

HAYDU BROS. WAS LARGEST TOWNSHIP EMPLOYER

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The purchase of a 40-acre tract of land on Mt. Bethel Rd. south of the Kirch farm marked the beginning of one of the largest manufacturing plants ever located in Warren Township. For nearly two decades Haydu Brothers Laboratories was Warren's biggest single employer.

Haydu Brothers was originally founded in Newark in 1936 as Excel Products Co. by George and Zoltan Haydu and their father, John, an immigrant from Hungary. In a loft building on Market St., the company designed and built high speed machinery to make small radio parts.

The 40-acre Mt. Bethel Rd. Lilac Farm, as it was known, was acquired from A. D. Runyon of Millington for \$5300, with \$100 down and a 10-year mortgage. When the Haydus bought the land, there were over 1,000 lilac bushes growing there.

Initially, the Haydus utilized existing chicken coops as their factory, starting with two employees. Dick Farrell of Warren was one of them. In 1939, as the manufacture of radio tube parts burgeoned, Haydu enlarged its operation by building a 2,000 sq. ft. plant, tearing down the chicken coops. As World War II approached, Haydu Bros. emerged as a major employer in Warren.

With the onset of the war, the manufacture of electronic components became an essential business, one that the Haydu family quickly met. During the war years about 80% of the employees at the plant were women. Because of gas rationing, Haydu Bros. operated its own bus line from Plainfield and surrounding towns in order to enable employees to get to and from work. The company maintained its workers' spirits with pool parties and outings, fostering a family atmosphere that many still remember today.

The company manufactured a wide assortment of electronic components for such prime contractors as Raytheon, RCA, Sylvania, G.E., Philco, Sperry and Westinghouse. Some of Haydu's components were part of the early radar employed against the Germans during the Battle of Britain.

Capitalizing on their success, the Haydus built a 2,000-ft. air strip next to their plant in August 1946 to facilitate the shipment of parts to their customers using company-owned airplanes. Where air strips were not available, Haydu's pilots dropped their deliveries by parachute. Haydu's air strip was Warren's first and only airfield.

In the 50s Haydu Bros. made headlines when one of its planes, a Stinson carrying

\$20,000 worth of radar parts from Pennsylvania to Warren, crashed atop a mountain off Mt. Horeb Rd. The pilot, a young Scotch Plains aviator, was pinned in the cockpit until members of the local Rescue Squad and Washington Valley Fire Co. extricated him.

After the war ended, Haydu's product line expanded to include television tubes and parts, transistors, burners, neon sign making and glass blowing equipment. They also manufactured Nixie and Beam switching tubes and television picture tubes for such major companies as RCA, G.E., Sylvania and Magnavox. By 1946 the Haydu plant occupied 100,000 sq. ft. and employed 500.

During the years the Haydu company was active in Warren, there was hardly a family in the area that didn't have someone employed at the factory. Among the families at work in the plant were the Prossers, Toros, Houses, Mancercellas, Suttons, Marchells, Suckoes, Sanders, Adamis, Possiens, Paldinos, Kirchs and four members of the Farrell clan.

The plant was sold to the Burroughs Corporation in 1954 but was still operated and managed by George and Zoltan Haydu until 1956 when they left Warren to open Haydu Industries on West Front St. opposite the old Mack Truck plant in Plainfield. In 1960 the Haydu brothers moved to Hialeah, Florida, taking many of their employees there to a new plant where they continued to manufacture high quality electronic components. Today George Haydu, who in the late 1950s was a leader in the work of resettling refugees from the Hungarian Revolt of 1956, is retired. Zoltan Haydu and his sons operate the Z. Haydu Mfg. Co. in Hollywood, Florida, manufacturing Ultra Sonic dental equipment and components used in blood analyzing equipment.