



Euclid Beach Remembrance

An employee's view, circa 1946/1947

By Hal Braschwitz



This is a vignette of a young employee's viewpoint of Euclid Beach Park, Cleveland, Ohio in the era of 1946/7. In order to set the time in perspective, a little background is necessary. In 1946 World War II had just ended. During that war the United States had created the largest military in our history: about 16 million participants out of a total population of about 130 million. Further, the military was composed primarily of working age males. At the end of the war this force



was decommissioned with extreme rapidity. A young high school graduate in 1946 was faced with conditions that had never existed previously in the history of our country. His employment opportunities were bleak as he faced competition from all of the returning veterans. For the

most part his choices were to go college, if he could gain entrance (again competition from these same veterans) or join the army. There was still a need for occupation troops in various parts of the world at that time.

I was fortunate to have been accepted at Case Institute of Technology. Again, out of a class of 500 only about 100 were recent high school graduates. During the summer of 1946 I gained employment at Euclid Beach Park as a ride operator. Euclid Beach Park was a large amusement park located in the city of Cleveland directly on Lake Erie. It was well run and very popular. It was readily accessible by public transportation which was important at that time as personal automobiles had not been available for five or six years because of the need of military production.

My working hours were for twelve hours a day, seven days a week for a pay of 28 dollars. Further, I lived on the far west side of Cleveland and Euclid Beach was located at the eastern edge of town. My commute via street car was about an hour and half each way for fifty cents each way. Therefore my total portal to portal working time was about 15 hours per day and transportation costs were one dollar. Throw in a hot dog and a coke for lunch and my take home earnings were further diminished. In any event I was happy to have employment. Actually, it turned out to be probably the happiest employment period in my whole career.

One of the perks of the job was that during lunch breaks, etc. one could ride free with a guest on any of the many rides in the park. Unlike today's amusement parks, entrance to Euclid Beach was free and one paid individually for each ride taken. The key to this perk was the "guest". Most of the ride operators were young males and a group of young girls inhabited the park and

followed the operators around during their breaks to obtain free rides. Today I guess that we would call them "groupies" who follow professional athletes and movie idols about. In any event it was such a significant perk that I believe some of the workers would have worked there for free. The most popular rides to take the girls on were the "Over the Falls" where one was in the dark in a small boat for most of the ride and then up a hill and a fast ride to the exit and the "Flying Turns" which was essentially a roller coaster where the girl sat in one's lap in the car.

I worked on the "Laugh in the Dark" where one rode around in a car on a track in the dark and met various scary objects. This was also a popular ride to take the girls on. At times I also worked on the "Dodgem" which was a neat place to meet the girls.

As a young person I also met my first con artist hustler. The park also included an area with table tennis tables for patron use. I liked to play table tennis at the time but was at best a mediocre player. I watched a fellow play there who I considered to be a "pro". One day he invited me to play with him and lo and behold I won the first two games. I was quite naïve at the time but was really wondering what was going on. Then on the third game he suggested putting some money on the next game. Suddenly the light came on and I told him my break was over and I had to get back to work.

Another pleasant experience occurred when I found out that the park manager, who lived on the grounds, was an amateur radio operator and had an amateur radio station located there. I had just gotten my amateur radio license and had not, at the time, set up my own equipment. He invited me to operate his station and I achieved my first amateur radio contacts from that location.

Even though, certainly by today's standards, the pay was pathetic and the working hours were horrendous, I still remember that time as a very happy period in my life thanks to Euclid Beach Park. 🐾

A Very Small Selection from the 1941 Euclid Beach Employee Roster

Anjeskey, Richard	Bergach, Frank	Cudahy, William
Dutchcot, Celia	Epaves, Jack	Frischcorn, Paul
Guccion, Norman	Heffner, Beatrice	Iannicelli, Andrew
Jarosz, Raymond	Kessler, Agnes	Longfield, Tess
Mytrosevich, John	Nachtigal, Fred	Offenhauser, Phil
Plantsch, Anna	Quinlivan, Cormack	Raybuck, Don
Scarlatelli, Phyllis	Timperio, Carmen	Urankar, Alvin F.

Van James	Tassel,	Waschman, Walter	Yuhus, Mike
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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHcOUpRL8Ck&NR=1>
(Ride the Thriller)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBXJEMydQU&feature=related> (Ride the Flying Turn)