

**The Early Days of the Chicago Section
of the American Society for Quality Control**

by
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The Chicago Society for Quality Control was a group which started at the end of World War II. Many of the members had taken five day War Production Board training courses at local and neighboring universities: Iowa under Lloyd Knowler, at Purdue under Irving Burr, at Illinois under John Henry and at Michigan under Cecil Craig.

The first War Production Board course at Illinois Institute of Technology was in 1943. The students, who were from industry, appointed a committee who arranged to hold an organizational meeting on June 4, 1944. At this meeting Warren Jones was elected Chairman, Fred Trowbridge Vice-Chairman, Alvin Brooks Vice-Chairman in charge of Membership and Publicity and Jim Fizzell Secretary and Treasurer. This, then, was the inception of The Chicago Society for Quality Control.

There was also a group of quality control devotees meeting monthly at Northwestern University under the leadership of Prof. Mason Wescott. Many of these people had taken the War Production Board course at Iowa. Mason Wescott also brought people to the Chicago Society meetings and he participated in our programs very frequently.

Our early meetings were held at the Western Society of Engineers, at Bell Telephone offices (since Howard L. Jones worked there), at the old Lewis Institute on west Madison St., and at other places, a different place almost each meeting.

Warren Jones started out as a two-term president. He, Jim Fizzell and Ernie Robinson were the chief speakers at early meetings, as well as Fred Trowbridge and Mason Wescott. Jim Fizzell had recently (then) taken a short course in significance testing at Columbia and he spent an evening unveiling the mysteries of the u test, the t test, the chi-square test and the F test to us.

I believe that it was during 1945 that the Northwestern group merged with Chicago and Mason Wescott thus became a member of The Chicago Society for Quality Control. We were hosting our first Midwest Conference Convention at about the same time that the Metropolitan Section (New York City) was hosting the first National Convention.

Charlie Matz, Hank Becker and Fred Halton came with the Northwestern group, I think. Charlie taught an evening course in SQC at Northwestern, The texts of the day gave formulas for straight line confidence limits of a regression. He refused to teach that because his intuition told him that they must be curved. He complained to Mason, who agreed with him. I don't know for sure who it finally was that developed the curved confidence limits of the regression but I think it was Irving Burr or Wallace. Incidentally, Wallace was a member of the Chicago Section in those days, as well as Brownlee. Since then, whenever Charlie gave a course in SQC he spent about 25% of the class time on the curved confidence limits of the linear regression and the students had to be able to develop them.

Al Brooks made the Western Electric course in SQC available to the Chicago Society members for \$25.00. This was a three hour per week, sixteen week course, with Al doing all the teaching. I took that course. The gentle spirit of Al Brooks was always recognizable from a distance because of his straight stature and albino white hair. He had been a protégé of Joe Juran. Al passed away this year, you recall. I learned a lot from Al. Incidentally, his college training was with a music major,

The ASQC was formed in 1946, the second year of existence of the Chicago Society and Chicago was a founding section. We then became the Chicago Section of ASQC.

Dean Brumbaugh of The University of Buffalo started Industrial Quality Control magazine even before ASQC was formed. When the new Society came into being he asked them to take the periodical over. They did and appointed Mason Wescott Chairman of the Editorial Board and he held that post for many years until Irving Burr replaced him. Recently the name was changed to Quality Progress. Eventually Mason left Northwestern to work for Ellis Ott at Rutgers. We here regarded Mason as a sort of a hero for we were greatly indebted to him for his dedication in educating us, so when he left the area we made him an honorary member. We missed him and felt a real emptiness after he was gone. Later he went with a team of professors to India and taught the industries statistical quality control there. After that Mason Wescott went to The University of Buffalo. Now he is retired. We read in Quality Progress recently that Mason Wescott received one of the top awards which the American Society for Quality Control bestows.

Things were not entirely well between the Metropolitan Section and Chicago. Metropolitan Section was the largest at that time and had some big names. We considered them to be arrogant and perhaps they were not accustomed to the Midwestern spirit of independence or perhaps we were a little jealous, who knows, but when our delegates were invited to the National Convention Planning meeting for the Second ASQC Convention, possibly in Chicago, they claimed we weren't sufficiently cooperative. I think our representatives were Fred Halton and/or Henry Becker and Warren Jones.

The National group, which was mainly Metropolitan, expressed the thought that because of their extensive experience hosting the First Convention, they would plan the Second Convention, to be held in Chicago, and Chicago's part would be to supply the local dignitaries. Chicago pointed out that as far as experience is concerned, the Midwest Conference Convention in Chicago had outdrawn the National Convention in New York. Chicago was then told that if they thought that they were indispensable to a National Convention, the Second Annual ASQC Convention would be given to a different city, and so it was.

For many years thereafter the Midwest Conference Convention, regardless of where it might be, received exclusive attention by Chicago. I don't think we had a National Convention here in Chicago until at least fifteen years after that. In 1955, during my term as Section Chairman, we were offered a National Convention here, the first one for Chicago, but refused it for the same reasons.

Other people I remember in those times were George Cohan, then of G.E., Joe Lisy, then of the Cook County Treasurer's office, Henry J. Jacobson of Western Electric, Dave Wadrow of Sure Bros., Emory Gottshall of Zenith Radio and Gordon Schuber of Automatic Electric, where Harry Bennett also worked.

The first two day training program was in 1945, sponsored by the First Midwest Conference. The Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry and the Chicago Society for Quality Control. I don't remember the very early ones. The first ones I remember were run by Charlie Matz with help from Fred Halton, Henry Becker, Mae Tarver, Bill Lieberman, others and myself, each, in his turn as he became available. One year I remember Larry Stickler had it. Wescott, Burr, Knowler, Henry, and occasionally Mc Elrath of Minnesota or Relich of Purdue Extension; these were the instructors we had year after year. As far as I can remember, in the early days the Two Day Training courses were given in the Bal Tabarin room of the Sherman Hotel.

Henry Jacobson had always been one of the most active members of the Chicago Section in the early fifties. At that time he sustained a sudden personal loss in the death of his wife from pneumonia. A year or so later Henry began dating a very beautiful girl and he began bringing her to the meetings. This girl was as remarkable as she was attractive: Dr. Marjorie Sutherland, a teacher of bacteriology and statistics at Illinois Institute of Technology.

Marjorie had a wealth of unusual statistical knowledge, among other things, of sampling under complicated circumstance, such as ore sampling and sampling of coal, where you sample to find out how much the load is worth. Soon this Canadian girl became Mrs. Jacobson, although to us and in her business, which was teaching and consulting, she was always Marjory Sutherland. It was in 1954-55 when we started the Advanced Training program. I remember the year because it was during my year as Section Chairman. Marge was the obvious one to teach this course, to that everyone agreed. The first course was given at Wahl-Henius Institute on Fullerton Ave. Bob Tenney was the president of that company and he allowed us to use the classrooms free, gave us free beer from all over the world, and occasionally he did some lecturing, too. Even though I was Section Chairman I took the course and I remember Bill Lieberman, John Louer, Mae Tarver, Bob Williams and Eleanor Schlifer, among others, as classmates. That year I appointed Bill Lieberman to be Chairman of the Basic Training Course. Jim Fizzell, Gil Sorber, Bob Storer and I had each held this office in various prior years. The next year Bill was elected Corresponding Secretary, the first elected office he had.

Just prior to all of this, Henry Jacobson, Marge, my wife and I drove to the Midwest Conference Convention in St. Louis, where Henry was scheduled to speak. This was also a belated honeymoon for Marge and Henry. Henry had a brand new Olds 98. Earlier in his career he had been a beer truck driver. There was no speed limit on highway 66 in those days, in fact there were no I highways and 66 was just two lanes most of the way. We decided to leave early in order to avoid too much passenger car traffic. We left Chicago at 5AM, spent an hour in a restaurant in Bloomington for breakfast, and crossed the bridge into St. Louis at 10:30 AM.

Henry was a pattern driver. He held it at 95 until he got in back of a truck or car when he would brake it to 70 or 75 or whatever the truck was doing. Then, when he got a chance, he would pull around and step it up to 95 again. Just outside of Springfield he almost did this one time too often. We were going up-hill (one lane each direction) and were temporarily stalled behind a truck doing 70. Henry finally pulled out and got even with the truck just as another truck came over the hill from the other direction. To make it worse, in that instant Henry discovered a truck ahead of the one he was trying to pass and there was no room in between! Well, Henry floored it and we did pass the leading truck in just the nick of time. I said, "Henry, you took ten years off my life". He replied "What do you mean? We didn't even scratch the paint." That was Henry Jacobson.

Hardly fifteen years later, Henry suffered a stroke while he was in Korea, and a few years later he died of a coronary. Meanwhile they had been living in Indianapolis, where Marge still lives.

It was at that Midwest Convention in St. Louis that I first met Mae Tarver. I was listening to a talk in the Kiehl Auditorium, I think, when I noticed a young lady sitting next to me who wore a Chicago Section button. I think it was Paul Olmstead who was lecturing and I figured that any young lady who elects to listen to Paul Olmsted must have something on the ball, so I got talking to her and before we left she agreed to co-chair the Chicago Section's Publicity with Martin Joseph. She didn't even know Marty, but it worked out. From that day on Mae was a house-on-fire for Education and Martin Joseph became known in Reliability and he was the Electronic Division Councilor for District 11 for many years, which he inherited from me. Bill Lieberman also took off like a rocket, finishing up with all his justly deserved honors and his Educational work for the National ASQC, and he really isn't finished yet, I'm sure.

The year after these events Mae was helping Marge with the Advanced Course, The next, Marge was helping Mae. By the time Marge and Henry moved away it was Mae, Lieberman and Quin.

During the first year of the Advanced Course we even had Jack Youden give a lecture. He was to speak at The University of Chicago at 3 PM so we arranged with him to pick him up at the airport, take him to lunch, then to the U. of C., then bring him to our dinner meeting, where he gave the same talk. Then we took him to the hotel we had him registered at and the next evening we brought him to the last session of the (first) advanced course. He taught us that last lesson, gave us our diplomas and autographed our textbooks, Statistical Methods for Chemists, by Youden. Youden was a National Bureau of Standards man under whom Marge had had the same course in North Carolina. After the lesson the entire class took Jack to the Black Forest for dinner. Jack has left this world. too, since then.

I have mentioned Bob Tenney. He also did much for the Section. He had a copier based on electrostatic charge principle long before Xerox had one out. He built it himself, so we were able to make multiple copies of our lesson plans, etc., a sort of first in those days. Bob is a Master Brewer and had a real good consulting business going besides his brewing school.

Karl Bauer and Harry Sagen were prominent in those days. They and their Chemical Division Associates were always envied because of their seemingly unlimited budget. Joe Lisy was still going strong in the middle fifties. He's listed as "Assistant to

the Basic Training Program" and as a Director of the Section, in the 1955-56 Section Program Book. Merve Fisher, Steve Wozniak, Eugene Freund, Lindson Anderson, Dale Wolvin, Pete Kuffner and Paul Randolph were present at many of the Meetings. Our entertainers, of course, were Bob Lacey, magician and sleight of hand artist and Dick Ede, with his versatility at the piano keyboard.

The only lot by lot sampling tables I could get in the forties of the AQL type were the old Army Service Forces tables which were double sampling plans with the second sample exactly twice the size of the first. Of course Dodge and Romig LTPD and AOQL plans were already available. Dodge and Romig were on the committee which developed the JAN STD 105 plans (joint army-navy). After this followed MIL STD 105A, B, C and D in quick succession. Our fellow member Bob Peach was also in on some of these original meetings which included Dodge, Edwards, Romig and others on the question of Acceptance Sampling by Attributes.

In the forties, I still remember one afternoon program given by the War Production Board in one of the Chicago hotels. One speaker was a man in Navy uniform, a Commander Schaefer, I believe, who very eloquently explained operating characteristic curves of batch type sampling plans. This opened up a new world to me. Until then I thought control charts was all there was with any substance to it. Outside of Shewhart's classic Economic Control of Quality of Manufactured Product all I had to learn from was the War Production pamphlets, such as ANSI Z, the ASTM Manual on Presentation of Data and Holbrook Workings and Molina's tables on the Poisson tables, etc. However, a few years' later there were many new publications. Grant's book on quality control was a good complement to Shewhart's.

One of the big moves of the fifties was when the National ASQC business office moved from New York City to Milwaukee. This was beneficial in many ways.

In the fifties we used to meet at the Furniture Club on Lake Shore Drive. Our programs usually started at 4 P.M. with a demonstration of some product, machine or principle followed by a cocktail hour, dinner, and then the evening program.

The Basic Training Program classes met in the University Of Illinois class rooms on Navy Pier. These were wide open spaces in the wintertime. Usually Mae, Bill Lieberman, Joe Lisy (he put up the signs) and I were sort of a nucleus. We usually had a hamburger together before class and most of the time Mae took most of us to the L or train station afterward in her little Volkswagen with its air cooled engine and no heater. Paul Randolph got us the classroom

In the late fifties George Cohan ran a Saturday morning class in quality control at the then YMCA College in the loop. Bill Lieberman, Charlie Matz, Archie Jackson and I lectured for him at various times. Eventually Archie set up a course of his own and ran in competition to George. Then George got a better job and moved out of town. It wasn't long after that, when after a number of mild heart attacks Archie got one in Mississippi which took his life during his term as Section Chairman. Other names I now recall of those days were Bill Collins of Johns Manville, Adolph Hitzelberge, Pat Reynolds, Howard Boe, Ralph Quin-(my protégé), Frank Berman, Rush Langdon, Bob Majeski and Larry Stickler.

In the early days we tried to nourish sub-sections. We planned for one in Northwestern Indiana, one near Kankakee, one in the Fox Valley and one in the Waukegan area. The thought was that these sub-sections would eventually develop into sections and we would assist in the interim. Nick Relich took hold of the reigns for Calumet in about 1954. He was an instructor at Purdue Extension in Hammond. He was elected Chairman by the group and Chicago put him on the Chicago Board of Directors. Marshall Minter and Edgar Ellis were Vice Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer of the new Calumet sub-Section of the Chicago Section of ASQC. I believe by now they are a Section.

Kankakee started KM up without any help from us as a complete Section. I think Jack Henry and U. of Illinois helped them,

Two years after Calumet became a sub-section, that is in the 1956-57 year, Fox Valley became a sub-section of Chicago. Christopher B. Wyatt was elected Chairman, Alfred F. Zornow, Vice Chairman and Harry E. Jahns Secretary-Treasurer. It wasn't very long after that that Fox Valley decided that they were ready to go completely independent and they became a full section of ASQC.

The North Shore didn't show much activity in setting up housekeeping for themselves. I believe one reason for that was because the Racine-Kenosha group started a Section with Milwaukee's help. Actually I think Chicago helped them as much as Milwaukee. However they were there and when I visited or spoke there I found Zion and Waukegan people there. However very recently the Northeastern Section sprang up and this energetic group didn't seem to need much help.

In regards to the Kenosa-Racine Section, they did take another of my proteges from the Chicago Section, Francis Curtis of Kenosha. He went through their officer sequence and he later had a term as Midwest Conference Chairman, I believe, and I think it was the year that Chicago

finally had its first National Convention. That Convention was an outstanding success, thanks to Bob Williams and Larry Stickler, among others.

We now have a quality control megopolis reaching from Calumet around through Kankakee, Fox Valley, Northeastern and through Chicago, Racine-Kenosha and terminating with Milwaukee on the North. which is also the home of National ASQC. I feel it a privilege to have had a momentary small part in this development and to tell what I can recall about it.

Sincerely,
Ralph Haertel
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