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**FERNALD LIVING HISTORY
Project**

Name: Mary Burdett

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Tape 7

Project Number 20012

Tape FLHP0007

12:01:13:27

Q:

OK, First I just need to get your name and go ahead and spell it for us just so it's on tape that way.

A:

OK, Mary Burdett.

12:01:23:19

Q:

Great. And uh, give us a little background. I understand you grew up not far from the Fernald site?

A:

Right, I grew up in the Peach Grove area which was Blue Rock and Springdale, only we were at the bottom of the hill on Northwest Road.

12:01:39:26

Q:

And how long did you live there?

A:

Uh, seven days before I was born. Till about well, we moved here in '72 and I was in California and Washington State a little bit with my husband in the Navy. So I pretty much lived there before we moved here.

12:01:58:23

Q:

Wow. Fort Lewis?

He was

Army base isn't it?

Right, well we lived in Tacoma next to the Army base and um his ship was in Birmingham so he drove every day. There was like zero housing in Birmingham when we got there. But then again we found out we didn't really want to live in Birmingham. So

My sister was stationed out there in Fort Lewis.

Uh, huh.

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12:02:24:27

Q:

Um, let's see, um, as you were, as you were living in that area, um, did you know what the plant was?

A:

No, I, I really didn't even know I would venture to say I didn't know it was there. Um, we lived back even more back from the street than this place, and um, we had a housekeeper stay with us because mom and dad both worked, um, like I said we were latchkey children but we never locked the door till I was in high school. And, um, so we really didn't get out a whole lot. We went to school, of course, and we were in scouts when we were a little older but we very seldom came this way. We thought it was a big adventure to go from our house to Kemper Road to a farm there where sometimes we would get animals or something. That was a big adventure (laughter) so we were..

12:03:25:08

Q:

So your family was a farming family?

A:

Uh, yeah we the garden, big gardens and we raised a lot. We didn't sell. Um, we raised a lot for our self, uh, we had pigs and cows and stuff for awhile. A pony, and a horse, in fact I have a picture of dad with a mowing machine pulled by the horse and um, before we graduated to tractors but uh we only had like um 18-20 acres. But he did a lot of hay and stuff like that just to, just to sustain our own animals and uh then as we got older and he got more involved in Boy Scouting, the animals and the farm got less. So we started doing different things or you know as we grew older.

12:04:19:26

Q:

Do you remember when they were building the plant at all?

A:

No. I was born in '46 so I guess I was pretty small and wouldn't have really paid any attention had we had anything. I guess we had a radio, we had a TV not until I was maybe 10 or more. So we really didn't hear news, we didn't, you know other than the radio. I remember listening to the radio, cereal kind of programs so we sort of lived like 20 years behind so to speak.

12:04:55:07

Q:

Um, what kind of uh myths or legends did you, have you heard about the plant? I know you mentioned here, animal food sign, what's that all about?

A:

Well, I had heard somewhere over the uh past that because their feed was in the word on the title um that lot's of people thought it was animal food factory. Where they actually made animal feed for cattle's or horse's or dogs or whatever. Um, and nobody ever I guess said any different, I don't know because it was never I never talked to anybody about it but I, that's just kinda talk I've heard or common, this is what happened at that time period. Maybe I'd read it in a paper or something but all, after the fact.

12:05:52:13

Q:

OK. And um, did you have any contact with plant workers, did you know any plant workers?

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A:

No, I don't believe so. Um my mom and dad worked at the hospital and people we knew from scouting and stuff like that, I don't, and church, we went to St. Paul's in Blue Rock then, I don't believe I knew anybody who worked there.

12:06:20:04

Q:

And where did you go to school?

A:

Colerain Elementary, Junior High, Senior High. Our class was the last class from that old building and my husband's class was the first class from the new building, so we're now planning our 35 year reunion so. Getting that together for August.

12:06:41:10

Q:

And where did you go to college?

A:

I went to Jewish Hospital School of Nursing. Graduated in '67 and then generally I worked in long term care. I worked in a nursing home in California a little bit while we were there. Didn't work in Washington because Michelle was little and then I worked at Drake for over 20 years and uh now I work at Beechnoll long term care. I prefer long term care. I like going, I work part-time most of the time so I like going back to the same people. When you work in a hospital you don't see those same people. You want them to go home but...(Laughter)

12:07:26:28

Q:

So in the midst of your career and everything, how did you get involved in scouting?

A:

I was a scout from third grade on and um went all the way through high school and graduated, stayed registered, they just kept sending the paper in the mail and I'd pay my whatever it was, my three bucks, whatever it was then and then when I got married and had my daughter, Michelle, then I knew I wanted to stay registered. Um, because I wanted her to you know be in Girl Scouts if we could. And, uh, next year I'd get my 45 year pin. Cause I stayed registered for 45 years, so. And then when she started in first grade, they had first grade Brownies then, they didn't have Daisies like they have now in first grade Brownies. And um so we started a troop and she stayed all 12 years, I was her leader all 12 years and um she is now a leader in Eastern Ohio. Not married, doesn't have any kids, but she has taken her kids from Brownies to mostly Juniors and Cadets. She stayed with those girls, so.

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12:08:39:07

Q:

Wow. And uh what kind of activities did you do as a leader with your, with your girls?

A:

Um, back when we started there was a patch program called The Busy, The Bees. They had three different levels that you could work and three different years. And you focused on different activities and they were all, basically Girls Scouts an informal learning um activities and setting goals and the girls, the girls are supposed to be deciding what kind of activities they want to do within the guidelines of um to earn their patch or program whatever it is your working on and usually we sat and talked to leaders and then presented to the girls what they might want to do. Gosh, we went to McDonald's tours, we went to Pizza Hut tours. They had roller skating events. Um, Brownies didn't camp then, um in fact they were right in the midst of that time period I believe deciding whether Brownies could sell cookies.

12:09:40:05

And um, so then she did get started into selling cookies and we were real supportive. We sold at work, both of us did, and I think the most she ever sold was 600 boxes in one year. So, and that was 600 boxes to deliver. (Laughter). But she did a great job and you see where we live, you don't have, and you can't walk from door to door, so we drove and then we chose subdivisions where we were pretty much be guaranteed there were no girls so we'd, she went from door to door there and delivered and sold in school. She sold cookies through her senior year in high school to the principal, to anyone who would buy and uh did not bother her. Girls Scouts has, did have a big impact on her life. She would argue Girls Scouts with any Boy Scout around. (Laughter) But, she, she loved it.

12:10:35:17

And I loved it. I, I mean I did it for her in the beginning and um felt like you know that she needed to get some things out of it that I got out of it. Of course, the time period was different and activities were some different, and of course, expenses were greatly different but I felt a value in Girl Scouting that helped me as a person and I felt Girl Scouting would help her as a person and um, basically she loved it and stayed in all the way through, got her Gold Award, which is equivalent of the Eagle for the Boy Scouts.

12:11:15:02

And stayed in college even. They had a campus group in eastern Kentucky where she went. And when she moved to East Liverpool Ohio, then she called a council there said I want to be a troop leader. And, of course they asked the question how old is your daughter and she said I have none. She got started in a troop within months after she moved there. So...

12:11:39:18

Q:

Wow that's great. Um, let's get a little bit into the a, the camping. Um, was that a big activity for your, your troop?

A:

When I was growing up we were selling cookies to build the camp. That's the focus of the cookie sale at that time was to try to sell as many cookies to build a new camp. And the camp was Ross Trails in Ross, Ohio. And so of course that wasn't a burden for us to sell cookies you know, so we did and uh, I am not even sure what year the camp opened but um it was always there. And then when we, when I started with her, like I said at that time Brownies did not camp. And then they started a program where they could go for three days or a week. And her first experience was at Ross Trails um, as a third grade Brownie and stayed a week. Didn't know a soul. And uh, she didn't come home so (Laughter) I mean she came home

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after the week. But she enjoyed it.

12:12:46:05

And we went as a troop then to several of the different units at Ross. We also went to Stonybrook a couple of times and we went to Monte Grass as a Senior Scout, and we went to um, Timberhill, we went to Butterworth. Each camp offered a different something and ah, Stonybrook we went a couple of times as the girls got older and we would go on no-no camp outs. And as everybody knows when you send the list of gear home with the girls, at the bottom is the no-no's list. No candy, no make-up, no hair dryers, no what ever. So we would at least once a year try to have a no-no camp out where they could bring all those things.

12:13:33:20

And so we would always have it in lodge, so there wouldn't be a mess under the tent etcetera and um, the girls liked it, that was fun. Because they didn't bring all those things, your tapes, and music, and of course they didn't have as much as they have now, in the way of CD players, and everything but they did bring what ever they wanted to bring. And ah, course that was way up into older girls.

12:13:56:25

But um, like I said, each camp offered something a little different. And ah, Ross offered the wagon unit and offered the tree house which was _____ together and um, they had two winterized units, Totem and Fox Den. And each of them was a little different, but they loved staying in em. And of course the tent units were entirely different, but they liked staying in those too.

12:14:30:23

Basically, it wasn't a monthly thing like the Boy Scouts, we generally did not camp that often. Um service units were allowed once every three years to have a big camp out. And um, we would fight to get our name in, in time, to be at the camp we wanted to be at. And generally our service unit went to Ross because it was really convenient for the parents. Um, if they had to do that baseball or softball or what ever game they could kind of come back and forth.

12:15:02:21

And um, the girls could accomplish both of those activities without missing too much. So and we did, we had a service unit camp out right at, the last camp out at Ross was our service unit. So we were, in hindsight we were kinda glad it was us. Because it was local people right here and able to enjoy the camp.

Q:

How would you say that Ross Trails enriched your life and how would you say it enriched your daughters life?

12:15:35:28

A:

Um, just knowing it was there available to use, now granted I grew up in the country, and this is pretty country, but it was different. You could always go, you'd have your planned activities, whatever the kids wanted to do, whatever we felt like we needed to accomplish. Um it was a place away, um the girls could be without family, um without interference from brothers and sisters.

12:16:09:03

They could be ah, united girls together in the troop, even though there might be problems within the troop, which happens with girls of any age. Um. But just knowing it was available and it was um place

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to go, to be away and to have that experience that ah Girl Scouting could provide. Now we actually never went primitive camping where you took everything on its own. Some troops in the service did, but our troop in particular never did.

12:16:40:12

And because it was our camp here in the local area, ah my generation is, the group who um, purposely sold cookies to buy and build the camp. Um. We always, we always had a connection to it than was different than any other camp. We felt good to go to another camp. We were thrilled that Girl Scouts owned as many camps and they did right here in our area.

12:17:10:27

But Ross was ours and it was different than the others. And my daughter when she was 16, ah worked as a Junior counselor at Ross, spent her 16 birthday there. And ah enjoyed it. She, she loved working with the girls. And um, it I really believe it helped her focus on her career what she wanted to do. Um. She knew she wanted, she loved working with kids, and she knew she wanted to be in the kind of job where she could help people. And she is an occupational therapist now.

12:17:47:02

And um. It was, I think in part of the things that she learned. She'd always loved helping out with the Brownie Troop, she was an official ah, troop assistant in her high school years. One of the teachers had, her daughter was in a Brownie Troop. They had trouble recruiting parents to stay, not just come and help, but to stay at a regular basis, and she would go every week to their meetings and work with their activities.

12:18:16:00

And then her senior, for her silver award in junior high she and a couple of the girls from the troop planned ah about a 6 weeks long activity for the girls at Houston Elementary. Those girls were not registered before she went, did the activities, and um registered the girls, did the _____ ceremony all of that. And they planned that for their silver award project.

12:18:42:28

And as far as I know some of those girls did stay in. And um, like I said she just. It was good for me, I enjoyed being a leader, even though lots of times it was very frustrating and you know, try to plan things and deal with parents and um that's OK. You just know that if you are making that commitment, that's what you do. And um. Then to see that she got things out of it, really helped a whole lot. It made me more committed to stay on those very exacerbating days. And um. She, I know she'll say to this day that Girl Scouting helped her.

12:19:27:15

And really the, the statement they make now is to help girls grow up to be caring, confident, competent, women. And that's her to me (emotion) its really great. I mean, to have, have as a parent, to know that your child is doing well. And um, she has her own problems of course like every person, but I really think Girl Scouting was a big part of her life that way.

12:19:53:26

Now as an adult, I do all adult level work. I don't really work with the girls and now I do it for me. Its fun, I work with recognition to look at seeing the people get recognized for the job that they do in Girl Scouting and also archives. And that's become really dear to my heart. Um, to look at all of the old items that um Girl Scouting has had over the years.

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12:20:22:27

Book, and uniforms and themes and programs, and all of that so that's really where I've kinda focusing my work now. Besides, she's, its sort of her fault, she's decided she wanted to collect. And go from there and as a parent when you child went from Brownies to Juniors, you gave away your Brownie uniform. Or when you got a bigger size you gave away, and its like darn, I wish we had those now. Her's.

12:20:53:12

She said she, mom I had to rescue my beanie. (Laugh) I said well I thought I was doing the right thing, but, you know now in hindsight it would be really nice if we could have had her uniform. So.

Q:

Yeah, wow, and the camp was a big part of all that?

A:

Yes.

Q:

Cause I know with Girl Scouting camp is like the big treat your always waiting (Response: Right, right) for. You know, now you daughter when she, when she was selling cookies was one of the rewards being able to go to camp or?

A:

Usually because that was a big budget, by the time you rented the space, you plus bought groceries for 15, 20 people and then the activities that you were going to do, say your gonna tie-die shirts or what ever then of course you had to buy all the supplies. And dues money could never in any way cover all those activities. So the cookies were always tied too.

12:21:50:22

Um, and really I think probably by the time the girls got in junior high they all had accounts where if they sold one box of cookies they got x cents in their account, where if they sold 100 box of cookies they got x cents times a hundred. And it encouraged them to then save for different activities.

12:22:08:26

Um, every year from 6th grade on we went to Columbus for the, a COSI, which is the Center of Science and Industry. We either drove in a car, we rode in a bus, and you stayed over night um, and that cost a certain fee. And then we usually always tried to plan another activity, we went to the State House on year and we went to the ah historical place there over on 17th Street.

12:22:33:19

Um, so that, that all cost extra money. And we encouraged the girls to sell so that they would be able to, you know go on their own, not have to hit their parents up for money. And um, and then of course the basic purpose really of selling cookies is two things: a) to make money, and b) for the girls to learn something. And um, we, didn't take us very long before we learned, and we would explain to all the girls in the group that this is how you do a cookie sales.

12:23:03:07

Since we lived out, we cannot go door to door, so every year she'd keep her cookie sheet and call everybody back. And 90 percent of her sales would be by phone call. She would talk to people at church, talk to people at school and um then we would think of other people who were no longer in Girl Scouts that might not have access to cookies, so um she learned marketing. In a kind of round about way.

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12:23:29:11

And that's, that is another whole purpose of the cookie sale is to teach the girls things other than sell cookies. I mean the purpose of the selling is to; a) make money for the troop, and b) make money for the council, and c) teach the girls a whole lot. And.

12:23:43:27

It that a bug? (Touches face and Laughs) And um usually it did and she pretty much, you know got all of that and lots of girls did in the troop some girls, they would never, even their parents wouldn't hardly buy a box, but that was their family. And, you just kind of had to work around that. But um, (Response: Wow) the cookie sales was a big part of the activity, it took time ah to order, to take their orders and then deliver, and then of course you learned about the people who said Oh yeah, I want 10 boxes and then their never home or I never ordered those and all that's learning for the girls.

Q:

I always buy a case of thin mints myself.

A:

Yes. (Laughter) Have you tried the thin mint ice cream from *Eddy's*?

Q:

Yes, yes that's good.

A:

Have you tried smors ice cream from *Eddy's*?

Q:

Ohhh. Smor's. Oh good. (Laughter)

A:

Yes. Yes. Our council has *Carmel Delights*. But it's the same as the smor's. *Eddy's* has both ice creams out this year.

Q:

I'll have to try that one. I haven't had the ...

A:

Deliciously evil.

12:24:54:08

Q:

Well, lets ah get into a little bit um how the Fernald plant affected the camp. Um, really I think most of what happened, happened in '84. Did you hear, I mean did you get a lot of the news about Fernald in about 1984? Do you remember hearing about the dust collector problems in plant 9 or anything like that?

A:

I don't, I must have heard because: a) we're so close and b) it was in the news. But I don't know that I actually processed enough of that information to remember it. Um I do know that at the time, as more news came out um I guess what they were trying to decide is what to do. I cannot speak for the council

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itself, but I mean, I just know what I basically heard and um, the discussions that were around um to you know what would, what's going on and how is it gonna make a difference to us.

12:26:00:10

A:

Um to the girls who go and then of course has it made a difference in anybody's life. Has it really done anything to anyone. And um, I probably was kind of skeptic growing up there all my life and it didn't appear that anything had been done to me. So you know its hard to internalize that kind of concern when your one of the people they should be concerned about. (Laugh)

12:26:28:15

A:

So it was hard, you know to understand, and the technology and all that, you know its like well what does that mean and you know are they telling us everything, kind of a thing. That pretty much everybody probably talked about and said. But I don't remember, you know jumping on the bandwagon getting absolutely up in protest, concerned about it.

12:26:52:23

A:

On the Girl Scout level pretty much I looked at the board in Ross, ah people who were investigating, or looking into it as they were gonna you know get as much information. Because it was gonna impact, if anything happened at the plant, would impact whether or not there was girls in camp at that moment it would still impact the camp. And um, so it was like a step aside but not in the forefront.

12:27:29:07

Q:

And while you were running the camp, did Fernald make itself known, did they tell you what to do in an evacuation drills or anything like that?

A:

I don't really know that part. Of course we always had the tornados and um that kind of safety issues that was addressed, but I don't know that I ever saw a piece of paper that if the plant blows up, do this kind of a thing. So I don't really know. And I really was not on, you know privileged to that information other than I don't remember hearing anything as a troop leader who would register to go to the camp. I don't remember hearing anything about it so I don't really know if they discussed or it was presented to the leadership at council, I can't say that.

12:28:15:10

Q:

Tell us ah, about the events that led up to the camp closure.

A:

Um, at the time in '84 I was still on the board. And we would, we would discuss, things were coming more to the forefront and we would discussing over the next couple of years, what potentially might happen, what you know even options that the council could use. Um, I'm, I'm assuming there was a committee that looked into it specifically and made reports at meetings um, nothing much I don't think was sent to the general membership um there might have been a survey or a questionnaire or something that went out.

12:29:07:27

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I just don't remember at this point in time. But um, in general the council was not ignoring the situation, but certainly did not have: a) what they felt was a whole lot of information, or b) what kind of information was it you know. And how do you make a decision based, when do you know is enough information.

12:29:32:17

Um, so they discussed it for some time before um, any actual action was done. And then we went on our service unit camp out in the fall, of September, usually's when we went and then right after that then they made the announcement that the camp would be closing, that no one would be able to use it. But that's pretty much all that they announced.

12:30:05:10

And it was, I guess the impression we got for the people who lived here was well they're gonna check things out and find out. And um, and I guess as uncomfortable as that was, it was, the feeling was really better safe than sorry, look into all the details, get everything straightened out and then we can go back to camping.

12:30:28:02

And, that of course never happened. So it was like a real chop off kind of a thing. But again, in hindsight there was nothing else that could have been done, I don't believe, although when you talk about emotions and how people feel that doesn't help a whole lot. That doesn't give a whole lot of comfort to people.

Q:

We have to change our tapes. Ok we're gonna take a little break.

13:01:03:10

Q:

Ok. Speak. Um, tell me how the girls reacted to the camp closure.

A:

By then um, I don't know how my troop girls, we were pretty small senior troop by then, and like I said we had just finished a camp out and um, so it may not have hit them as much. I know my own daughter was upset because it was a lot of ties for her. Um.

A:

The other girls pretty much didn't go as a councilor you know and that kind of activities. Um, she, my daughter also was the president of the senior planning board at that time, and did attend board meetings in that position so she did hear some of the talk. Um, but um, again while we were there, the big decision making didn't happen. Um, other than to stop any activities at the camp.

A:

She was upset, um, she's still probably would be upset to talk about it. Um, because again that was an important part of her life just going to that camp and camping in general. But the other troops, I don't know. I really never talked to the other troop leaders to ask about how their girls felt. At that time, it was like maybe we don't really want to talk about it kind of a thing.

A:

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Individual troop leaders may have talked with their girls about why they couldn't go there anymore, or why they needed to choose another camp for an activity, but I, I don't, like I said my girls were all seniors, up in the high school.

Q:

As part of the generation that worked so hard to get that camp established, how did that make you personally feel when the camp closed?

A:

I was saddened, um, again we had the extra tie because of Michelle because of the Boy Scouts, my husband's Boy Scout troop that connected with the camp that would go out on the weekends to help set up the units and so there was an extra tie there, besides the fact that it was um, so close, and because like I said us senior girls ourselves we had worked to make money for the council in order for them to go out and buy and build the camp. Um. I was kind of in between two thoughts that oh my gosh we won't be able to do that anymore, we won't be able to go there and what's going to happen. Um, is it just going to fall down, be abandoned, whatever. And the fact that well I guess we have to think about the issue of safety, um, pretty much you didn't think about it when you were camping there in relation to the plant. And, so it was hard. I was unhappy. I know when she called after the actual sale date, when I told her she cried on the phone, cause a portion of her life that's gone. Um, and somehow I don't think, she worked at a couple, she worked at Camp Campbell guard, and I don't think she connected the same way with our camp. It was just a job, a summer job.

13:04:37:03

And, I, I don't believe there is, I mean if they closed it tomorrow, she would be sad that people wouldn't be able to do that. But I don't think there would be that kind of a connection that she felt that they were taking away a part of her life and I think that pretty much the other adults who were in my generation that were involved in Girl Scouting in this area we pretty much felt the same way. Now lots of people were downright angry and it was hard to talk to them when they were so angry but it was definitely a loss in their life that some people might not understand, I don't know. But it was a loss. It's like when your church is torn down, and you have to not just build another one but go somewhere else, start all over again and it was sort of that kind of a feeling that: a.) We didn't believe it and b.) In the beginning well maybe they'll get it straightened out and we can go back that kind of activities were going through people's minds. But of course, that never happened.

13:05:44:21

Q:

And at the time, um, how did you feel about the Fernald plant?

A:

Um, I don't know. I don't know that I'd say mad, um maybe upset. Because again what were we hearing? Were we hearing the truth, um, why didn't somebody say something before? What, I mean if they were in the know how come AOh, yeah it's government, now we know@ Those kind of negative feelings of course, but, I mean, I don't think I would have bashed anybody who worked there or anything like that because probably at that point, unless you were upper upper management I would figure that you might not have known a whole lot either, kind of a thing. It just depends. But I mean I wasn't you know, go out and protest, angry, upset that all of it. Why did all of it have to come to a head and why did it result in the closure of the camp.

13:07:01:27

Q:

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Good. Good. Um, I'm just reading through what she had written, um, what was the typical day at the camp like when you would stay?

A:

Um, breakfast, and it depends on whether you were cooking or the girls were cooking and of course what unit you were in. Totem and Fox Den, they had stoves, um, the tent units, definitely over a campfire if you could. They all had kitchen units, so that depends on what you wanted to make, um, lots of times we would do box ovens, where we would take the cardboard box and the tinfoil and do that kinds of stuff, different kinds of cooking so that the girls could experience it. Make different foods other than the same ole same ole. Pretty much once you got up, hit the latrine, got your

breakfast going then you would look at whatever activities you were planning for the day. Now if you were a resident camper, they're pretty much scheduled. Um, if we wanted to, just for our troop campout it was pretty much up to us what we did.

13:08:20:10

Whether you wanted to walk around the camp and look at the different units. Whether you had a scavenger hunt organized. Whether you had an activity in the camp, such as tying or you know any multitude of activities that you wanted to do, or if you were specifically working on a badge, then you would get down to business of whatever it was you were doing. And of course lunch came. Depends, sometimes we looked at trying to plan an easy lunch so that you didn't occupy three or four hours making lunch, cleaning up lunch, so you had more time to do the fun things. Or just sit around, take a break, or just look at things or everybody could go lay in their bunks for a few minutes and relax. And then supper.

13:09:07:13

And then we almost always had a campfire and some kind of singing and as I tell everybody, I love to sing, nobody loves to listen but I love to sing (Laughter). And um, when my daughter went to resident camp, she always learned all the new songs, all the songs so she could come back and teach the rest of the troop and any other Brownie troops or groups that she would be involved with. So that we were up you know pretty much of what the songs were and what was happening in the singing world so to speak, even though none of us could really do very well at it, but we loved it and it was fun. Although now there's a whole lot of songs that are politically correct so we can't sing those anymore (Laughter).

I have found that to be true.

Yes. (Laughter)

13:09:55:02

Cause we were the same way. We had all the Girl Scout songs down, and now you know. My husband doesn't like to go long distances in the car with me, so I'm glad. (Laughter)

Our senior troop went to Vermont as a special trip in 1962. They had a Girl Scout roundup in Vermont. There were thousands of girls from all over the United States there. And one girl from our troop was chosen to go, and one girl from another senior troop in the White Oak area was chosen to go and we were all jealous so we decided, well we're going to go and visit. So we planned and saved money, and I couldn't tell you how many paper drives we had and stuff and I imagine bookos of cookies and uh earned enough money to rent a bus and we went to, um, we stopped in Niagara Falls. We went to Fort Ticonderoga. We went to Mystic Connecticut of course we went to Vermont to visit the roundup. We

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stayed in somebody's cow pasture, put up tents.

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My dad did not go, but he provided us with a two seat, two hole seat latrine that fit inside of a tent and you put plastic bags underneath it so that it would collect the waste, and then you discarded those everyday and so we had our own setup there in the camp, in the cow pasture. Among the cow patties, and um, we really had a good time doing that as a senior troop and, um, again that was a whole big project kind of a thing, but it was, it was fun. And then we tried to plan a couple of trips for our girls um money was a whole lot big problem by the time they got in junior high and high school.

13:11:38:16

It was certainly more expensive to do any kind of activity and um, we did do a couple of different things. Um, where I'm saving money now to go to England in 2001 um, with a small side trip to Switzerland to ??????. Um, my daughter's troop is interested in going, so we're saving money to that end now.

Now that sounds like fun.

Yes, Yes.

Wow.

13:12:08:06

Q:

Um, let's see. Let's, I want to go forward just a little bit. Um, generally how do you feel about living in such close proximity to the Fernald site?

A:

It never bothered me. It really never, I never gave any thought to it for I would suppose most of my early life, um, later I would hear news reports about, um, the cancer rates in Southwestern Ohio is higher than any other part of Ohio. Nobody ever actually said a and b but they would say a and then somewhere later somebody would mention b, but never put the two together. Um, my own father died of cancer of the larynx, but he smoked like a chimney, so it's hard to say did, 20-30 years of living in the area make that worse, I don't know, there's no way to ever say. But I never really personally, I mean it never really bothered me personally.

13:13:27:12

Even when I pretty much heard what they really did as opposed to what people said they might be doing. It's like well you know what can you: a) What can you do? b.) I've already been here. And if I wanted to move to the east side of town there, you know there might be something over there that might causes bigger problem as people are saying this could be. So we didn't move. We're still here.

13:13:56:08

Q:

What did you think the plant did? I mean did anybody have any ideas about what the plant did? I mean besides the Purina thing. Did you have any...

A:

No, not until way later in life when actually everything started coming out in the paper. And then, atomic and all that was again processed into my brain but not not detailed down to where I could say what they did. It was, it was a business. That's pretty much it for me. I didn't, you know get into it so to speak.

13:14:31:29

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Q:

And how do you feel about the work that's happening right now? Have you heard much about that?

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A:

Well I know it's been a long time and I, I, of course people may get aggravated but you know it wasn't built in a day, so to speak, to make the mess so it's going to take awhile and of course now by law, all the safety issues everything has to be done so differently. It isn't like you can scoop it all up and bury it in the ground somewhere. Whatever it is. So I understand it takes a long time. But again you have to take sort of everything with a grain of salt because if the government's dealing with it, that makes it hard for people to swear up and down that their going to believe every word that comes out of somebody's mouth. And I think, doesn't matter what company comes to be involved in it I think it's pretty much the same way.

13:15:22:28

I mean, because they would, everybody would say well, either we're being told what they want us to know or they're only telling us half the story. There's always going to be a negative to it. But, I guess in, when it comes to personally, me and my family, I don't, I mean, I can only hope that they're doing right. Again, I don't know that I would be motivated enough to move to another part of the county, um, at this point if something's going to happen, I guess it's going to happen. Although I feel basically reassured with the medical program that: a) Somebody's watching me, with, other than my family doctor even, because he's looking at me as a a patient and they're looking at it a step above that because they probably do know more about people's health that lived in the area, worked in the area than he could ever know. So, I kind of look at, I kind of feel reassured that somebody's lookin at the big picture. I mean, I'm the little picture of an individual but somebody is looking at the big picture. And that's pretty much all that I can do. Say that if they're looking at the big picture then if there's something that need to let us know, then I'm hoping that they'll do that.

13:16:47:17

Q:

So your part of the medical monitoring program?

Uh, huh.

Um, tell us a little bit about that? What exactly do you have to do?

A:

Um, basically in the beginning, though it was a whopper of a physical and I mean of course I'm in health care, I mean I know that this stuff when you pile it all together, it's a big undertaking of expense to start with that each individual got all the testing that was done. And then on a yearly basis we go um, we either do a survey, or we do a actual physical, or both. Just kind of scattered out through the year. And, um, I feel real comfortable because I know as a person (chop off my health care) but as a person I wouldn't go to the doctor and all that stuff. So it's reassuring, I mean, as a nurse I know I should do all that stuff, but I don't. And so it is reassuring that there is, I do have a much better medical history and background in just test results and stuff that I might normally have.

13:17:54:20

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Basically I'm a healthy person so you don't go to the doctor for every rip, stitch, or whatever. So, at least I do have a basis for if something develops in a little while or another 10 years or whatever, then they'll have a baseline on practically every kind of test that they would ever want to take on me. And I feel good about that and I feel good about that for my children, um. Michelle comes home for her testings, schedules so that she can take vacation time, and she goes, wah, wah, I work in a hospital all the time, why can't they just do it here. And it's like, well, they have their own standards and that way they know what parameters they're using etc. And so she schedules to come and our son, he is developmentally handicapped, was his title in school, he's high functioning, but he doesn't drive, and he's has learning problems, just some general life problems.

13:18:53:10

If we died tomorrow he would have to have somebody to help him manage. And it's great knowing that he has that resource in medical testing, and again, that big picture. I feel comfortable that if I did die tomorrow than at least he would have some kind of um, look at the big picture in his health, other than the day to day. So, I feel, I feel good about it. It's amazing that they do as much as they do in the way of testing. Cause like I said, I know how expensive all of it is. So...

13:19:35:09

Q:

So once Fernald is torn down, as you know that's what they're doing out there, what would you like to see that land used for?

A:

Well, definitely not houses. Um, I don't know. I don't know if people would feel comfortable going there as a park. I don't know if people would be comfortable going there for any reason. I think if you put a big fence around it and a big padlock, everybody would go uh, huh, yeah, they got it cleaned up all right then how come you can't get in if you want to get in. So I think they have to be real careful because they're fighting a perception that's 99.9% bad for years and maybe very negative for much more years. So what they do with it is I don't know, it's almost as much as kind of a quandary, I mean what were we going to do with the Girl Scout camp. That same kind of quandary. Because you just can't say, do this or that or the other. There really has to be some thought put into it so that people would accept the results and be comfortable with it and not be afraid of it.

13:20:58:03

Q:

Good. Uh, let's see. Uh, have anything you want to add?

A:

Um, no, I think it's real interesting that what your trying to do again because I'm involved in archives I can see that this is a valuable piece. Because once something happens to me any feelings or thoughts that I had would be gone. So to look at trying to capture as many people's feelings and understandings about the whole thing from a to you know the beginning to where it stands now I think it's real important. Um, what you do with it, you know you may not do anything with it for 10 years but if you don't do this part you don't have anything to do with. So I think that's real important. I think that's real valuable.

13:21:58:18

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And when I talked to a couple of different people they go your getting a job at Fernald. No, it's living history, it's archive kind of thing and they go Oh, OK. So I mean I really haven't heard anybody say negative about other than they didn't understand what this process was. Um, and, but I think they, you know, that's a different light. So maybe by me talking to people kind of help a little bit to look at it. And also, you know, if there's if I talk to somebody and they go well, I, whatever, whatever, you know to maybe put them in contact with you all to see maybe, again that different story might be a piece of information you didn't have before or a understanding or um, just a hearing of something that you hadn't heard before.

13:22:53:03

So I think this is, I think this is important and whether anything comes up actual my piece, doesn't really matter in general the you know 50-100-300 people whatever you do bring some kind of understanding to the whole thing. And again, like I said, if you don't do anything with it for 10 years and then something happens after that then that's great. Um, so my piece might not be valuable in it's own but in the big picture I think how people feel in all different aspects, just you know whether you worked there, whether you lived near there, whether you you know whether it was impacted in your own personal life by somebody you loved, you know died, and you felt like they were responsible, etc. etc. Those are the kinds of things that if you don't hear it you won't know it. So...

13:23:52:04

Great.

OK.

Thank you very much.

OK everybody, quiet on the set, this is NAT sound.