

MY EARLY DAYS AT HARZA
by
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While a student at New Trier High School I ran around with three guys: two from the Class of 1948 and one who was in the Class of 1949 like me. We all belonged to the young peoples group at the Glencoe Union Church. Dave, who was in my class, was the son of the minister. Ron lived at the south end of the village and Jim lived two blocks south of me. We played bridge together and often bowled on Saturday mornings at the alleys in the Church basement below the sanctuary.

About 1947 Ron got the idea of starting a business he called Household Maintenance Service. We mowed lawns, did other yard work, cleaned houses, washed windows and baby sat.

The summer of 1948 Ron got a request from a neighbor for two of us to wash dishes after a dinner party. Dave and I took on the job. It was for a family named Fucik. We were there a good part of the evening and finished about 9:30 or 10:00 o'clock.

Ron went to the University of Illinois and majored in Chemical Engineering; Jim went to Carnegie Tech and majored in mechanical engineering. I went to Swarthmore College and majored in civil engineering. Dave went to Grinnell College, but did not major in engineering.

In the summer of 1951 Ron got a job at Harza. He spent some time organizing the library. In the summer of 1952 I got a job at Harza and found that Bob Hunter was there. His sister had been in my 8th grade and New Trier classes. At that time Harza's offices were on the seventh floor of the Old Daily New Building at 400 West Madison Street. I took the Northwestern to the Madison Street Station. The train was like I'd ridden in high school: steam engine, no air conditioning, windows opened to let in air and soot. After debarking the train, I walked across the covered bridge and took an elevator with an operator to the offices on the seventh floor. I was assigned to work with Keith Willey and Roger Anderson (not the Roger Anderson who was at Harza in the 1960s and 1970s) on the Meric-Evros irrigation project in Greece. They were just back from field studies. We were along the wall at the front of the drafting room that was to the north of the front offices. Leroy Harza's office was on the other side of that wall. I sat at a drafting table at the window, Roger was to my right and Keith sat at a desk on the aisle. I brought a brown bag with my lunch in it. Lunch was 45 minutes. One lunch period when the others were

gone Mr. Harza appeared and motioned for me to follow him into his office. I followed him, wondering if I had done something wrong. He motioned to the window and asked me to climb out on the parapet (twelve inches wide with a nine inch high concrete wall, seven stories above the plaza along the river) and adjust the thermometer that had been knocked askew by a window washer.

I came back to work in the summer of 1953. Harza had expanded, taking space on the tenth floor and a floor at 112 So. Clinton Street. Dave Louie was the senior employee there. I designed the crane girders for the underground powerhouse of the Ambuklao hydroelectric project in the Philippines.

I went back to Swarthmore to pick up three courses I needed to graduate. In February I went to work for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford, Connecticut. I found a room at a rooming house on the west side of Hartford at 29 Kenyon Street (the name of the girl I was pinned to at Swarthmore.) Driving to the Aircraft on Farmington Avenue we passed Mark Twain's home. While there, I learned that a friend from New Trier was at Columbia Law School in New York City. I drove to NYC and learned he had a date the evening I arrived, so I tagged along with his roommate and some others to an open house at Sarah Lawrence College. There I ran into a girl I'd known at Swarthmore (she'd transferred), but eventually ended up talking to a Japanese student, whose father was in the diplomatic corps. She and I walked to the Bronxville Inn and danced in a small room with a jukebox. Then we joined a group that turned out to be a reunion of a junior college class and danced to the band music there. Years later, I saw her name in a newspaper article about the Beatles; her name was Yoko Ono.

Deciding I didn't like working at Pratt & Whitney, I wrote to Modjeski and Masters in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to see if I could work there. The reply was "Yes." I arrived in Harrisburg in September and designed a pile footing for eastern most pier of the Greater New Orleans Highway Bridge over the Mississippi. A few months later my draft board in Evanston asked me to get a physical examination. I took it at a nearby military installation. I had a choice of going to Ft. Dix in New Jersey or Ft. Leonard Wood in Missouri for basic training.

I chose the latter, because I planned to drop off my hi-fi equipment and other stuff at my folks in Glencoe. I was drafted four days after the Korean war was declared over. After basic training, I had no orders and was held over for two weeks until my assignment came through. During those two weeks the company commander had the few of us waiting for orders going at night to other companies and taking blankets off bunks to make up for shortages he had. Eventually, my orders arrived and I was given two weeks leave to go home.

Except for three weeks at Camp McCoy in Wisconsin, my service was entirely at Ft. Leonard Wood. In 1956, President Eisenhower declared the Federal Highway Program in the National Interest. I wrote Modjeski & Masters and they provided documentation and a statement that they could use me. In November 1956 I was released and drove home to collect my belongings and drive back to Harrisburg.

After a couple of years I took the Pennsylvania professional engineer's examination and passed it. I joined the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers. At some of the meetings there was a state engineer named Marcel Bitoun. In 1958, my brother wrote that Dad had told him our grandfather, Frank McClellan Dean, had been born in Philadelphia in 1863, and asked me to see what I could find out about him. Thus began my life long interest in family history. I wrote to my father's brother and sister and learned that my grandfather at the age of sixteen had coaxed his mother into letting him join the U.S. Navy, that he had, and in 1879 he with about 150 other boys were assigned to the USS Constitution (Old Ironsides) for a year; that his father had published two handbills in Philadelphia in the early 1860s [*The Stars and Stripes* and *The Palmetto Flag*] one giving a Northern point of view, the other a Southern one; the latter causing a riot in April 1861 after Ft. Sumter was attacked. My great-grandfather gave up publishing and opened a "segar" store, where during the Civil War, Union troops marching down Chestnut Street would break ranks, load up with cigars, regroup, and continue on toward Washington.

I used to go to the Pennsylvania State Library on my lunch hour because it had a genealogy section. In 1959 I noticed an attractive young lady filing cards in the card catalog and struck up a conversation with her. That evening I called and invited her to home coming weekend at Swarthmore. We married in August 1960. I answered an ad for a job with the National Lumber Manufacturers Association in Washington, DC. At Christmas we drove to Glencoe to spend the holiday with my parents. Mom had an open house, inviting her friends to meet the new bride. My friend Ron's father was among them and when he heard I was considering the NLMA job, suggested I speak with Ed Fucik about it. Ed had moved from south Glencoe to South Deer Park in Highland Park (a lake front property.) After I'd returned to M&M, I got a phone call there from Art Geuss, who asked me to return to Harza. I accepted his offer and, in January Peggy and I drove back to Glencoe. Dad had found us an apartment in Hubbard Woods.

The trains had changed. The Northwestern RR had acquired air conditioned cars and push-pull diesel engines. I was assigned to work for Pete Duros in a room at the north end of the 9th or 10th floor. Andy Eberhard had an office there and Sham Azri and Roman

Wengler ran the new computer department. I soon noticed an employee in an adjacent office; his name was Marcel Bitoun.

In late 1962 Jim Schalk and I were chosen to participate in the Chicago Fallout Study. We attended a two week seminar on shelter design at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, rooming together in a condo in the married student housing area. After that we had to go to a seminar at Ft. Sheridan. I was then assigned to A. Epstein, an architectural firm on Pershing Blvd. on the south side. There we took part in a survey of existing buildings in the Chicago area that might have shelter potential. One building I surveyed was the State prison at Joliet. Thereafter, I surveyed the south side around 71st Street and the South Shore Country Club.

When that assignment ended I was assigned to the Indus Basin Department. Al Bourgo was the Officer in charge, John Scoville was the Project Manager. The space set aside for the project was at the south end of the tenth floor. I sat at a drafting table in the third row. A cigar smoking chain smoker, Dave Westfall, was to my left and young Don Roberts was to my right. Though my great-grandfather had a cigar store, I found the cigar smoke irritating. John Baggesen was located somewhere in that room, too. There was a clerk outside John Scoville's office whose name was Condon; he was a nephew of the band leader of that name. In a room just off our larger room sat Bill Bristow and a South African named Phil Sherlock. I had the sensation that I'd seen Phil in the dining room of a hotel in Yorkshire when Peggy and I were on our honeymoon. In another room was John Dixon. Down the hall was a coffee break room, where some of us would congregate about 10 AM. Harza was the General Consultant to WAPDA (the Water and Power Development Authority of West Pakistan). We reviewed design work prepared by an English firm, Binnie and Partners. One day I left the Indus Basin Project room near 5:00 o'clock. When I returned the door was locked and my coat was inside. A young engineer, Jim Passage, picked the lock so I could get my coat and go home.

While in the Indus Basin department, I applied for the Illinois Structural Engineering license by reciprocity. I was interviewed by a panel that included Ralph Peck, one of the authors of my soil mechanics text (Terzaghi and Peck). They asked me about the function of weep holes in a retaining wall I'd designed. I received my Illinois license.

In June 1966 Peggy and I with son Merrick drove to Danville, Kentucky for my sister's graduation from Centre College. In July Dad and I flew to Athens, Georgia to identify her at a funeral home near the interstate highway from Atlanta to Columbia, South Carolina. She had been driving to visit a college friend who lived in Columbia.

About 1968 I was asked to be Franklyn Rogers' assistant. My new location was in a cubicle in the front office across from Frank's office. He had projects in South America. He would fly to Buenos Aires and take a ferry across the Plata River to Uruguay. One time the ferry sank and Frank treaded water for some time before being rescued. We had a sales representative in Argentina whose name was Pete Iturralde. He had been a pilot for Peron. Sometimes he came to Chicago to work on a proposal. Frank became the Project Sponsor of the Finchaa Project in Ethiopia owned by the Ethiopian Electric Light and Power Authority (EELPA). It was an AID project and when the American bids came in too high, AID decided to seek international bids. Harza redid the drawings for international bidding. We had four EELPA engineers in Chicago for six months to participate in the preparation of the documents. Peggy and I invited them to our home for dinner, Frank took me with him to Addis Ababa for the bid opening. We flew to Milan, then to Athens, where we had a layover and visited the Acropolis, then to Cairo and on to Addis Ababa. My luggage was lost and I coped without it while we were there. An English engineer working for EELPA loaned me some of his underwear for the two weeks we were there. After the bid opening session Frank and I sat and tallied all the bids. The four engineers who had been in Chicago invited me to dinner in Addis Ababa. The day before we were to leave my luggage turned up. I went to the airport to collect it and had my pocket picked, so I lost all of my travelers' checks. We loaded the bids in a set of Harza luggage (those black fiber board suitcases). Because Frank was to make a stop in London, I was to fly back to Chicago with the bids. My itinerary was to Khartoum then to Rome with an two overnights, then to Chicago.

At Khartoum I got off the plane and took a photo of the plane. An Arab appeared and demanded my film. In Rome I was booked into an out-of-the-way hotel with a very uncomfortable bed. After breakfast I had a few hours to sight see. I visited the Colosseum, which smelled like a urinal, the Trevi Fountain, and got to the Pantheon. When I arrived there were two stewardesses with southern accents. I remarked that my sister had gone to school in the South. One asked where? "Centre College in Kentucky," I replied. "That's where I went," she said. It turned out they had attended some of the same classes. I took them to dinner at the restaurant on top of the Rome Hilton hotel. An Italian fellow asked one young lady to dance. When she got back, she said he'd told her he was a millionaire. Calculating the exchange rate, I figured he had about \$10,000.

Arriving at O'Hare the customs agent asked me the value of the bid documents. When I said they had no value he passed them through with no more questions.