

## **Some key Y-12 General Foremen remembered**

Over the history of Y-12 there have been many management style changes. During the Manhattan Project from 1942 through 1946, the Tennessee Eastman Company, chosen specifically because of their expertise in managing work well, did just that. One example is the practice of reporting periods.

No, they did not do monthly reports; they used the concept of "Kodak Periods." There were 13 of them in a year, each one four weeks in duration. The periods were evenly spaced, which allowed for comparison of performance between periods without having to factor the actual amount of time available in each period. They were all the same.

In 1947, when Carbide and Carbon Chemical Company expanded from K-25 to Y-12 and X-10, they brought their management style with them. Clark Center was a key individual. Clark Center Park, still known by old timers as "Carbide Park," is named for him.

For many years what came to be known as Union Carbide Nuclear Division had a distinctive large system management style that placed key individuals in roles where they had substantial individual position power. These individuals were often rotated from one area to another depending on the organization's needs and the individual's development potential.

Keith Hyatt writes about his memories of two such key individuals, Ray Guinn and Herman Butler. If you knew these two men, you can imagine what is coming. If you did not know them, then you are going to gain insight into Y-12's "Can Do" attitude and one key element of its success. For example, you can sure bet Jack Case knew both of these men well.

To set the stage, Keith came into the picture after these men had served many years in their positions and were well established and respected for their technical knowledge and in-depth understanding of the areas for which they were responsible.

Keith said, "Ray Guinn was the General Foreman (as they called them in those days) over E-Wing, and the H-1 Foundry. He was a big guy, around 6'4". He took over in E-Wing in 1973 until around 1987. I will always remember what Ray told the new operators when we had our first meeting with him.

"He said that President Reagan was going to make this place boom, and we had a lot of work to do. He told us his main rules were that we put in eight hours work for eight hours pay, stay out of the break room except at break times and not to leave early for the change house at the end of the day. Ray was kind of a taskmaster; he had quite a bit of authority over E-Wing during those days when we ran full blast production.

"He maintained that authority over his supervisors. He was tough on them, and they knew he was in charge! Ray was on top of the day-to-day operations. If equipment failed in those days, you could bet that Maintenance would get a quick call from him.

"He had an Assistant General Foreman in E-Wing named Jack Minton. Jack knew the entire operation and was Ray's eyes on the floor. Jack would come in early every morning and walk down the wing to check for any problems that might have developed overnight.

"Ray retired in the late 80s, but came back a couple of times to help as a subcontractor with accountability and material issues and other items he had quite a bit of expertise in. Others that were key in the operation of E-Wing in the 1980s were Tom Little, Pat Hair and Richard Hodges, as well as the rest of the operators and supervisors who worked during a pretty production-oriented era.

"Herman Butler was an incredible source of knowledge in Building 9212. He was the General Foreman in 9212 when I came in 1980 and continued in that role until around 1992. Herman, like Ray Guinn, had the

aura of being totally in charge of his operations. He had around-the-clock shift operations, and he could show up at any time, day or night, to check up on how they were going.

“One Saturday, for example, I was running, or attempting to run a piece of equipment for the first time. I was having a lot of problems trying to get it started up. I happened to look up and see Herman passing through the area, so I asked him to come over and help me out.

“Herman came over and within a few minutes, we had it going. He told me which valves to open and close and some things to check and try, by memory, he did not have a single thing to refer to. Herman had that kind of knowledge of all the processes in his area.

“Herman did some consulting help in the 1990s, and he did a series of videos called ‘Ask Herman’ about the operations up there. One other source of his knowledge was his logbook, which he left open in his office for all the supervisors and operators to read so they could understand what happened on the shift before him.

“Herman had some others that supported his operation such as Marcus Potter, who was his ‘Jack Minton’ as well as large crew of veteran supervisors and operators.”

Thank you so much, Keith, for the personal account of your experiences with Ray Guinn and Herman Butler. I knew both men and served them as Maintenance General Supervisor. You can be sure that I can identify with your comment about “Maintenance getting a call” when things broke. I was “Maintenance” to both of them, and I personally took the calls. You can also be sure that they got the maintenance support needed, or I had to explain the reason why!