

FARM UNION OPENS VILLAGE FOR AGED

Project to Provide Homes for 58 Retired Workers

Special to The New York Times

DELANO, Calif., June 16 — The United Farm Workers of America dedicated the nation's first retirement village for farm workers yesterday in this arid town, which has been the focal point of the union's struggle to organize the nation's farm workers.

"Our deep roots in Delano shall never be pulled out," Cesar Chavez, the union's president, told a crowd of about 2,000 supporters at the union's 40-acre headquarters here. He said the village was named after Paulo Agbayani, a Filipino member of the farm workers' union who died of a heart attack while on a picket line in 1967.

The \$250,000 village has been financed by the Martin Luther King Jr. Farm Workers Fund, which consists primarily of money collected from growers as part of their contracts with the farm workers' union.

The dedication ceremonies were particularly emotional for the 57 men and one woman who will move into the two-acre village this summer. Most of them are Filipinos who have no families here because they came to the United States in the late nineteen-twenties and early 'thirties, when the immigration law prevented them from bringing their wives with them, and miscegenation laws prevented them from marrying white women. They were also prevented from owning any property until these restrictive laws were declared unconstitutional after World War II.

The 58 persons who will be the first residents of the village sat on folding chairs near the podium, listening to a group of farm worker officers and officials from a score of other unions extol them and their efforts to bring collective bargaining and decent working conditions to the fields.

Workers Praised

Most of them were among the 1,800 members of the Filipino Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee who walked out on 33 ranches in the Delano area on Sept. 8, 1965, and began the nation's first major grape strike. Eight days later, the Filipinos merged with Mr. Chavez's National Farm Workers Association. At that time, they were making \$1.10 an hour. Farm workers' union contracts now provide for wages of up to \$2.85 an hour, plus incentive payments for the amount harvested.

One of the happiest "manongs" (Filipino for older brother) was Sebastian Sahugan, a 70-year-old retired farm worker who came to the United States in 1929, worked in canneries in Alaska and hops fields in the state of Washington, and picked grapes throughout California.

Mr. Sahugan, who was one of the original 1965 strikers, beamed when he said: "We see now that we have a nice place to go. We are very proud of that. Once, we couldn't even dream about this, but now it's becoming a reality."

Tears came to Mr. Sahugan's eyes when he added: "I know the village will be a beautiful one. It's been built with the hands of people who have the spirit of love in their hearts."

Indeed, more than 1,000 volunteers—many of them members of trade unions—helped to build the village.

The village consists of six interconnected, U-shaped buildings that are of Mexican style, wood frame with adobe veneer and red tile roofs. There is a bathroom for every two bedrooms, a lounge, a patio, a dining room and a kitchen. A group of dietitians will supervise the menu.

Each resident will pay about \$100 a month for room and board. The union will provide assistance for those who cannot afford it.