Noh drama). Some have memories of men hanging up flowing silk carps on high poles on Boy's Day or pounding steamed rice to make mochi for New Year's, of veterans of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team proudly saluting the United States flag, of women preparing homemade sushi or practicing ikebana (Japanese flower arrangement) or making origami (folded paper ornaments), of children playing hopscotch or marbles in front of their tenement homes or fishing at Flood Gate (the local irrigation reservoir) or playing jan-kon-po (a Japanese paper, rock, scissors game) or jin-tori (a version of prisoner's base) or joining in a game of soccer or Estonian dodgeball or just catching fireflies on a warm summer evening. Many remember the large community gatherings, particularly, the Seabrook Buddhist Temple's annual participatory Obon Dance, the Japanese American Citizens League's annual chow mein dinner, its annual community picnic at Thundergust in Parvin State Park, and its annual all-village New Year's Eve dance in the Community House.
The following represent some of the highlights and scope, both past and present, of community life in Seabrook:

- The Seabrook Community House in 1947 sponsored or provided facilities for, among other things, four boys’ clubs, three girls’ clubs, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, Intermediate Girl Scouts, Senior Girl Scouts, and Brownies, an adult education English and cooking class, and a United States citizenship class; Community House activities in that year included an Issei talent show, a Nisei basketball tournament, a Girl Scout carnival, an English and Japanese language oratorical contest, a wiener roast at Parvin State Park, and several holiday-themed dances (Valentine’s Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Eve).

- The Seabrook Soccer Club, composed mainly of players of German ancestry, competed in the Philadelphia Soccer League First Division and, in 1959, vied for the national championship in the National Amateur Cup Eliminations.

- The Estonian Choir, which introduced Estonian and European harmonies of song to Seabrook and neighboring areas, gave concert performances in major cities on the East Coast of the United States in addition to a musical tour of Canada.

- The Seabrook Minyo Dancers, carrying on a now 50-year tradition of Japanese folk dance in Seabrook, performed at the “People’s Inaugural” for President Jimmy Carter at the National Visitor’s Center and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 1977 and represented the State of New Jersey at the 1983 Festival of American Folklore on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

- The Japanese American Citizens League’s annual charity chow mein dinner, with accompanying cultural exhibit and entertainment, draws many former Seabrookers and other diners from throughout the Delaware Valley.

**Education in Seabrook**

The ethnic groups that settled in Seabrook in the 1940’s and 1950’s faced a dilemma familiar to many of a recent immigrant background: how to instill the values and skills necessary for advancement in their newly adopted home yet preserve the language and traditions of their own culture.

For most Seabrook parents of the 1940’s and 1950’s, working long hours at the Seabrook Farms factory left little time to further their own formal schooling. Typically, parents sacrificed their own education and career ambitions for the education of their children. Yet, during the slack season of the factory or in between work and caring for their young, many adults attended adult English and citizenship classes to smoothen and hasten their entry into American society. Such classes were held in the Seabrook Community House and were attended regularly by a significant number of Seabrookers.

For many Seabrook children of the 1940’s, the first taste of public schooling came with enrollment in the Seabrook Child Care Center (more commonly known as Seabrook Nursery School). This Seabrook Farms- and federally-supported facility served not only the practical purpose of allowing one parent to work the day shift at the Seabrook plant and the other parent to work the night shift (and sleep during the day undisturbed) but also the educational purpose of providing local children with their first collective learning experience, including their first encounter with the great ethnic diversity of the village. Here over a hundred youngsters gathered from 7:30 a.m. till 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, to participate in a variety of supervised activities and to receive, according to a Seabrook Farms newsletter, a hot lunch, an “inexhaustible supply of milk,” fruit juice, snacks, and a daily dose of cod liver oil.
All primary school children in Seabrook received their education at Seabrook School (later renamed Elizabeth Moore School) and its 1956 extension, Seabrook School-North (later renamed C. F. Seabrook School). Seabrook School graduates of all ethnic origins still fondly remember many of their former teachers, who not only introduced them to the wonders and mysteries of the 3 R's but, for some, also became their first adult English-language models. The graduates also remember the many school activities, from participating in spelling bees and putting on skits for parents to playing kick baseball and Estonian dodgeball during recess hour. Nor can any Seabrook School graduate easily forget the strict demeanor of Elizabeth Moore, the school’s longtime and respected principal, who marched confidently into each classroom to administer the latest IQ or state achievement test amidst a sea of anxious faces.

By most accounts, Seabrook School, one of the highest-rated public schools in New Jersey in the 1950’s, succeeded in instilling basic skills and knowledge in its diverse body of students. Many Seabrook School graduates later went on to excel in the classroom at Bridgeton Junior High School and Bridgeton Senior High School. Indeed, because of the success of Seabrook School in instilling the new—and, in the process, Americanizing the young—the task of preserving the old proved much more difficult. In face of great odds, parents turned to religious organizations and social clubs in an effort to preserve ethnic languages and traditions. For adults this meant organizing and financially supporting private classes within their own ethnic communities; for children, it meant attending classes (and often doing homework) in addition to those at Seabrook School. Ethnic folk arts taught in Seabrook in the 1940’s and 1950’s included dance, song, painting, flower arrangement, cooking, and many others. Among the languages once formally taught in Seabrook were Japanese, Estonian, German, Latvian, and Polish.

Some highlights of education in Seabrook include the following:

- The Seabrook School Auditorium in 1953 was the site of a then record-setting citizenship ceremony: sworn in as United States citizens were 126 first-generation Japanese immigrants, the largest group of individuals from a single nationality to be naturalized in one event.

- Seabrook School, reflecting the ethnic composition of the village, was probably the most culturally diverse nonurban public school in New Jersey from the late 1940’s into the late 1960’s.

- Seabrook School was consistently one of the top-ranked public schools in the State of New Jersey. In 1962, Seabrook School provided approximately 20% of the students at Bridgeton Senior High School; yet, six of the ten seniors graduating with “Highest Distinction” that year were graduates of Seabrook School; in that same year, Seabrook School graduates served as presidents of the senior class, honor society, science club, debating club, editor of the school newspaper as well as captains of the boys’ varsity football, basketball, baseball, and tennis teams and girls’ varsity field hockey and basketball teams.

- The Seabrook Japanese American community has shown a high rate of students continuing their education. A 1958 news article in the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin reported that, since settling in Seabrook, the Japanese American community sent every one of its children to high school and every one graduated, with three-quarters going on to college.

- Seabrook, whose population consisted mostly of displaced or immigrant families (many in which the language of the home was not English) produced a remarkable number and variety of educated professionals, including, at last count (1994), at least 4 lawyers, 2 dentists, 4 medical doctors, over 10 Ph.D.’s, and at least 3 honorary doctorates.
**The New Generation: The Next New Beginning**

In farming, as in life, seeds are sown, take root, sprout, and then flourish in their seemingly short allotted season, only to die to nourish the soil for the next growing season. The Charles F. Seabrook’s once-bustling Seabrook Farms plant is now gone, a victim of the fierce competition in the food industry and the corporate mergers of the 1980’s. Many of the pioneering generation of settlers who lived in Seabrook Village and worked in the plant during the 1940’s and 1950’s have already passed away. Yet, like the planting and harvest seasons, life in Seabrook recycles, with the old nourishing the new. Another frozen food processing plant, Seabrook Brothers & Sons—begun in 1978 by James M. Seabrook and Charles F. Seabrook, II, and their children (sons and grandchildren, respectively, of Belford L. Seabrook, eldest son of Charles F. Seabrook)—now stands just south of Seabrook Village. The next generation of Seabrookers and their offspring, like the pioneering settlers of the 1940’s and 1950’s, also face new challenges that test their capacities for hardship, hard work, and hope. Seeking to reconnect to cultural roots, some of the new generation have developed an interest not only in learning traditional dance, taiko drumming, folk arts and crafts, ethnic cooking, and martial arts but also in preserving the memories of the past. Enriched by the past yet looking to the future, this generation of Seabrookers is also planting new seeds. Theirs is the next new beginning.
The "Seabrook Farms: A New Beginning" was prepared in conjunction with the construction of the Seabrook Educational and Cultural Center and the preparation of its first exhibition. The museum and exhibition was dedicated at the People's Inaugural, October 8, 1994 on the occasion of the Seabrook 50th Year Celebration of the arrival of Japanese Americans from the ten relocation centers and the internment camp incarcerating the Japanese Persians during World War II for which the United States Government later apologized. Seabrook Farms was the largest employer of Japanese Americans who resided from the War Relocation Authority camps.

THE NEW JERSEY COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

The New Jersey Council for the Humanities (NJCH) actively supports the public's use of the humanities to enrich personal and community life in New Jersey. The NJCH sponsors projects that bring humanities scholars together with the general public to examine and discuss important ideas and issues. Projects are designed to provide lifelong learning opportunities to the people of New Jersey.

People examine the human experience and explore basic questions of meaning and value through the humanities, an umbrella phrase for a range of disciplines and areas of inquiry that include literature, history, philosophy, languages, and comparative religion. Public humanities projects bring these disciplines out of the classroom and into our lives, giving us the opportunity to look beyond our everyday concerns and see ourselves in relation to larger questions. The humanities offer ways to investigate, evaluate, discover, record, and articulate the meaning of human experience.

The NJCH awards grants of up to $10,000 each to New Jersey nonprofit groups through a semiannual competitive proposal review process. Mitigants of up to $2,000 are awarded bimonthly. The NJCH also creates its own initiatives and sets aside separate grant funds for proposals related to these initiatives.

In addition, the Council sponsors People & Stories/Contra y Contigo, a literature discussion series held in English or in Spanish that allows educationally and socially diverse groups to discuss contemporary short stories. The annual NJCH Book Award, begun in 1989, honors an author who is a New Jerseyan by virtue of birth, residence, or occupation, and whose humanities book balances scholarship with general public appeal. NJCH offers more than twenty different Reading & Discussion Programs in literature, culture, and history, and music history. Funding for these programs is available through NJCH grants. In-TUKA offers the business community the opportunity to provide humanities programs to its employees. Most programs are presented in the workplace during lunchtime.

The NJCH is a non-profit organization established in 1972 by federal law as a state council of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Accountable to the NEH and responsive to the people of New Jersey, the Council is supported by the NEH, corporations, foundations, and individuals. The Council is composed of twenty-five volunteer members, of whom six are gubernatorial appointees.
"AWAITING A SIMILARLY GRIM FATE WERE 365 REMAINING PERUVIAN REJECTS, WHOSE DESPERATE PLIGHT CAME TO THE ATTENTION OF WAYNE COLLINS, A SAN FRANCISCO ATTORNEY THEN CONDUCTING A ONE-MAN WAR AGAINST THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IN TRYING TO EXTRICATE THOUSANDS OF NISEI CAUGHT IN THEIR 'RENUCIATION TRAP' ANOTHER ONE OF THE EXTREME CONSEQUENCES OF THE EVACUATION TRAGEDY.

TO ABORT U.S. PLANS TO 'DUMP' THIS RESIDUAL PERUVIAN GROUP ON A DEFEATED, WAR-PULVERIZED ENEMY HARDLY ABLE TO CARE FOR ITS OWN STARVING MASSES, COLLINS FILED TWO TEST PROCEEDINGS IN HABEAS CORPUS ON JUNE 25, 1946, IN A U.S. DISTRICT COURT IN SAN FRANCISCO AFTER THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT CONTENDED THAT SUSPENSION OF DEPORTATION ON A LIKE BASIS AS CAUCASIANS WAS NOT PERMITTED, AND A SUBSEQUENT APPEAL DIRECTLY TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE PRESIDENT CAME TO NO AVAL. WITH THE REMOVAL PROGRAM BROUGHT, BY COURT ACTION, TO A FORCED HALT, THE DETAINES WERE PLACED IN "RELAXED INTERNMENT" -- MANY OF THEM AT SEABROOK FARMS, NEW JERSEY, THE WELL-KNOWN FROZEN FOOD PROCESSING PLANT WHERE THE LABOR OF GERMAN POWs HAD BEEN UTILIZED DURING THE WAR YEARS, AND WHERE EVACUEE GROUPS FROM MANY CAMPS WERE GIVEN EMPLOYMENT."

MICHI WEGLYN

Years of Infamy
The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps
1976