Seabrook Farms Inquiry Design Model Lesson (9th-12th Grades)



Aerial view of Seabrook Farms (1950) from NJ Digital Highway

This lesson about farm labor follows the C3 Framework and uses the inquiry design model (IDM) with primary sources to teach high school students about Seabrook Farms in New Jersey. Depending on the grade level and course in which this lesson is taught, some additional background information may be necessary for students. Some accounts of Seabrook Farms celebrate the company's diverse workforce and agricultural innovations, while others describe it as a site of control and exploitation. This lesson presents students with an array of primary sources so they can decide for themselves.

A History of Seabrook Farms

Seabrook Farms was an industrial farming and food processing operation based in Upper Deerfield Township, five miles north of Bridgeton, in Cumberland County, New Jersey. From the Second World War until 1959, when C.F. Seabrook sold the family business to Seeman Brothers, a grocery wholesaler, Seabrook Farms was one of the largest producers of frozen vegetables and foods in the world. At a time when the frozen foods industry had only just emerged, Seabrook Farms was at the forefront of inventing new ways to grow, process, and freeze vegetables. It devoted considerable resources to marketing and branding its products. Through its warehouses and trucking fleet, Seabrook Farms handled 115 brands, including its own signature items, that it packed and shipped. The company worked in concert with chain grocery stores to transform how customers bought and understood frozen foods. By 1945, Seabrook Farms was already producing close to 50 million pounds

of frozen foods annually and, by 1957, that number had doubled to more than 100 million pounds. Seabrook Farms was a mass producer of consumer goods. The company created 10 to 14 million gallons of effluent wastewater from its processing operations daily, for instance, polluting the Delaware Bay watershed as a result. Key to everything it did was Seabrook Farms' access to sufficient supplies of labor. During harvest and peak production season, when peas, spinach, lima beans, and other produce had to be picked and quickly frozen at the company's plant, Seabrook Farms employed more than 7,000 workers.

Seabrook Farms began as a 60-acre family farm in Cumberland County in southwestern New Jersey and was run by Arthur P. Seabrook from 1886 until 1913. His son Charles Franklin, known as C.F., purchased the farm from his father and bought another 68 acres, incorporating and trading shares in what became known as the Seabrook Farms Company. In the years that followed, C.F. purchased several small farms in Deerfield Township (now Upper Deerfield Township), adding another 200 acres. He also doubled irrigation, built a greenhouse, power plant, dams for water storage, a blacksmith shop, sawmill, garages, and a school for workers' children. He also constructed boarding houses for the farm's laborers; and, despite his competitors and opponents' vocal protests, used his appointment on the State Highway Commission to get a wide network of roads built to help his operations.

By 1919, Seabrook Farms was a 2,000-acre enterprise. A truck farm, it sold fresh fruit and vegetables directly to wholesale buyers. From the start, the company bragged about how its uses of new sciences and technology, such as overhead irrigation, improved fertilizers, and commercial greenhouses, allowed it to overcome limits on production that weather, climate, and geography imposed on previous generations of farmers. A 1919 feature published in Henry Ford's *Dearborn Independent* gushed that C.F. Seabrook had finally brought the factory system to farming. Although Americans often associate agriculture with small, independent farms, by 1920, roughly 90% of all agricultural workers were wage laborers. In its early days, like most growers in New Jersey, Seabrook Farms relied on seasonal workers, who were paid piece rate wages to harvest vegetables. In the 1910s and 1920s, these workers were often Italian immigrants recruited from Philadelphia or Camden. After World War I, some of these men found year-round jobs working as mechanics and lived with their families in row houses known as the "Italian Village," which was owned and leased by the company.

By 1924, Seabrook Farms was struggling financially, and investors removed C.F. from the company's leadership. It was renamed Del-Bay Farms and opened canning operations, meaning that for the first time, produce was not only being grown on site, but also processed for long term preservation against spoilage and sale at a future date.

In 1929, C.F. managed to raise funds to repurchase farmlands lost to Del-Bay Farms. After the stock market crash in 1929, C.F. began buying large amounts of foreclosed farmland in Cumberland County and adjoining areas, over which he maintained separate, private ownership. In 1930, the company contracted with General Foods to quick-freeze fruits and vegetables using the method developed by Clarence Birdseye, packing their goods under the Birdseye label. Birdseye dominated the early frozen food market, making Seabrook Farms the most important packer in the country. Still, plummeting agricultural prices caused by the Great Depression meant that Seabrook Farms was only able to remain afloat after C.F. borrowed $250,000 from the federal, New Deal Reconstruction Finance Corporation in 1933.

During the 1930s, Seabrook Farms turned its focus to canning and freezing operations, and, by the early 1940s, would stop selling unprocessed produce altogether. Although it continued to employ thousands of fieldworkers from May to November, to harvest vegetables for processing, over time, these laborers would come to be increasingly divided - in status, race, and pay - from workers employed in the company's plant. Nonetheless, in April 1934, field, and plant workers, Black and Italian, joined together to demand that Seabrook Farms grant them a pay increase, and recognize Farmers and Workers Association, Local No. 2., an unaffiliated union that workers had formed. Seabrook initially agreed to pay male seasonal workers 30¢ an hour and women seasonal workers 25¢ an hour. However, he reneged on that promise and reduced wages to 17¢ an hour for both groups, resulting in a strike that began in July 1934. The strike was radicalized by the involvement of the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union, a West Coast union that was affiliated with the Communist Party. On July 9, 1934, in the midst of the beet harvest, strikers threw rocks and sticks at tractor and truck drivers, resulting in sheriff's deputies and local farmers retaliating with tear gas and fire hoses. C.F. Seabrook deputized local members of the Ku Klux Klan to supplement his private police force. Eventually, federal mediators from the US Department of Labor brokered an agreement, although many workers who were fired were never rehired, despite what Seabrook Farms had agreed to. A leading civil rights journal of the period, *The Journal of Negro Life, celebrated* the strike as a rare and important example of Black and white worker solidarity.

In 1941, John "Jack" Seabrook, C.F. 's son, directed Seabrook Farms to recognize plant workers at Seabrook Farms as members of Local 56, a chapter of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen union, which was then affiliated with the AFL. In the collective bargaining agreement that it reached with management, Local 56 won from the company the concession that seasonal plant workers would be protected by the union's contract and pay 25 cents a week in fees to the union, despite being ineligible for full membership. Fieldworkers, however, were never subject to the union's contract. Like many things at Seabrook Farms, Local 56's reputation, and legacy, is complicated. It garnered a reputation among certain members for being a "company union" that actively sought to avoid conflict with management. At the same time, it was very active in promoting civil rights' causes, had a diverse bargaining committee that included Black and Japanese American representatives, and worked closely with Japanese Americans during the initial redress movement during the 1940s and 1950s.

Until World War II, most of the laborers at Seabrook Farms were locals or seasonal migrants and "day haul" laborers, who labor bosses and brokers contracted to growers in "gangs." However, as farm workers entered the military or moved to significantly higher-paying defense jobs, Seabrook faced a severe labor shortage. After the United States entered the war, Seabrook Farms initially looked to the Farm Security Administration (FSA) as a provider of labor. On May 15, 1942, the FSA opened a mobile camp on Seabrook Farms' property – known as the Big Oak or Bridgeton camp – which accommodated a thousand residents. Growers and processors reluctantly accepted FSA camps because they helped ensure that agricultural labor would be reliably available. Workers understood that the FSA camps offered better living conditions. While dwellings were small - they were only 16 x 16 feet - they were limited to four occupants or a single family, and each contained a stove. The camp had properly installed privies, and shower facilities with hot water. Residents were charged only ten cents a week in rent and required to contribute two hours of labor a week to the camp's maintenance. FSA camps provided recreation, social services, and self-governance through camp councils. In 1942,

federal officials assigned to the FSA camp at Big Oak also aided migrant farmworkers in securing free transit to future jobs and more favorable employment contracts. The FSA camp at Big Oak provided on-site healthcare and education for migrant children as well. A classroom was set up in the Big Oak cafeteria after Upper Deerfield Township refused to enroll sixty Black children from the camp in local schools.

In 1943, the arrival of Jamaicans contracted through a bilateral agreement between the United States and the island's British colonial governors, forced domestic migrants to vacate Big Oak for private camps owned by the company, such as Orchard Center, since guest workers were guaranteed spots in government camps by treaty. That same year, Congress, influenced by grower lobbying and anti-New Deal activists, denied the FSA crucial funding appropriations, gutting its ability to provide services beyond housing. From Seabrook Farms management's perspective, Jamaicans were preferable because they came exclusively as single men, without families requiring social services that local communities refused to provide. The favoritism that Jamaican and later Barbadian guestworkers received at Seabrook Farms was offset by their legal status as guestworkers, and the fact that if they left the company to look for other work, they faced deportation.

Anti-Black racism in Cumberland County was considerable. David Burgess, a white activist minister who traveled with migrant farmworkers from camps in Florida to New Jersey, labeled Bridgeton the "seat of the Confederacy in South Jersey." Following a speech he gave to the Bridgeton Kiwanis, on the plight of migrant farmworkers, he was accosted on the street and attacked as the "damned minister who wants to free them God-damned [n-word] rather than keeping them in their place." In his autobiography, Burgess discussed Bridgeton as a city where Black residents were barred from owning businesses, and systemically denied public sector jobs. After police shot an unarmed Black man in the back, killing him, in early 1942, Emerson Steward, treasurer of the local NAACP chapter, angrily reminded white readers of the Bridgeton Evening News that Black Americans had the right "to come here or leave, this being a free country," and that numerous Black GIs were sacrificing their lives in Europe and Asia to defend this very proposition. Despite local racism, Local 56 partnered with the Southern Tenants Farmer Union, from 1943 to 1946, and each summer, three to five hundred Black women college students were bused or flown in for the summer, to work in the cannery. Other migrant workers included whites from Appalachia, who were recruited through a federal placement program coordinated by the Wartime Manpower Commission. During the War, Seabrook even contracted with the federal government to hire more than 500 German prisoners-of-war who would work under the supervision of a guard.

In the spring 1943, the War Relocation Authority (WRA), the federal agency responsible for administering the ten "relocation centers" in which Japanese Americans were incarcerated, begin issuing the "Application for Leave Clearance," which was also known as the loyalty questionnaire. Designed to separate "disloyal" Nikkei from "loyal" Nikkei, those classified as loyal became eligible for military service or work release from the camps. At a December 17, 1943, meeting facilitated by the WRA's New York office, Seabrook Farms agreed to pay for a Japanese American individual's roundtrip fare to visit as a "scout," with the expectation that this person would then return to the camps and drum up interest in resettlement to New Jersey. Coincidentally, George Sakomoto, from the Amache Relocation Center in Colorado, happened to read about the agribusiness in *Reader's Digest*, and requested a tour of Seabrook Farms from WRA officials in Philadelphia, after which he was assigned to the scout position. In January 1944, Sakomoto became the first Japanese American to work for the company.

Initially, the WRA encouraged Japanese Americans released from camps to view Seabrook Farms as a temporary arrangement where they could recover their economic independence and self-sufficiency, and not as a destination for permanent settlement. After he received a letter from the New York City-branch of the ACLU in May 1945, for instance, expressing concern that resettlement at Seabrook Farms ran counter to the agency's "general policy of spreading Japanese-Americans around as much as possible," WRA Director Dillon Myers responded by arguing that the company was a "dispersal point" that "affords an excellent opportunity for evacuees to become acquainted with eastern conditions and agriculture." The WRA had to navigate concerns that Seabrook Farms would become a "Japanese colony," and therefore impede Nikkei integration into white, American society. From January 1944 to December 31, 1945, 2,463 Japanese Americans resettled at Seabrook, with 750 people – or slightly more than thirty percent of the total number – departing from the company during the same period (the evacuation order from the West Coast was lifted for most incarcerated Japanese Americans in January 1945). On December 31, 1945, when the WRA regional office in Philadelphia provided its final census of the resettled population at Seabrook Farms – before the agency ceased functioning on April 15, 1946 – there were 1,711 Nikkei living at Seabrook Farms, with 1,024 of those in residence actively employed by the company.

The Nikkei community that first established itself in the spring and summer of 1944 followed a migration pattern where married men came to New Jersey on trial leave, usually alone, before calling for their families once family units that the Federal Public Housing Authority (FPHA) were constructing, were ready to be inhabited. The 200 FPHA family units that opened in June 1944 consisted of three-room cinder block houses containing coal-fired cooking ranges and ovens. The units had refrigeration and private inside toilets and showers. The FPHA originally arranged for 80 family units, or roughly half of all available family units, to be reserved for Black migrant workers and their families, who were wishing to convert to full-time employment that the on-site housing serviced. But Seabrook Farms blocked this once the relocation of Japanese Americans to the East Coast was underway. In its bid to encourage Nikkei families to come to Seabrook Farms in the summer and fall of 1944, the company also promised to pay for the transport of one dependent per worker, with kids under sixteen years of age not counted against this ratio.

Debilitating losses of property and opportunities on the West Coast shaped decisions to relocate to Seabrook Farms. Mamoru Ogata, for instance, testified to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians in 1981 that the main thing he felt at the end of the war was devastation. He had lost the California farm business that he had only just opened in 1939, after twenty years of wage labor as an immigrant farmworker. His investments included barracks he had built for twenty workers, two tractors, two horses, and other equipment that he estimated had been worth $7,000 in total. In the rush preceding removal and detention, he had sold everything he owned for $250. "I didn't want to go there since my home and farm was in California," the translation and transcription of Ogata's testimony from Japanese notes, "But we had nothing, so we decided to go to Seabrook." The Ogatas no longer had "hope and conviction" by that point. Afterlives of incarceration lingered for years. In 1949, a Nisei wife attributed her husband's inability to earn enough money to support their family of six to his "attitude" stemming from "his experience during the war when they were forced to leave their home in California."

During World War Two, the United States entered into bilateral agreements to intern Japanese "enemy aliens" living in Latin America. Beginning in 1942, approximately 2,500 Japanese Latin Americans, mainly single men, were kidnapped from their homes and businesses, put on ships, brought to the US, and detained—mainly in Crystal City, Texas—without ever having formal charges brought against them. A group of roughly 300 Japanese Peruvians, who were fighting postwar deportation to Japan as "illegal aliens," were paroled to Seabrook Farms in August and September 1946.

Seabrook Farms was also host to approximately 300 "renunciants" sent to New Jersey from Crystal City in October 1946, on what was termed "relaxed internment." In late 1944 and early 1945, approximately 5,000 Japanese Americans renounced their birthright US citizenship, for reasons ranging from political disillusionment with the United States to the misguided impression that renouncing their citizenship would not result in potential deportation. With the war's end in September 1945, the majority of renunciants sought to have their citizenship restored, to avoid deportation to Japan as enemy aliens. Wayne Collins, a lawyer representing the Japanese Peruvians at Seabrook Farms, also took on these cases. The long battle to have renunciants' citizenship restored did not conclude until 1968. Renunciants were detained under relaxed internment at Seabrook Farms until September 1947, when a federal judge finally released them as "Native American Aliens."

After the war, in 1949 and 1950, the company sponsored close to a thousand Estonians, Poles, and Volksdeutsch (ethnic German) refugees from Displaced Persons (DP) camps in Germany. These were individuals and families who claimed that their return to their native countries would result in persecution from Communist and Soviet authorities. Much like the Japanese Americans who preceded them, many Estonians who had lived in German DP camps found the housing conditions they encountered in New Jersey worse than what they had known in camps. However, as Seabrook Farms' sponsorship was required for their resettlement, they had few options during their required six-month work period. During the 1950s, Seabrook Farms would also be an important employer of Puerto Rican contract and Jamaican guestworkers, whom the company hired as fieldworkers during harvest season.

In 1994, Japanese Americans still living in New Jersey, as well as individuals and families who had returned to the West Coast, founded a museum and center dedicated to telling the history of Seabrook Farms. Today, visitors can go to the Seabrook Educational and Cultural Center (SECC) in Upper Deerfield Township to learn about the "global village" created by the man known as the "Henry Ford of agriculture." In the past five years, the SECC has begun work to engage with communities and descendants of workers at Seabrook Farms, whose histories have not received sufficient attention, to make sure that these pasts are represented and included as part of the story the museum tells.

*** *The above history is excerpted from Professor Andy Urban's forthcoming book*, Processing History: Labor, Capitalism, and Memory at Seabrook Farms, *which will be published in 2026*. ***

For more information, resources, and readings, educators can also consult the following:

- Invisible Restraints: Life and Labor at Seabrook Farms digital exhibit at Rutgers University Libraries
- James Seabrook collection at New Jersey Digital Highway
- "Agricultural Public History, Reimagined:Seabrook Farms as a Case Study," by Andy Urban (*Agricultural History*, 2023, 97 (4): 685-690).

- "South Jersey's Seabrook Farms: Innovation, discrimination, and opportunity," *South Jersey Times*, March 10, 2020, by John Seabrook and Andy Urban
- Seabrook Farms at Densho Encyclopedia by Kelli Y. Nakamura (Holmes & Meier, 2003)
- "The Spinach King" by John Seabrook, *The New Yorker*
- *Growing a Global Village: Making History at Seabrook Farms* by Charles H. Harrison
- *Adios to Tears: the Memoirs of a Japanese-Peruvian Internee in U.S. Concentration Camps* by Seiichi Higashide (University of Washington Press, 2000)
- After the Camps: Seabrook Farms, New Jersey, and the Resettlement of Japanese Americans, 1944-47 by Mitziko Sawada (*Amerasia Journal*, 1986-87, 13(2), 117-136)
- *The Henry Ford of Agriculture: Charles F. Seabrook, 1881-1964 & Seabrook Farms, 1893-1959* by John M. Seabrook
- The Life of Japanese Americans at Seabrook Farms during the Second World War by Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia

Compelling Question			
How did Seabrook Farms establish a "global village" of laborers?			
Staging the Compelling Question	Seabrook Farms was one of the largest producers of frozen, canned, and dehydrated vegetables in the United States. Essential to its success was a huge labor force, which was unusually ethnoracially diverse for its time. What do you think drew or pushed people from Europe, the Caribbean, and all across the United States to this farm in rural New Jersey? What do you think their lives might have been like given their cultural and linguistic differences during times of war and racial segregation?		
Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3	Supporting Question 4
What was Seabrook Farms known for?	How did Seabrook Farms find laborers to meet WWII demands?	How did Japanese Americans end up at Seabrook Farms during WWII?	How did Seabrook Farms provide resources for its workers and were they adequate?
Formative Performance Task	**Formative Performance Task**	**Formative Performance Task**	**Formative Performance Task**
Make a social media post or ad promoting Seabrook Farms	T-chart with pros/cons of working at Seabrook Farms	Sequencing activity	1-paragraph exit ticket responding to the supporting question
Featured Sources	**Featured Sources**	**Featured Sources**	**Featured Sources**
• Seabrook Farms commercial • Postcard • Cookbook • Seabrook Farms Timeline	• Strike at Seabrook Farms (1934) • "The Negro joins the picket line" (1934) • Bertram Aiken to C.F. Seabrook letter	• Seabrook Farms poster from Manzanar • Article in *Grenada Pioneer* • Children 1944	• Consumers League of New Jersey report • Tsufura Testimony • Kudo oral history • Seabrook Farms untold Japanese

		● Tsufura Testimony	American story
Summative Performance Task	Create a brochure that includes each of the following components: 1. Description of Seabrook Farms (location, owner, summary of its operation history, agricultural impact) 2. Description of at least TWO different ethnoracial groups of laborers that includes how/why they came to Seabrook Farms, the type of work they did, and how they were compensated/treated 3. The legacy of Seabrook Farms - why is it worth studying and what should people know about it today?		
Taking Informed Action	How does the contemporary recruitment and treatment of agricultural workers compare to what happened at Seabrook Farms? Research the farms/laborers that are near your community and learn about the crops that are grown, the labor that is required to grow and harvest them, and the conditions that are experienced by farm laborers. Are the laborers protected from unfair wages and exploitative conditions? Are there examples of ways they have resisted unfair conditions? What can you do to support them?		
Optional Extension Activities	Extend this lesson by having students research two groups that were not described here but were significant presences at Seabrook: Prison laborers (including prisoners-of-war) and Peruvians of Japanese descent subjected to rendition in U.S. prison camps during WWII		

C3 Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries

The compelling question for this 4-part lesson is, “How did Seabrook Farms establish a “global village” of laborers?” This lesson can be taught whole class, through stations, or in small groups in a single extended instructional block or over multiple class periods. The IDM table below notes relevant C3 Framework indicators as well as New Jersey social studies standards.

C3 Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools

This IDM lesson can be adjusted to focus on history, civics, and/or economics, and C3 Framework indicators and NJ social studies standards for each discipline are provided below.

C3 Framework Indicators:

- D2.Civ.6.9-12. Critique relationships among governments, civil societies, and economic markets.
- D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.
- D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.
- D4.3.9-12. Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary)

NJ Social Studies High School Standards

- 6.1.12.HistoryCA.11.a: Evaluate the role of New Jersey (i.e., defense industries, Seabrook Farms, military installations, and Battleship New Jersey) and prominent New Jersey citizens (i.e., Albert Einstein) in World War II

- 6.1.12.CivicsDP.11.a: Use a variety of sources to determine if American policies towards the Japanese during WWII were a denial of civil rights.
- 6.1.12.EconNM.11.a: Analyze how scientific advancements, including advancements in agricultural technology, impacted the national and global economies and daily life.

C3 Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
The IDM template features four supporting questions, each of which is accompanied by a selection of primary sources. Students can use a range of approaches to respond to these questions using evidence from the primary sources, from informal discussion to sticky notes and notecatchers. Instructional suggestions for each supporting question can be found after the IDM template.

C3 Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action
Suggested performance tasks are provided for each supporting question, and a summative performance task is provided in response to the larger compelling question in addition to questions/activities to prompt informed action and extension activities.

Instructional Guidance for Supporting Questions

What was Seabrook Farms known for?
Begin by sharing the Seabrook Farms commercial, postcard, and cookbook image. What do students think Seabrook Farms was best known for, both in terms of production and innovation? This video, created by the U.S. State Department and narrated exclusively in Japanese with English subtitles, for distribution and screening in Japan, offers a glimpse into employee life, spotlighting the various parts of the crop production process at Seabrook as well as the childcare center, kindergarten, and healthcare center. It is clearly presenting Seabrook as idyllic and will likely evoke suspicions and questions among students; encourage students to record their thoughts and questions as they watch, as the activities that follow will contradict some of the video's content. Next, allow students to look through the digital timeline in pairs or individually to get a sense of how the farm changed over time. If social media existed during the farm's heyday in the 1940s and 1950s, what might a post advertising Seabrook Farms look like? Students should pick a social media platform of their choice or the teacher can designate an advertising structure for them to follow in order to create an advertisement for Seabrook Farms.

How did Seabrook Farms find laborers to meet WWII demands?
Open by giving students an opportunity to share what they already know about how various industries were impacted by World War II. How did industries find workers to replace those who left to fight in the war? Relatedly, what do they know about how did laborers find ways to resist low wages and inhumane working conditions?

With these ideas in mind, show the video The 1934 Seabrook Farms Strike: Black Workers in the Agricultural Industry in South Jersey. This will provide an overview of Seabrook Farms' employee diversity as well as how the company exploited its laborers and attempted to disregard unions, although the second half focuses on the Campbell Soup canning plant in Camden. Share the photo of the strike at Seabrook Farms and/or the article entitled "The Negro Joins the Picket Line" and encourage students to make observations and comparisons about what they notice in the primary sources and to connect accordingly with the video content. If students have been engaged with conversations about racial stereotypes, the letter from Bertram Aiken to C.F. Seabrook has plentiful

examples of racist beliefs regarding workers; use this with caution if you have not previously explored racial stereotypes with students. Individually, in pairs, or in small groups, they will end this activity by creating a T-chart that lists pros and cons for working at Seabrook Farms.

How did Japanese Americans end up at Seabrook Farms during WWII?
Begin by asking students what they recall about Japanese American incarceration (often inaccurately described as internment - see an explanation of these terms here) during World War II. Explain that some Japanese Americans forced to live in War Relocation Authority (WRA) camps were given the option to resettle and work in the Midwest and on the East Coast, then show this video: Asian American Hidden Communities - Seabrook Farms New Jersey. This video by a Cumberland County history teacher is very short and is a good supplement. A longer video (~40 min) created by the Seabrook Farms Educational and Cultural Center features interviews with people who lived and worked at Seabrook. Major facts/dates to note are:

- George Sakamoto was granted leave from the WRA camp in Amache, Colorado to work after Christmsa in 1943; the WRA gave a small number of Japanese American men $25 and a one-way train or bus ticket, and as Sakamoto was headed east, he read an issue of *Reader's Digest* that had a feature on C.F. Seabrook and his farm. Sakamoto headed to the WRA office in Philadelphia to inquire about Seabrook Farms, and became the first of 2,500 Japanese Americans who would work at Seabrook from 1944 to 1947. He returned to Amache a few months later to recruit more workers.
- In 1944, Seabrook Farms, represented by Jack Seabrook, connected with the Philadelphia American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), which was supporting Japanese American resettlement. To recruit Japanese American laborers from WRA camps, Seabrook planned to build new apartments and began with a small delegation of Japanese Americans to "dazzle them with the vastness of the operation and the promise of jobs to any and all comers" (Harrison, 2003, p. 29). The first delegation of three Japanese Americans to arrive at Seabrook were from the Jerome Relocation Center in Arkansas: Ellen Noguchi, Fuju Sasaki (who would later be called "Mayor" among the Japanese American community), and Harold Ouchida. They arrived in April 1944.
- By August 1944, about 300 Japanese Americans had left their WRA camps to work at Seabrook Farms.

Next, share two primary sources from the WRA camps with students: a Seabrook Farms poster from Manzanar and an article in the *Grenada Pioneer*. Ask students to describe what strategies Seabrook Farms used to entice imprisoned Japanese Americans to come to New Jersey and what opportunities they might have hoped for. Then share this image of the newly constructed housing for Japanese American families. Ask students to speculate how this housing might have compared to the barracks at the WRA camps and to record their ideas. The text of Tadashi Tsufura's 1981 testimony to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (pages 175-176 detail his life at Seabrook) clearly states the poor work and housing conditions at Seabrook Farms. Share this text in whatever way is best for your students (teacher reads aloud, students read independently, or in small groups), then ask them to record main ideas about Seabrook housing from Tsufura's description. Do their notes match their guesses after viewing the housing photograph? How might Japanese American workers have felt upon leaving the WRA camps only to arrive in similar circumstances?

Students will likely not be surprised to learn that most Japanese Americans did not remain at Seabrook Farms once their contracts ended. Many moved elsewhere, to cities like Chicago, New York, and to the West Coast, in search of better opportunities. By 1949, there were 1,200 Japanese Americans at Seabrook and by the 1970s, there were only 530 Japanese Americans. Using whatever sequencing/timeline graphic organizer you prefer, have students note 6-10 events in chronological order that led Japanese Americans to arrive at Seabrook Farms. Additional information can be found in the Recruiting and Housing Paroled Internees section of the digital exhibit *Invisible Restraints: Life and Labor at Seabrook Farms*.

Number of Japanese Americans at Seabrook Farms

1944	**# of Japanese Americans**
April	14
August	300
December	831

1945	1,711
1946	2,297
1949	1,200
1970s	530

How did Seabrook Farms provide resources for its workers and were they adequate?
Have students work in pairs or in small groups to analyze and summarize information from the following primary sources. They should share their summaries with the whole class to detail the resources provided to workers by Seabrook Farms and to determine whether they were adequate for healthy living conditions. Additional information and primary sources can be found in the digital exhibit *Invisible Restraints: Life and Labor at Seabrook Farms*; the section on housing may be especially helpful.

- **Primary Source 1: Consumers League of New Jersey report** (dense text)
  This report details the housing conditions at Seabrook as determined by the Consumers League of New Jersey. Page 1 lists the people interviewed by the league and the locations visited. Page 5 (second page of PDF) describes the camp at Big Oaks and lists the league's recommendations for improvements. Pages 5 and 6 (bottom of second page of PDF and third page of PDF) describe Orchard Center Village and the league's recommendations.
- **Primary Source 2: Tsufura Testimony** (simple text)
  This 11-page PDF is the testimony of Tadashi Tsufura, who at the time was the only Japanese American public school principal in New York City. Tsufura was giving testimony to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians in 1981 as part of the effort to seek redress (reparations) for Japanese American incarceration during WWII. Pages 173-175 (pages 1-3 of the PDF) describe Tsufura's frustration with the committee and summarizes his life through incarceration. His account of his family's time at Seabrook begins halfway through page 175 (third page of the PDF) and ends at the bottom of page 176 with the mental breakdown of his mother. His story describes the long shifts at Seabrook, the living quarters, and what life was like for Japanese Americans at the time.
- **Primary Source 3: Kudo oral history** (4:02 video of interview - transcript available here)
  Segment 13 of Elsa Kudo's oral history at Densho's Digital Repository is about her time at Seabrook Farms and describes the housing for Japanese American families.
- **Primary Source 4: Seabrook Farms untold Japanese American story** (6:28 video - transcript option available on YouTube)
  This video was recommended for use with the supporting question, "*How did Japanese Americans end up at Seabrook Farms during WWII?"* so students may have viewed it already. While it provides a summary of Japanese American experiences at Seabrook, most of the

video features Theodora Yoshikami, who describes what life was like for her family. The end of the video shows a collection of buttons that resemble mugshots with numbers below the various Japanese American employees' faces - this might evoke rich conversations and comparisons among students. Note: The work hours mentioned in the video are lower than what Tsufura describes.