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FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

Name: Marvin Clawson

Date Interviewed: 8/24/1999 Date Transcribed: 12/14/1999 Tape: 75

Project Number 20012

Tape FLHP00174

12:01:00

Q:

Are you ready to go?

A:

Sure. Yeah.

Q:

Okay and you can just talk to me. Uh, first of all, if you could just give us your name and spell it, so we know we have it right.

A:

Aw, okay. Marvin W. Clawson. M-A-R-V-I-N C-L-A-W-S-O-N.

12:01:16

Q:

Great. And if you can give us a little bit of background. How long has your family been here in the area?

A:

You mean uh, my wife's family, or me?

(Both laugh)

Q:

How 'bout both?

A:

I been here. Oh, I see. My wife's family was Butterfield, and they was pioneers. They, they was here since the early 1800s, as well as, both sides o' the house was here. The Wilkins and the Butterfields were both pioneer families. And uh, and um, Doris's father and mother bought this place in 1940.

A:

Handed, been all, down through the family, and they (clears his throat) uh, farmed this since 1940, and been in the family, the Butterfield family since 1940. Before that was the Wilkins.

12:02:14

Q:

And how long have you been in the area? You were raised in Indiana?

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:02:17

A:

I was raised near Mount Carmel, Indiana, which is about 11, 12 mile away. And I just got acquainted with my wife uh, at a square dance in Seven Mile. You know, a lot o' square dances in those days in the early '50s. And that's how we got acquainted, and. And then I didn't know she lived here, I just met her at the square dance (chuckles). And uh, I was uh, and then I met her dad, and he was the most uh, friendly man I ever met (chuckles).

12:02:57

A:

And uh, it was really uh, he impressed me, he took me in as a boy, as a son. You know. And, and that's how I got acquainted here, and uh. And then we, we got married in 1954, and I was around here, acquainted with it when the first started this, building this plant myself. Uh, they started construction in, or uh, middle of '51, '52 and '53 is when they built the plant.

12:03:33

A:

And uh, we noticed all the new construction, and they had a big cons-, construction sale in the latter part o' the uh, the building, and I attended, my dad and neighbors, we attended that sale. It was mostly for uh, big commercial uh, industrial bids, you know. If you wanted a wheelbarrow, you had to buy 25, or, or if you wanted a welder, you had to buy six o' them big, big portable machines.

12:04:02

A:

And so, but it wasn't for the ordinary farmer, but we all, it was a public auction. We all attended.

12:04:10

Q:

Tell me a little bit about eminent domain; some of the people that lost their farms because of eminent domain.

A:

Well, we uh. That was um, really a um, hard time for the farmers in this area. Because they, the government come in, and they, they had, wanted to site this place here as a, as a nuclear, as a atomic energy plant. The old Atomic Energy was the one that originally uh, bought this place. And um, they decided to buy here.

12:04:44

A:

And they offered the farmers uh, \$675 an acre for productive land, and \$350 an acre for non-productive land. And the farmers, you know, \$675, was a pretty good price, but when they split it off, th-, they uh, had a lawsuit. And that was in 1948. And (clears throat) and of course, my wife's uncle, Raymond Ervin, he was part of that lawsuit.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:05:18

A:

And uh, they was very unhappy. And of course it took about 3 years to get it through the civil court system. And they had a trial in April of '51. And uh, 30 days later, of course they lost the trial, and they was just paid what they was originally offered. And they was ordered to vacate the place within 30 days. And that was a very stressful time that they lost their land. You know, and the government took it from 'em. Wasn't very happy (chuckles).

(Tape stops and restarts)

(Off camera: Stand by. And we're back on normal speed.)

12:06:04

Q:

Okay so, who were some o' the families that lost their land in eminent domain?

A:

Well, the Knollmans lost some land, and uh, and, and uh, Arthur Fuchs had a farm, which was close by in that thousand acres there. And there was a, a family uh, from Cincinnati owned the Gray Farm, and they had 327 acres over there, which was a, was a very well to do, nice farm, you know.

12:06:39

A:

And, and uh, I think there was a uh, Baitor? But I, I'm not real particular, but I knew, I know those three were a while. You know, the Knollmans, the Fuchs, and the Grays. And they had several hundred acres involved there. And there was other small land owners, and I can't recall, you know, who they was.

12:07:05

Q:

When they started building Fernald, what did most people think was happening?

A:

Well, uh, we, we knew in the beginning that they call, it was Atomic Energy uh, people that, from the government that bought this. 'Cause we s-, they was a lawsuit, the power of eminent domain. And so uh, we knew who the owners was. And, and uh, orig-, originally, the uh, the Senator uh, Bricker, and uh, Governor Loushy, back in those days, why, they campaigned very hard for this plant here.

12:07:50

A:

Because times was hard, and there wasn't too many jobs floatin' around in those days. And, and they campaigned real hard, and, and we was told it was a nice uh, no problem workin' there, and it was a good place to get a job, you know. But we found out different later, of course. We was kind o' hoodwinked in the beginning (chuckles).

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:08:17

Q:

How did uh, the plant, the plant location here, why did they decide on this area?

A:

Well, uh, from what I've read uh, in reference, they had three, three criteria that they really zeroed in on, and one was a, a fast-moving river close by. The other was underground water supply, which is very important for their operation. They could pump millions o' gallons o' water a day. And the area, the Cincinnati area was a tooling center, in highly skilled industrial workers. And they had a pool here, and they had the three things that they needed, and that's really why they picked it here.

12:09:10

Q:

And once it was built and became operational, how did it change the surrounding community?

A:

Well, of course, we had a influx of a lot of workers, and your local businesses benefited from that. And uh, 'course there was a lot o' people uh, that didn't live in this area. They lived out in Indiana, and farther, in Cincinnati area and things, place. But uh, it was uh; it helped the economy as far as that goes. But then we was always concerned later on about the weird smokestack streams come (chuckles).

12:09:51

A:

And then we would see the uh, people, they had these white van trucks, and they had little uh, air monitor stands at that time, uh, posted all the way around the uh, plant. And they had like little cotton cloth filters, and they would come around every day and pick up those filters. And we thought that was strange. Wh-, why, and they, go down Paddy's Run Creek, and they would pick up pebbles.

12:10:23

A:

And, and, and things like that. And we, we would watch that, and we couldn't get any answers. But we said, "wonder what they're lookin' for. You know, it's really strange." But never got any answer, but they was lookin' for contamination, even in the beginning. In the beginning when this plant was built, was uh, the '50s was the dirtiest time of, of the whole operation.

12:10:50

A:

From '51 to, '51 into the '60s was absolutely. The first batch run at Fernald was the dirtiest. That was the old K65 uh, material that come down from Chicago it was shipped here. This was a new plant to refine ah, they had a crude system to get uh, to get the first two bombs material. So they sent it down here to uh, with this new process to get uh, to finish the uranium.

12:11:22

A:

And so they could um, you know, it was a rich source of um, uranium. They already had it on hand, but they couldn't extract it because they didn't have the facilities, and this was uh, this was it.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:11:36

Q:

Describe some of the uh, you mentioned the smokestacks. Describe what you saw while you were living so close to the plant and you could see a lot o' stuff was going on. What, what exactly did you see while you were here?

12:11:48

A:

Well, we was always concerned about um, they had um, we find out later you know, there was a hundred and seventy some stacks exhausted to the atmosphere, and a lot of 'em would produce weird lookin' smoke. And we was always concerned about that. But uh, we couldn't get any answers, or everybody said, "no problem, you know. Everything's safe, and doin' it at a new plant, and everything's good."

12:12:24

A:

But then as the years go by, we noticed this huge volume of black smoke comin'. And, and I went around the plant, and um, and it was on the East side. And they had a open incinerator there they was burnin', we didn't know at the time, but at that time, they was burnin' highly radiated waste oil. And they was just burnin' it open atmosphere.

12:12:52

A:

And had a little ol' sheet tent around there and just a furnace nozzle there and it blasted up and it made a huge volume o' smoke. And, and we complained about that, and so their correction was they would just burn it at night.

12:13:09

A:

And then, then the next morning, why then you'd have this s-, smoke settled in the area, you know. You'd have a big fog area. And uh, we didn't know it was highly radiated oil, we wasn't informed, but that bothered us, too.

12:13:28

Q:

When you tried to talk to the people at Fernald to find out what was going on, how did they react to you?

A:

Well, we was treated as outsiders. And, and our business is here, and, and you have no reason to know what we're do in' here. This is everybody that worked at Fernald originally had to have a Q clearance, which is a high-classified clearance, by the government. And they informed all their uh, workers that, "gee, keep your mouth shut. This is a classified work."

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:14:06

A:

And we was treated the same way. When we asked questions or do this and that, “well, we’re doin’ our work safely, and this is highly classified work, and we, we’re okay. You don’t have anything to worry about.” (Chuckling) We didn’t get any answers. Everything was secret.

12:14:30

Q:

In about 1984, 1985 around there, there was a lot of media attention because of the dust collector releases in Plant 9. How did you and your family react to that news when it happened?

12:14:43

A:

Well, uh, we was quite shocked. Uh, that they had what they call the filter room, they call the “bag room.” And that was large wool um, bags that was like 20 feet long and like 18 inches in diameter. And, and the, the uh, the exhaust from the, the uh, furnace, would filter so it wouldn’t go to atmosphere. Well, we find out that the “bag room” wasn’t kept, or the filter room wasn’t kept up.

12:15:15

A:

And some o’ those long tubes was uh, loose from their mooring and they just flap in the wind and, and they exhausted everything to the atmosphere due to bad maintenance. And uh, I have a little technical knowledge due to workin’ with General Motors, and, and I was shocked at the maintenance was so shoddy. And, and it was our air that they was contaminatin’, and very concerned.

12:15:7

Q:

And how close did you live to the plant at that moment, when you found that out?

A:

Well, at that time, uh, I was workin’ at uh, Hamilton in the old Fisher Body plant. But then we visited up here regularly, uh, on the farm you know. That’s where Doris’s folks was and we’d come up regularly and we was very. We didn’t live here, but we visited very often. Actually, we lived near Ross, Ohio, about 2 miles um, north of Ross, Ohio on a farm. That’s where we originally lived.

12:16:29

A:

But when I uh, my, Doris, when we had the lawsuit, of course, her residence was here, established here. But I worked at a chemical plant down on New Haven and Paddy’s Run. I worked there for 6 years, from ’59 to ’65. And that’s how I established my residency, uh, on the lawsuit. Because I worked within a quarter of a mile from the plant.

12:16:58

Q:

Tell us a little bit about how the uh, the lawsuit got started, and a little bit about the media attention that ensued after this all kind of hit the public knowledge.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

A:

Well actually, uh, Kenny Crawford uh, and I both worked at the old Fisher Body in Hamilton, and I knew him as a very young boy, and so did Doris. And uh, he come over and asked me one day. Uh, he had a problem that he said he didn't know how to address. He said uh, well, the was, he found out that he was drinkin' water out of a contaminated well, on the old Knollman property.

12:17:46

A:

And uh, he was very angry. And, and the government knew that 3 years before they told 'em. And it was gonna come out on the news media on Channel 9 that very night that he come over and me. And he asked me what, what I would do if somethin' like that happened. And I said, "well, gee, that's really serious." And I said, "I, I really, hunt me up the best lawyer I knew how and sue them up to high heaven." You know, and it was that serious.

12:18:20

A:

And he said, "well, Marvin, do you know anything about hirin' a lawyer?" I said, "no. I never hired a lawyer in my life." But he says, "well maybe I'll go over the library and get a book or somethin' and, how to hire a lawyer." (Chuckles) I said, "well, that'd be a start. You know, I wouldn't know, even know where to start." So I think that's what he did.

12:18:41

A:

And uh, and then flew, his wife's work down at the old Longview Hospital. I had a fellow employee that used to work with, uh, I went to school with Chesley, and uh, and uh, used that as a reference to get in and talk to uh, to Chesley. And they had a interview, the Crawfords had a interview with Chesley and uh, he took their case because he said it sounded like they had a good case. Well, that's how it started.

12:19:13

Q:

Tell us about the media attention. I know you were on the mag-, uh, front cover of Time Magazine and there quite a lot of people coming to interview you, and those types of things. How did that affect you and your family's life?

A:

W-, well at that time, um, we couldn't believe it. You know, people come out o' the woodwork and wanna talk to us, and we just, country folk, you know, and we didn't know we had any special corner o' the world (chuckles). But ah, it was uh, um, we didn't know uh, how serious it was, and, and why they was askin' all these questions, you know. And they, they, we found out later that they knew a little bit more than we did.

12:19:59

A:

And uh, and uh, they, as we got informed it become quite serious what was goin' on over there. And, and actually, uh, when we was on the cover of Time Magazine was when uh, the government first time

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

they admitted that any amount of radiation would be harmful. And they lived, we lived all those years uh, thinkin' that maybe radiation wouldn't hurt ya. But now they admit that any amount was harmful.

12:20:33

A:

And so that brought the news media here to interview the community of local people. And it was, it was a circus for about three, 4 months (laughs).

12:20:48

Q:

So who did you talk to at that point? I mean, who were the, some o' the shows that showed up and interviewed you and then some o' the magazines and the newspapers?

12:20:56

A:

Well, we was interviewed by all the local newspapers. Cincinnati and Hamilton, and Columbus, and uh, (clears throat) and uh, we was interviewed by Boston Globe, New York Times, and uh, gee, I can't remember all the, all the different. But we had like eleven or twelve different foreign countries come here with a, with a crew that would interview us, and uh. We, we just couldn't, couldn't believe that.

12:21:34

A:

And uh, actually they couldn't believe our story. Because they said, "well we was, always understood the United States run a clean program, and was above board." And they was shocked as to how sloppy the operation was run here. And uh, and they of course went to other sites and found similar problems. And uh, and they was, they was in more shock than we was, really.

12:22:09

Q:

My gosh. Um, during that point in time, uh, there were a lot of people from the news media who were asking you about health effects in your family. Can you tell us a little bit about the types of health effects that have affected you and your family?

A:

Well, uh, (clears throat) we originally, uh, you know, immediately, we had um, my mother-in-law had cancer of the colon, and my wife had, had memphatic (lymphatic?) cancer. And uh, we just, a-, attached the high radiation operation here as, as part of the problem. And, and uh, we really thought that was where the cancer was comin' from, was the high radiation level in the operation of this plant and the K65 Silos.

12:23:07

A:

We really believed that. And we found out the, that they was spillin' radiation over the fence line over here, so it took 2 years, for them to hang a sign on the fence down here, uh, at different intervals. And they would put the millirems, per hour, radiation level on there, and they, and once a week they, they would change the measurements.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:23:40

A:

And I'd go, while I'm here quite often, I'd go shut my air off and we'd go read them signs (laughs). But it was scary in the beginning because we didn't know what we was dealin' with. It was radiation from the uh. On this, this side o' the plant, on the west side, it was radiation from the K65 Silos. It was 1600 pounds raw radium in the mass of material in the K65 Silos, and that was where the radiation come from.

A:

But they only uh, measured uh, gamma, which was the high-speed bullets. Uh, the gamma rays. They, they didn't measure the, the low, low dose, just the high dose.

12:24:31

Q:

So tell us a little bit more about the lawsuit and how um, how you were involved as far as having to give depositions and were you one of the plaintiffs, and what exactly, how did that all work?

A:

Well, um, we, we got um, involved in the lawsuit, (clears throat) and uh, very interested. And uh, we was picked, Doris and I was picked as a, as a uh, one o' the uh, what do they call that, uh, witnesses! One o' the witnesses to the, to the trial. There was 17 of us that was interviewed for witnesses. First of all, we started with the summary trial as a means of settlement. Uh, and everyone tried that system first.

12:25:23

A:

And uh, we was, um, it was eight days 'til the trial. And it was, very um, actually, in the beginning, I'm a little ahead o' my story. We was deposed because we was a witnesses to the trial. And uh, that was quite shocking, in that uh, first they wanted to interview us as psychiatrist because they wanted to know if we had all our marbles (laughs).

12:25:48

A:

And we was a qualified witness you know (chuckles) and so that was quite shocking being interviewed by three psychiatrists all in one day. And then we was deposed, and 'course, totally ignorant of what a deposition meant. And we got educated there, and we was ed-, we was dep-, I was deposed as well as my wife about eight hours, a day. And uh, that was quite enlightening.

12:26:21

A:

And actually after I got uh, used to what ah, bein' deposed, and the first half o' the deposition was a minute because I understand the original question. I was ask everything, "yes" and "no", and I trapped myself, they was smart enough to trap me (laughs) and so then we ended the deposition in the afternoon, and, and I sort o' enjoyed it after that (laughs).

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:26:51

A:

And then I come home and told my wife how they treated ya, and how they, worked on ya, and uh, the next day, she went back and she did great on her deposition. Because we had a little education as to what would happen, and how they would ask trick questions to trap ya and get ya to answer somethin' that, say somethin' that you really didn't believe, you know. You just got tripped up, you know. And it was quite, uh, uh, enlightening, really. The justice system was (laughs).

12:27:30

Q:

How did the government react to the lawsuit?

12:27:35

A:

Well, the government was absolutely sure that they were goin' to win the case. Because they had, been through this process for 35 years. And they had covered up the big, big lie about uh, the, the cla-, through classification that uh, there was no harm in what they was doin'. To anybody, workers or community.

12:28:02

A:

And so they was very successful for 35 years, and, and um, they won every lawsuit. And they intended to win this suit also, by the very fact that they, their base of evidence was, they was above the law. That the local, environmental, state and federal law, didn't apply to them. That they was the government and they was above the law.

12:28:34

A:

And so um, that was the premise of all their um, uh, court uh, proceedings all through the years, and they always won. And so, um, Stan Chesley said, "well if that's true, you have to have an exemption and, uh, registered in the federal register, by executive order, by the President."

12:28:59

A:

And so he sent some uh, lawyers over to Washington and researched the record, while the trial was goin' on, if I'm not, if I'm not misinterpret, you know. And, and they researched the federal register and found no exemptions. So they come back and told Stan, they had no exemptions. They had been bluffin', and so the roof fell in.

12:29:28

A:

And the government um, settled through the summary trial due to that fact. I mean that's where the settlement come in. And o' course they had no money budgeted, for the trial uh, for a loss, so the, the uh, budget problem wasn't addressed for about 2 years. They had no money, and it wasn't appropriated, so it was quite a while before they had the money (chuckles).

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

Q:
We're gonna pause right there to change tapes.

Tape FLHP0175

13:01:02

Q:
Okay uh, great. So back to the lawsuit, how long did it last, and was it every day?

A:
Uh, the, the trial was, lasted eight days, and it was a full day each day, other than just a break for lunch. Was about a 8 hour day, and it was a full day. And the government had a reference library on one side o' the, the big room in Judge Spiegel's off-, uh, courtroom. And he would constantly have secretaries run and get reference material (chuckles) and feed it into the lawyers so they'd have reference material.

13:01:53

A:
But it was, it was quite impressive as to how the system worked.

Q:
So what was the government's story?

A:
The, the government o' course didn't admit to anything unless you could just pin 'em down, you know (laughs). Ah they, they, Henry Gill was the lead lawyer for the government, Department of Energy and ah, he made nice ah, ah, he made a good presentation but it wasn't all true (laughs). We would, I would sit there and shake my head and couldn't believe the stories that he would reference and I personally knew otherwise, you know.

13:02:49

A:
And he presented them as the truth and, and ah, that's the court system. If you're a, if you're a good presenter and ah, and you seem to project the truth why you might influence the jury, you know. I just was shocked that ah, I thought you had to tell the truth (chuckles) when you was in court, (raises right hand) you swear, you know, to tell the truth, nothing but the truth, but that's not always true. I was shocked.

13:03:20

Q:
And who were some of the witnesses that the ah, government had, I mean who were some of the people that testified on behalf of the government?

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

A:

Well you had ah, mostly administrative people of the old National Lead of Ohio. You had ah, I think Jim Spenceley and ah, Weldon Adams was the two that come to my mind. They was ah, Plant Manager and Assistant Plant Manager. Weldon Adams was probably the (coughs) the biggest reference material because he, he started there as a clerk really, and he went to ah, ah, engineering school at Owen at night in the '50s.

13:04:02

A:

And he become a associate and then he become a engineer, so he worked in every department in that, and he was the main reference ah, man. He put the case together for the, the government because he was very knowledgeable about Fernald operation. He knew everything, or he thought he did anyway (laughs).

13:04:26

Q:

Wow, um, you took a tour I think in 1986 of the plant during production, can you tell us about that tour that you took?

A:

Well, (coughs) of course at that time we was part of uh, FRESH, and some way or another, uh, when Westinghouse came on board, they wanted a baseline for everything. Uh, they wanted to show the public ah, where they come in and how contaminated it was, they didn't even wanna take any responsibility for the last 30 some years of operation. They would preferred that they would be responsible for this day forward.

13:05:09

A:

So they had a baseline, and so we had, got on a tour in the spring of '86. And that was, they come on board in January o' '86, and that tour was in the spring, like April or May, somewhere in that period. And um, they was still in operation. They, ya see, the plant stayed open until July of '89. And so, I had worked in, with General Motors at a toolmaker, been in industry uh, many years myself.

13:05:46

A:

And I was shocked at the crude operation that Fernald had here. And um, no safety regulations. Didn't require anybody to wear any um, respirators doing operations, and I mean I was shocked. And, it was um, quite enlightening to me that they had such a crude operation, and disregard for workers.

13:06:14

A:

Ah, they didn't um, supervise workers to make 'em do anything, other than, "oh, if it's too hot, just throw your, cut your s-, sleeves off your coveralls, you know. Or throw your respirator over on a post and go ahead and do my work. Don't bother me." Didn't even have safety glasses, I don't think.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

13:06:34

A:

Well, they might have, but, you know, it's, where I worked, you know, you're it was a offense to not wear your glasses (laughs). You know, it was. So I was, and when they handled the derbies by hand, and rolled 'em out on a conveyor, uh, roller conveyor. And did all that by hand, for, and, just come out o' the big old crusher there. It was, it was shocking to me that they would use manpower.

13:07:06

A:

Expose the people to radiated mag fluoride, and just a daily operation, it was shocking to me.

Q:

Tell us a little bit about the other people who were there on the tour with you.

A:

Uh, we had a man that um, I believe his name was Frankhouser. And uh, he come uh, 'course we all um, started in a, got on a bus in the parking lot. And here comes this man with Geiger counters and 'quipment of all kinds hangin' on his shoulders. And boy, they stopped him. They said, "nothin' allowed here like that!"

13:07:56

A:

And o' 'course he had been around a little bit, and was doin' research work for us, tellin' about the contamination and so, and he wasn't about to back up (chuckles). So, so uh, he argued with 'em, and they finally let him come on with his 'quipment. And so, I knew who he was, and 'course, I'm always inquisitive, and I like to ask questions, and I says, "I'll get a seat next to him."

13:08:27

A:

And so, we were sittin' there, waitin' for people o' the board, and for the tour to start. And uh, he gets out is Geiger counter and turns it on, and boy, the reading comes up about half way o' the scale there. And he says, "Marvin!" he says, "could you believe, we're getting' radiation sittin' right in this bus here in the parkin' lot!"

13:08:51

A:

So, so he becomes rather in qu-, inquisitive, and he asks the tour guide on the bus, "where's this radiation coming from as we set here on this bus?" And he's a little hesitant to ask, uh, answer the question, and, and um, Mr. Frankhouser I think's his name. Uh, said, "well, I believe there's a little silo right over there in the northwest part o' the, in the distance over there."

13:09:22

A:

He says, "what's in that silo?" The man says, "um, powdered chlorium." "Well," he says, "we're gettin' quite a strong reading, even from this distance." And they didn't, didn't know how to address that, but he picked that up right away. And then when we was on the tour, he was takin' this Geiger

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

counter nozzle and sniffin' around and, (clears his throat) and uh, he found somethin' that they was totally, didn't know about.

13:09:56

A:

They, uh, he saw a little, (clears his throat) oil-soaked rag on a joint on a big air duct. And he put the nozzle up to that little rag there, and boy, the thing really cackled, you know. It was radiation, highly radiation in that little piece of cloth. And he says, "and where does this come from?" And they traced that air duct back to the cafeteria.

13:10:28

A:

And so, indirectly, we find out later that they put all new ductwork in the cafeteria, due to his, I think due to his finding. You can't prove that, but, but it was um, all replaced. And then they had, and then they established uh, in the beginning, they had to establish clean areas and dirty areas.

13:10:51

A:

And so they, they worked on that premise that, that if you was in a clean area, you couldn't just step from one area to the other, you had to be decontaminated, or checked before you could go from the clean to the dirty. And that's how it originally started.

13:11:11

Q:

Did you go into most o' the plants on site during that tour? Or what were some o' the plants you, you definitely went into? Or did they take you everywhere, or trace the process? Or.

A:

Ah, uh, main, mainly they took us in uh, in uh, two or three buildings. The machine shop, where the, they machined the uranium, the billets and things. We was in that. And we was in the area where they made the derbies, and the electric induction furnaces. And we was in the um, plant where they um, it was a chemical part o' the plant, where they um, used, what was it?

13:11:56

A:

Some kind of a anhydrous, hydrofluoric acid. And uh, (clears his throat) one o' the workers told me when I went in there, he says, "Marvin," he says, "ask about the etching on the glass, in, in the plant." They was all foggy. And I said, "anhydrofluoric acid will etch glass." (Laughs) It's powerful. Powerful acid. And, you, and the workers was breathin' that air.

13:12:34

A:

And I asked, I said, "well, hows come these window panes in this plant are all etched? Is that from release of hydrofluoric acid?" And boy, they didn't wanna ask that, answer that question, and they finally saw that maybe I knew a little something. And, and they said, "well, it is from hydrofluoric acid."

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

13:13:02

A:

And um, I said, "well actually then, then um," and I asked them about their maintenance on their gasket joints and things like that. I said, "apparently you've had some leaks around here at different times, or you wouldn't have etched glass in this plant." And they had to kind of halfway admit that that was true. But it was, there was a lot of hazards in the plant, and you can plainly see 'em.

13:13:32

Q:

During this whole process of um, having to educate yourself about what was going on at Fernald, can you tell us about that process? How did you come to know enough to be able to um, be a credible witness for your side of the lawsuit?

A:

Well, I-, in the beginning, um, of course, you sort of thought everything, (clears his throat) everything was wrong, and it was, never told you anything truthful, and uh, you suspected everything. And then as you go to through meetings, and once they got rid of uh, NLO, we actually put enough pressure on.

13:14:20

A:

Ah, I think, as a FRESH group, we put enough pressure on the Department of Energy, and different places, that they actually re-bid the um, the um, contract to, to operate Fernald. And I really believe that's why Westinghouse come in. Because the old NLO couldn't, couldn't uh, stand the um, heat of um, of the public askin' questions. They was from the old school, and they just wouldn't change.

13:14:52

A:

And, and so they brought in a new contractor to kind o' dress up the, the public relations with the community. Which is uh, where I got involved. And, and uh, as you talk too different um, people, and you talk to different employees, and, and um, administrative people, and uh, there's just, a, you learn, lot o' knowledge just talkin' to people.

13:15:20

A:

They have port, reports on these meetings and stuff, but people's where you really gain your knowledge. And I, that's, I'd always ask a lot o' questions, and, anybody I thought knew more 'n I did, I'd ask questions, you know (chuckles) and, and I edu-, was self-educated really.

13:15:40

A:

But uh, as, as it went along, we, we realized that uh, some things wasn't as bad as we thought it was, and some things like K65 Silos actually worse 'n we thought it was. So, uh, you just gain knowledge, and confidence, as, as you go along. And then I become a member of Fernald Task Force, and later changed to Citizens Advisory Board. And I learned a lot uh, through the process all the years.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

13:16:12

A:

And it's been very enlightening. And the cleanup process now seems to be uh, fairly well on schedule, and doin' a incredible job.

13:16:26

Q:

Tell us about some of your contact with plant workers. Uh, folks you knew.

A:

Well, ah, if you go back in the beginning, the plant workers, they was told they was under Q clearance, and it was all classified, and they really couldn't tell ya much o' anything. If you would ask questions or anything, why, "gee, this is classified. We just, we're just workin' there, and we can't talk about our work." And that, that's how they kept the community ignorant in all those years.

13:17:08

A:

Because we just wasn't privy to any information. You know, a-, actually what they was doin', it was very, very limited, you know. And uh, we, we thought, we didn't realize that radiation was harmful, in the beginning, back in the '50s, and '60s, '70s. We didn't realize that. Because we was uneducated, unschooled uh, on the atomic radiation or uh, skills and stuff like that.

13:17:37

A:

So, we never got a-, alarmed until the '80s, because we didn't have enough knowledge to get alarmed (laughs). And that's uh, and then later, o' course, we got in contact with the uh, the trial, and we saw a lot o' the evidence come out durin' the trial, the summary trial. And then I attended all the workers' uh, the workers also sued the Department Energy.

13:18:07

A:

And, and, and then I talked to several workers, and, and, um, and some o' the stories that they'd tell you what they did. Ah, just like, like in the Machine Shop where they would have large pits under there where the, the uh, chips and things or the dust, the grinding dust the, where they machined the uh, the uh, uranium.

13:18:31

A:

Why, they'd go down in those pits with a 5-gallon bucket and a, and a scoop shovel, and scoop that uranium dust material, and haul it to the surface with a rope. And, and, and, they did that work thinking that they was not getting' exposed, you know. They wasn't informed at all. They was totally uninformed and used, right.

13:19:02

Q:

Tell us about the workers' um, lawsuit. How did that come about, and what part did you play in that?

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

A:

Well, uh, the uh, 'course the workers was watchin' uh, very closely the summary trial of the citizens, local community here. And uh, and uh, as, so several of the workers attended our trial. And, and they become more alarmed as they saw what was happening, the evidence coming out in our trial.

13:19:36

A:

So, so they become more alarmed on their part, and, so then they decided maybe they'd better get a lawyer and sue the government for misrepresentation of um, of, of exposure, really, is, is the base of their lawsuit. And uh, and so they, they sued the Department of Energy and they went through a trial.

13:20:03

A:

And uh, and I don't have a real big collection uh, recollection of the trial itself. But I, I uh, talked to a lot o' the workers, and, and um, got, they would talk, some of 'em retired, some of 'em not too good a health. And they'd tell ya what they did in the plant. And it, it was shocking that uh, anybody would expose workers to that level and say, "gee, there's nothing that would hurt ya."

13:20:33

A:

I never will forget the first uh, community meeting that we had. Uh, and Weldon Adams was the chief uh, negotiator (laughs). And he said, "well, really you know, uranium is rather a safe material. It's um, although" he says, "you could probably eat a couple o' teaspoons o' that a day and never hurt ya."

13:21:03

A:

But he says, "I tell ya one thing. It is heavy. If ya drop it on your toe, you would definitely mash it." (Chuckles) I mean nonchalant like that, a man knowin' different, he addressed that to the public as absolutely harmless, other than just watch your toes when ya drop it. It's, it was, later, you know, I didn't have a very high opinion of Weldon Adams.

13:21:33

A:

Although, uh, he was a, he thought he was doin' a good job for the government, and he was totally loyal. And he was the front, front man to say everything was okay. And, and I think, ah, deep down in his mind, he told himself that so many times, he actually believed it (laughs). He said it with great emotion that uh, he was tellin' the truth, you know, and. And uh, actually, brainwashed himself, I believe (laughs).

13:22:12

Q:

So what was the outcome of the, both of the trials? What exactly happened at the end of all that?

A:

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

Well, the uh, the citizens' trial was uh, was uh, settled with, for property damage, emotional stress, and um, and you get uh, a medical monitoring physical every 3 years. And then later they, they would do some health studies, uh, to uh, that was, that was the money that might be appropriated later.

13:22:53

A:

But the medical monitoring, they set up a special medical monitoring (clears throat) uh, unit and, and then we was paid uh, on real estate, and emotional stress. Uh, a small amount o' money which we considered, due to our effort, was very s-, very minimal (chuckles). Uh, not to some people if they didn't put any time and effort in, but we put a lot o' time and effort in and got peanuts back, you know.

13:23:26

A:

Wasn't too happy (chuckles). A-, and the workers o' course, their settlement was very, very low. It was a few hundred dollars. A, and, a physical, you know. And so, every 2 years or so, and really, they got, they got a lot worse settlement than we did, you know. But there isn't too much you can do about it you know, unless you got a lot o' resources to hire a lot o' lawyers and, and just keep on.

13:24:03

A:

You know, if you're just a ordinary citizen, you're very limited in, in assets and resources to uh, get the manpower to really put the heat on, on the government. You know, you're really very limited. I-, in our case, Stan Chesley took uh, our case on the contingency basis to where he took a third of, of all winnings. If there was any, we didn't get charged anything, but he got a settlement on a percentage basis.

13:24:41

A.

And then when it was changed from a citizens' private suit to a class-action suit, well, then his contract was negated and the court set his fees. And I, I think if I'm correct it was 22 percent. And then due to winning, he, he testified to lodestar, which, when you win on a contingency basis, well you get to double your fees.

13:25:17

A.

So he had something like \$465,000 that he was accumulated, money accumulated due to his work, well, he got to double that fee due to the lodestar contract. And that was news to me, a winner gets to double his fees (chuckles).

13:25:46

Q.

So through this whole fight which lasted many, many years, how did your community and the people you knew react to your family?

13:26:04

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

A.

Well, we, we thought in the beginning that we was doing something that had to be done. We was convinced that that place had to be cleaned up. But the vast majority of the community, uh, thought that we was radicals stirring up something that should be left alone, just put a fence around there and just kind of put a cap on it and let it sat.

13:27:31

A.

And don't, don't advertise because you might destroy our, uh, property values in this surrounding community. And we had many people and friends say well you're just a troublemaker, you're, you're destroying our property values. Why don't you just keep your mouth shut? And, and that was hard to take in the beginning.

13:26:51

A.

It was uh, it took many years to heal that, that wound. It probably was never -. And I still find people say - oh, they'll never clean up that place. And I say, well, have you visited the site lately? The operation? No. Well, I say you ought to come along sometime. They - once a year they have a, a, community tour that anybody and everybody 's available can go. I says, if you have any reference from the beginning to now, you can see a quite a lot of cleanup.

13:27:26

A.

And it's progressing at a very good rate today. There's a few setbacks. But it's over and above, it's very good, in relation what they got to work with. You know. And, and so. But they're still skeptical. You still find people skeptical.

13:27:51

Q.

Something I forgot to ask you about - um, the Donahue Show rolled into town, what year was that, '88?

13:27:58

A.

I believe it was.

12:28:00

Q.

Can you give us a sort of synopsis of that whole experience? How did all that happen?

12:28:07

A.

Well, uh. I guess we'd better change the tape now.

(Showing photos)

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

TAPE FLHP0176

14:01:16

Q:

You ready? Okay I'll put that question again. What was it like when the Donahue Show rolled into town and how did all that come about?

14:01:25

A.

Well, the, the Donahue Show, I, I, I really believe they – we was on the cover of Time Magazine and, of course, that kind of ignited the news media, uh, and, uh, got the attention and actually we got a, a call from Donahue from New York and wanting to, us to come to New York studio for, for an interview. And, you know, Doris and I, country, you know, more country and not too, too citified – no way will we come to, to New York City.

14:02:03

A.

You know, we didn't like the big city (laughs). Well, he says, how about us comin' to see you? I said, well, that would be fine (laughs). Well, then, then, we sort of like the contact person to, to get a, a contacts in the local community here and they finally settled on the Hamilton High School as a production show that would be taped and, uh, on the television. So, so, he, he come to town.

14:02:36

A.

And, uh, Donahue, uh, uh, actually I was a little disappointed. It was Charles Hintzer and his family and Doris and I, and uh, my brother-in-law and mother-in-law. And we was all settin' there as, as, as a, the chief interviewers, you know, and he didn't even come over and interview us, recognize who we was, get our names, or. And, and, uh, it was surprising to me. We sat in a room and we just talked among ourselves. And nobody come in and interviewed us, getting us prepared for a show.

14:03:16

A.

It was very, we thought, was really delinquent on his part. But, uh, then, we come up to the, uh, warm-up part. He has a warmup crowd, skit, that he puts on and I thought he was extremely talented, bright, and, and, just really come across great. But when the taping of the show started, I mean, he changed clothes and come out dressed up and his personality just totally changed.

14:03:53

A.

He was, he was more like business, cold, you know, and he was kind of in a kind of a nervous state. And, uh, we was disappointed. And in the interviews, he, he got mixed up on who was, the names. He didn't know Doris from her mother, brother-in-law. And, uh, when he introduced us, he did, uh, do a fairly good job with the Charles Hintzer, the little boy that lost his leg due to cancer. I mean, he, he really interviewed them quite well.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

14:04:31

A.

But then we find out later that, that he, the show give a lot of free tickets to the Fernald employees. And so he catered to the Fernald employees' side and, and it kind of left us, uh, hangin' out, you know. He wanted to get their side that gee, it wasn't as bad as we thought it was. And we was projectin', ya know. And so he sort of bypassed us.

14:05:02

A.

And then he interviewed Governor Celeste and Glenn up on the stage, and different people. And they really didn't know the answers. And they would ask me, I was settin' on the front row, right for the stage, and I would answer the best I could. An, and they was totally, uh, not prepared for a, for a, the, a type of show that was, he was putting on.

14:05:30

A.

And, and we would find, what really shocked us. We, we'd have people get up in the, in the crowd and say, "well, I've worked there 6 months and gee, I'm healthy and strong. And nothin' wrong with me, you know." And then, an, and uh, maybe some older employees would do that. We, we just figured the show was sort of rigged. They had special people get up and testify that, "Gee, I worked there all my life, as healthy and never had no health problems, and I don't know what these people are talkin' about."

14:05:58

A.

So, we wasn't too happy with the show, as a whole.

14:06:08

Q.

Tell me a little bit about your involvement with FRESH. How did you, um, were you one of the founding members of the organization and, and how did, uh, how did it evolve?

14:06:18

A.

Well, uh, Kathy Meyers and Don Meyers, Don Meyers was a lawyer here in Harrison, and his wife, they come involved, and, and, and actually they had, and Lisa Crawford, I think, and I, I didn't know, Hillary Webb may have been in that prog, in that original meeting down at the Castle, at the, at the, uh, Venice there, or Ross now.

14:06:47

A.

Uh, so they had a meeting and thought something should be done. So, out of that org, meeting there at the Castle, uh, they decided to organize a FRESH group – a Fernald Environmental Safety and Health, uh. So, they, uh - Don Meyers, due to his expertise as a lawyer, why he drew up a charter and a mission and a agenda. And we got started that way.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

14:07:23

A.

And Kathy Meyers was the original chairman of the FRESH group until later she had, uh, children and she just didn't want to put all that effort in. So then Lisa Crawford become the, uh, chairman of FRESH. And we, uh, we, we worked really hard at getting somebody to pay attention. You know, the, the vast problems was here and was not addressed and, uh, and nobody seemed concerned and, uh, we didn't have much help.

14:07:57

A.

But, we, we just kept diggin' away and we got a little attention through the newspapers and the news media and, uh, we, we picked up quite a bit of strength and then, then we really got their attention and then, then they finally started to move, that maybe they did have a problem, ya know. And, uh, and then the trial come along. And they, it went against the government. So, so that really got it started. That, uh, that helped a lot.

14:08:30

A.

And, and, the - FRESH is still operational. And, and, they're still holding monthly meetings. But in my case, I just thought, well, I would slip over to the Fernald Task Force and, and learn the cleanup process and go through that process, and so I get more knowledge about what actually was there and, and the process of cleanup. And, and it's been an enlightening experience for me. I've really enjoyed it.

14:09:06

Q.

So, how has, um, communication between the community and the upper management over at Fernald - how has that changed down through the years?

14:09:20

A.

Well, eh, actually in the beginning, oh, uh, National Lead of Ohio, the communication between, between, uh, company and the community was almost zero. They denied everything. And then, uh, they lost their contract and Westinghouse come in. And they tried, uh, to, uh, have community contact and relations and PR, you know. They tried to, uh, really work at it.

14:09:54

A.

And, and things improved greatly when Westinghouse come in. An, and, uh, and we was, uh, we learned a lot due to their openness. Before, we had no knowledge. And, uh, we was grateful for Westinghouse. And then they, as things progressed, they lost the contract. And Fluor Daniel got their contract. And, we're, we're very satisfied with the, uh, cleanup operation at is goes today.

14:10:30

Q.

Through this whole ordeal, what was your worst moment?

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

14:10:38

A.

Well, uh, I, I guess you would say, uh, uh, when the government – that was in the, uh, fall of '88 when the government actually did admit that, uh, any amount of radiation, radiation was harmful to the human body. I mean, that was a shocker to me as well as my wife. She had, my wife had, Doris had cancer, an, two or three different times. And we always thought, uh, due to close proximity, that they was responsible for, for, uh, cancer in this area.

14:11:26

A.

And, uh, we was, we was really shocked when they denied it all those years and then they admit it. That maybe there was some truth to radiation and, uh, harm to the body.

14:11:42

Q.

And what was your best moment?

14:11:48

A.

It was probably when they, uh, developed the, uh, Fernald environmental cleanup. Uh, they, they started a project to cleanup and, and we felt that, uh, that we was a part of that. And it come to fruition. And we, we was proud to be part of it.

14:12:17

Q.

How did you feel the day that you found out that they were going to stop production?

14:12:23

A.

Actually, the day they stopped production, I was tickled to death. Because the pollution would stop; the pollution on site wouldn't stop but the air would clean up. And it was really quite something that we could get the operation to stop. But then we find out later that when they stopped the operation, they didn't clean the pipes and, and, uh, they stopped it in, in thinking that it would be an interruption and production would start back up.

14:13:02

A.

Well, that never happened, so they had a very expensive, uh, cleanup due to, uh, dirty material and piping systems and everything. So, so that, so the way they stopped was very bad. But it, it's addressed and it's cleaned up today but it costs lots of time and effort to clean the old dirty pipes when they could of just flushed them out the day they stopped and saved millions of dollars, many manhours, right.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

14:13:37

Q.

So you were involved with the Fernald Citizens Task Force, which is now the Citizens Advisory Board. Tell us a little bit about why you got involved with that group and what you would like to accomplish with that group.

14:13:49

A.

Well, I, I was, uh, uh, always inquisitive of, uh, of uh what was really going on over there. And I figured that, uh, I was just, I'm just a local citizen over here, not a qualified Ph.D. or nothing (laughs). But I was just a local concerned citizen. And I put my name in and for some reason or other, ah, they chose me as a local, uh, community member, which they wanted on the board. I didn't know all the criteria.

14:14:36

A.

And, uh, and so it's been very enlightening to be on the other side, ah, to see the problems and get the problems addressed. And, and you could ask all the questions, they seemed very forthright in their answers. And tried to - if they didn't have the answer, they'd get back with you. And so I was impressed of, uh, the new group, the cleanup group trying to do a good job and very conscientious. And, and I was impressed, over the years.

14:15:12

Q.

So right now, how do you think that the, uh, cleanup is going? How is it progressing?

14:15:17

A.

Well, it's like any cleanup. There's always little hitches that comes along. But they - the present, uh, people, Fluor Daniel, they seem to address the problem and, and get with it and, and try very hard to stay on schedule and, and do a good job. I'm really comfortable with, uh, with their, their cleanup.

14:15:48

Q.

What are the big issues that came down through the years, during the cleanup years, especially with waste shipment? Can you tell us a little bit about some of the issues involved with that?

14:16:01

A.

Well, uh, they started very slow in, in waste shipments in the beginning and, um, actually they, um - what they call the "hot material" goes to the Nevada Test Site. And, uh, they've been shipping to Nevada Test Site for years in those sealand containers (clears throat). They truck 'em out. But then they had a, a accident where they had a leakage out in, uh, Arizona, before they got to the Test Site. And, and then, and then that shut the waste shipment program down.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

14:16:41

A.

I mean it shut it down for, probably a year or better. I mean, it was a big investigation. You, you just couldn't believe all the, the, uh, time and effort trying to address - addressing a problem become a bureaucratic nightmare (laughs) and, and it took a long while to, to address the problem. And they're got, they're just recently back on board shippin' to the Nevada Test Site, with a lot more care and, uh, and, uh, control, you know, which should of been in the beginning, but everything was going fine and they thought they always would.

14:17:25

A.

And so they come, become lax in their quality standards of, uh, shipping. But, uh, they have addressed it and they're back on site. Now, they're, they're starting the, uh, waste, uh, ship - the waste pits, they're going to open them shortly from now, which is around the first of September. And, uh, they've shipped several trainloads out, which is about 50 cars - that's a unit train - goes directly to, uh, uh, Envirocare without, uh, it's, uh, it's expedited.

14:17:55

A.

No, no, uh, shifting; the train, it goes as a unit. And it works very, very well. And they've got all new cars, and, uh, new equipment. And they have shipped, I think, four or five trainloads, uh, at 50 cars, which is a lot of tonnage. And, uh, and it's went very well. We're, uh, we're very impressed as, uh, how well the operation is going. Of course, when you open the pits, that's a little different story from just pickin' up waste piles on the, on the site, that was accumulated over the years.

14:18:45

A.

I mean, ya go over there and ya load it up, ya know. But now, we gotta get in and, and dig the old waste pits out, which -. And then they have these big dryers to dry the, the material down to like a 15% moisture. And, uh so it becomes a lot more complicated. And there'll probably a lot more hitches and, and problems as we get into the pits. But I'm sure they got enough knowledge to, to address the, the problem.

14:19:14

Q.

How about rail lines that go through, uh, this part of the country? How do people feel about, uh, the waste shipments going through the community?

14:19:26

A.

Well, uh, there was a lot of concern of, uh, people along the rail lines. Actually the, uh, rail lines would be very simple if they wouldn't o' tore out the, uh, rail line from Fernald and Cincinnati. Years ago, they tore that rail line out. So, now, we, the, uh, rail line goes to Cottage Grove and gets on the mainline and comes back through Oxford and Hamilton, Cincinnati. So it's a long trip to Cincinnati.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

14:20:00

A.

And that was very concern for people in this area. But, uh, we was part of that, uh, addressing the, uh, upgrade of the railroads. And, uh, if you're going to ship things, why, we should have a good railbed. And so we're, uh – they have addressed that problem. They have upgraded all the rail crossings and, and strengthened all the trestles at Okeana. And they spent several million dollars upgrading that.

14:20:31

A.

And they put in -- and puttin' in, right now, they're puttin' in new ties. So we feel that, uh, the railroad – very slow in the beginning – didn't want to move. But, uh, now we, we see results of, uh, of, uh, effort on their part to improve the rail line and make it as safe as possible. And, and myself, and I know there's other people who maybe not feel as, as confident as I do, but I think they're addressin' the problem and, and things will be safely operated.

14:21:12

Q:

Now, you mentioned to me before that you, you've seen how so, so many buildings have come down at Fernald, and once all the buildings are gone, and the plant is pretty much gone, what would you like to see done with the land that's there?

A:

Well, that's a, that's a, a big, what I would like to see is what they projected. I, that, I had, it wasn't just me, they was a lot of us. But we, we, we wanted to see like a, a park area. You know, it was clean, we know we have the waste cell, and, and that'll be separate and kind o' fenced off.

14:21:52

A:

But uh, a, restore the wetlands, and, and uh, plant some trees and, and uh, maybe have a uh, museum of the history of, of, of, what happened here at Fernald, so, so a little background for the next generations uh, to come so they don't repeat the mistakes. And, and uh, so we're workin' on that. Uh, and then the Indian burial is also another item that might happen.

14:22:26

A:

They've already um, buried some 23 Indians I believe from, from diggin' up the pipeline to get water in this, in this area. And um, they've reentered those, and now the Indians want to bury all the um, remains of Indians aboveground over here at Fernald. And they're, they're still addressin' that. Joe Schomaker's the head o' that program.

14:22:53

A:

And uh, and um, I, I think eventually, they will find a way to enter all the Indians of, of Ohio here at Fernald. Uh, at least they're workin' on it, very hard. And I think it'll come to pass.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

Q:

Now you've been involved in going into an environmental uh, education program. Can you tell us a little bit about how you, how you were picked for that, and, and, and what that entailed?

14:23:26

A:

Well, when Westinghouse was uh, uh, first come in here operating, why they, they uh, established a environmental law school. And um, to educate their employees in administrative level. How serious

the law was before, the government said, "well, we make, or the laws are there, but they don't pertain"

(Cameraman: All right, fresh battery, and we're rolling.)

14:23:58

Q:

Great. Yeah, if you could start that again, uh, tell us about the environmental law, school.

A:

Uh, is he ready?

Q:

Um-hmm. Yep. We're rolling

A:

Oh, okay (chuckles) uh, the environmental school was first established by Westinghouse when they first came in to educate their employees a how serious it was that they adhere to the, the laws on the books. So, for some reason or other, they wanted a, a community member to be part o' that school. And really, I thought, I wasn't too much of a school person, or a law, law degree or anything.

14:24:39

A:

But I just applied for the school, and for some reason, they just picked me. I, I don't know. But anyway, it was very enlightening. We went to school for like for six or seven weeks and like 8 hours a day. And, and studied environmental law, took all the tests and everything. And uh, and actually it was enlightening to me that uh, there was so, the law was so complicated.

14:25:08

A:

And uh, there was so many things that had to be addressed paper-wise. You had to do your proper paper trail or you just was disqualified, you know. So, it was shocking to me how much bureaucratic (chuckles) paperwork involved in enforcing environmental law. And uh, so I went to school, and become quite interested.

14:25:34

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

A:

And um, and I took a tests, I didn't probably do like the others did, but still I went through the process and learned a lot. I really was, and met a lot o' people, and uh, contact with a lot o' knowledgeable people. I asked a lot o' questions, and it was, it was a great, great time for me.

14:25:57

Q:

I just have one more question. If you could go back 40 years or 50 years and tell the Atomic Energy, Energy Commission anything, what would you say to them?

A:

Well, actually, they didn't listen to people with caution in those days. There was what was call the I Report that goes back in the '40s. And, and they addressed the problem here that they had here at Fernald. That they was on top of a very um, uh, productive aquifer that could be easily polluted. And they was advised not to site this plant uh, over the aquifer.

14:26:45

A:

And um, they was um, disregarded. All conservative um, ideas of, "gee, this place'll be polluted." And so they went ahead above advice, but really, uh, there isn't anything more important than our drinking water. And to think that they sited the plant right over top of it, and pollute it, that's the worst, uh, sin I think you'd ever could do, and they did it.

14:27:31

A:

Well, with knowledge, knowin' that they had knowledge otherwise it wasn't the thing to do, but went ahead anyway.

Q:

Was there anything that we didn't cover that you wanted to cover? Or anything you want to add?

A:

Well, (laughs) N-, I think we went over quite a bit of it, didn't we? If you could, I think we went about over everything, really. Really enjoyed the interview.

Q:

Okay, good. Good, good. It was terrific. We're gonna do something now we call nat sound, it's just a little bit of natural sound from the area here. And we do have pictures just so you know.