

NOTICE

This transcript contains a Living History Interview conducted and prepared as part of the Fernald Living History Project. The narrations, descriptions, perceptions, opinions and beliefs expressed in this interview are solely those of the interviewee(s) and are not to be attributed directly or indirectly, to the United States Government, to the U.S. Department of Energy, to Fluor Daniel, Inc., to any Fluor Daniel Fernald teaming partner company, to any of their officers or employees, to the Fernald Living History Project or to anyone associated with the Fernald Living History Project.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

Name: Charlie Alvis

Date Interviewed: 5/6/99

Date Transcribed: 6/22/99

Tape: 16

Project Number 20012

Tape FLHP0032

07:01:02

Q:

Ok. First of all, if you could just give us your name and spell it, just so we make sure we have it right.

07:01:08

A:

Ready now. (Response: Hm-hm) Charlie Alvis. C-H-A-R-L-I-E A-L-V-I-S.

Q:

Great. And you can just talk to me. Just completely ignore the camera like it's not even there, (Response: Oh yeah) Just have a conversation, just you and me. Um, first of all let's go a little bit into your personal background. Um, where were you born, how long have you been in the area?

07:01:29

A:

Ah, born in Spencer West Virginia. Ah, I got drafted out of high school in 1944, as a senior, and I went to the Pacific. And I was there when the atomic bombs were dropped. Ah, I came up here to work in 1953. Had a wife and a 5-month-old baby. Ah, but before that, let's say that after I got out of the Army, I attended Bloomville State Teachers College on football scholarship.

07:02:06

A:

Went there 2 ½ years, then I transferred to Morris Harvey. I went there 2 ½ years and by having transferred, I lost some hours, credit hours. And then I went to work for BF Goodrich, in Akron Ohio, and then came back to BF Goodrich in Institute, West Virginia. It's the largest synthetic rubber plant in the world.

07:02:29

A:

And a lot of the people that worked down there came up here. Lot of foreman, area foremans and stuff like that, chemical operators. And ah, like I say, in November 1953 was when I started work here. And we ah, started at Plant 3, want to go into that now or?

07:02:51

Q:

Well first of all how did you get your job?

A:

FER\FLHP\TRANS\FLHP-16.WPD\February 23, 2005 9:45AM

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

Ah, they ah, National Lead came down to BF Goodrich there in Institute, and they interviewed people. I heard about it later on and two of us drove up here, and then I was hired as chemical operator then.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

07:03:14

Q:

And what kind of ah, security clearance and stuff did you need to work at Fernald?

A:

A Q clearance. And it was really rough because ah, they went back to Spencer and people told me later, said they checked for everything under the sun. Dirt under your fingernails needless to say. But ah, it, it was, you had to be a fairly decent individual to get a Q clearance. Or you, you could work in some of the areas out there without a Q clearance, but ah, the FBI was doin' the checking. It was pretty rigid, ah, ah, clearance.

07:03:49

Q:

Sure. And ah, tell us just a little bit about ah, the security after you started working there. What was that like?

A:

Well they checked, checked your lunch box as you come out. They had security all through the areas, and there was fences. And ah, they'd stop you sometime if they saw you out on the street, where do you work, ah Plant 3, that's all right if you're near Plant 3 where you'd be going to lunch.

07:04:18

A:

Ah, if you was over in Plant 4, and they asked you where you worked and you said Plant 3, then they took you out of the area. You, you had to have ah pretty good reason to be in another area. But at that particular time if you was assigned to Plant 3, that's where you worked. If you assigned to Plant 4, you worked there. You didn't go anyplace else.

07:04:40

A:

In later years, they got it so, course ah the clearance changed and everything else, they had like I told you before, they had fences around Plant 4 and 7. Ah, Plant 9 had a fence around it, ah Pilot Plant had a fence around it, ah Plant 8 didn't have or the machine develop, development machine shop didn't have one around it.

07:05:04

Q:

And ah, what about out in the community, what kind of um, security was out in the community?

A:

Well, I didn't attend ah the bars or anything like this, but I'm told if you went there and start talking about working at Fernald ah, they'd keep coming back until they found out if you did, if it was true that you did work there, then they, I, I guess they report it to security. That ah somebody is down there saying things that they shouldn't be saying, and this and that.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

07:05:37

A:

'Cause we never, they told us that we weren't to say anything about where we worked, what we did or anything else. I've had reports, that're, of people when they saw they painted the, one of the water towers were checkered board, you know, they said, well we thought they made biscuits there for dogs. Thought it was a dog factory, that's all they knew about it. So, if you want to say that ah things were kept pretty close ah, they didn't even know about that, you know what we were making.

07:06:09

Q:

Were you able to discuss your ah, job at all with friends and family?

A:

No. No. They wouldn't, really to be honest about it, they wouldn't know what you were talking about anyway.

07:06:23

Q:

So, if they were to ask, um, what would you say?

A:

I'd just tell 'em I couldn't talk about it, or ah you wouldn't be interested in it anyway. It's just on a need to know basis, and ah I didn't think they needed to know because I was told not to.

07:06:42

Q:

Great, great. Um, tell us a little bit, you got there in 1953, just as the plant was up in operation they...

A:

It wasn't yet. (Response: It wasn't yet) The Pilot Plant was working and some of the others, but Plant 2, I mean ah Plant 8 was operating. Ah, but Plant 2 and 3 wasn't. And we started that up in '53.

07:07:06

Q:

Tell me a little bit about the early years.

A:

Such as the operations?

Q:

Hm-hm, you were a chemical operator then.

07:07:16

A:

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

Right. (Response: Ok) Well, the ore came in, in 30, in 30 and 55 gallon drums. Ah, it came from Rhodesia South Africa, and ah, other some, I guess some came from Canada. But they would come in to Plant 1 and they would sample it.

07:07:36

A:

And it was suppose, you remember the two, the silos, the ah, the ah, tiled silos that were up in Plant 1, the material was suppose to go in there, and then be fed underground ah, down through that's First Street I believe, and ah over to ah, Plant 2. And it was supposed to go in the, bucket, bucket elevators and then go right on up to the digesters, to be dumped into the digesters, to be digested. That never did work.

07:08:12

A:

So, to say that according to SOPs, ah if you cut out that what worked and what didn't work, and the, you had to improvise after that. Then they started shipping it down on trailers down to Plant 1, to ah Plant 2. And remember the two conveyors that runs east and west of Plant 2 digestion area? They just set a fork truck driver come down and set these up on the conveyors and the operators dumped them in, ground and metal, and then they went up to the bucket elevators.

07:08:41

A:

And into the digesters. You go into the extraction, and they'd extracted uranium out of it. And I believe those were 18 inch columns that they used in there. And they had, held interfacing on it. And, and they'd just skim off the ah, radiation, the ah radioactive material, you know the ah, that they wanted. Then the byproduct from that, that hurt 'em from start up to get rid of the byproduct.

07:09:13

A:

Byproduct from ah extraction was pumped over to Plant 3 and combined raffinate. That means hot and cold. They had the 300 series of tanks there that had ah, 16 to 18 inches of um, concrete around it. It was that hot. Then right south of there, there was a calciner. Now if you can imagine what a calciner was, was, look at a, a top. That a kid spins, that's what it looked like, but it was three stories high. At that time, it was ah, ah, gas fired, this calciner was, and they, burners were horizontal, and they kept plugging up and stuff like this, we had a lot of problems with it.

07:10:14

A:

Then they switched them around and put them vertically and there's like a big centrifuge in the top of this big top that's suppose to spray this down in there and the heat coming up through it would turn it into a calciner product, or brown oxide. Now this is a byproduct from extraction coming over to combine raffinate. Going through evaporator, all the acid beads being driven off, and it was turned into a slurry like, like a chocolate slurry, and ah, they had a man from Rhodesia, South Africa sitting right in the door of hot raffinate building and every time we'd blow a batch out there, they'd write this

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

down.

07:10:58

A:

Ah, this thing, this thing never did work right. It ah, they started feeding it, well anyway one time they was running it and that centrifuge or like a fly wheel that was feeding the material in there, took off. I forget where they said they found it. But then we started feeding it into the bottom of it, and still it would make up, get two feet thick inside of the tank. And then we went down inside of that and ah, in scaffolding, we had cufflo respirators on and that, and whites, no anti-C's or nothing else.

07:11:35

A:

They hadn't heard of that. And we'd say, work in there 6 hours a day, and we'd come out of there and we'd be just brown. We'd be shoveling, and scrapping, this would fall down and, and they'd blow the batches out to K-65. After we got that done, they, they, we'd take buffers in there and buff the sides of this, real smooth. So when we started up again, you might run two, three days, then it start to build up, and you couldn't run anymore. It watered, the slurry would come out wet. So finally they tore that down.

07:12:09

A:

But let me say this just right at that time. That was back in the early '50's ah, they had more trouble with this byproduct than anything else. That's why the accumulation of drums, they started putting it in drums. But, I heard when I came back in 1980 that, that the material was in K-65, I forget, they're calling them silos out there, we called them tanks. K-65 tanks and they were numbered 1 - 2 - 3.

07:12:43

A:

But ah, they told me that ah, they, Rhodesia, South Africa come to the government and asked them if they would give us 7 million dollars to just leave it there. And so I guess our government said yes and it'll cost us a hundred million to get rid of it. Right south, after they tore that calciner out there, well I must have tell ya about the hot raffinate, a drum, a drum burrow building that they was using as a trash compactor later on.

07:13:18

A:

Do you remember that? They had a, oliver, iron cofillers over there that they feed this slurry into and they cut it off with an iron cutter as it built up, they'd just shave it off the end of the drums. And like I say this is why so many drums accumulated over there. Right south of that pad was a building called hot, hot raffinate. If you recall that I told you about the 300 series tanks, having 12 to 18 inches of concrete around them, that's where the Q-11 product went and everything.

07:13:54

A:

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

Got over to the hot raffinate building and they had ah, they were ah, had filters in there like they had in the drum burrow building. Inside of those walls, ah concrete was say three foot thick. And then if you had a window into the next room it was filled with oil. See this is the way it was supposed to be, to work.

07:14:17

A:

This is how the calcinite was supposed to be taken and they weren't doing it. You know you was supposed to be following SOP's and all this and that. But that, but that was another bad building there to work in. The evaporator to get rid of this product ah, was heated, had heat exchangers or they were evaporators they would drive off the nitric acid which went into nitric acid tower and it was ah, concentrated acid when it would come out of there.

07:14:55

A:

We recovered 55 to 60 percent nitric acid. We pumped that back to ah Plant ah, 2 to recycle it. Ah, the off gas from ah the metal dissolver building on the lower side of digestion, ah all the ah for all the ah pots or reactors for denitration, at, they had seven down each side of that deck on the second floor.

07:15:26

A:

Ah, when the evaporator up there was running in Plant 2, it was driving off the waters and the impurities and things that ah, extraction had left in it. This came down in the boil down tanks and spurge tanks and when the grams per liter got high enough you'd dump it into a 250 or 275 gallon pot.

07:15:54

A:

You'd cook that for so many hours. Some times you could cook one off in 3 or 4, 5 hours. Others it took longer. This turned the UNH into gold looking or yellow UO₃ which was gulped out of there into packaging unit and then went to Plant 4 to make green salt out of it.

07:16:18

A:

But to back up a little bit, they had wear boxes. And, we had our own scrubber system for denitration. You could send this to the atmosphere or you could send it to Plant 3. Plant 3 had, at this particular time, had two spencer blowers. They were inadequate to start with, but they were hooked up to steam just in case the electric went out, the steam generators would kick in. I never did see 'em, the steam generators kick in myself.

07:16:51

A:

So I don't think they ever worked. But when they cooked off 14 pots at one time, the metals shop dissolver and digestion all in that vacuum system, it just wasn't a third enough of vacuum. You know, two fumes filled that building, de, denitration building, it just orange looking in there. And we crawled

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

up and down the steps to operate the pots.

07:17:19

A:

To gulp these pots out of there, there was an 8 to 10 inch fan in the back, in the wall. And it was to pull the heat out of there. You was gulping that pot that's 1300 hundred degrees, that's hot. And you're standing there with a tube in your hand like that (demonstrates with hands a foot apart, in front of body with an up and down motion), but anyway that pulled that right in your face. No respirator, no nothing, you know.

07:17:44

A:

But, ah, later they got so that people got to noticing these fumes coming out of the absorber towers over of Plant 2 and 3, that they would ah, gulp them out say on third shift, fill them up on day shift and then ah, start them up on second shift so people couldn't see these fumes, you know.

07:18:15

A:

And eventually, when they did that, they just opened it up to the atmosphere and let it into the atmosphere. But that was suppose to come over, be pulled over to plant 3 with a, with these Spencer blowers later they got ah, Rooks Conerville blowers in. And they wasn't enough either. Just all kinds of fumes everywhere.

07:18:36

A:

And you could walk out of this nitric acid tower and there's acid hitting you all the time. It, it was just terrible, and ah. But anyway, after the material left denitration, went to Plant 4. Ah, they turned it into green salt. They had a fluid bed reactors over there. And first two would go down into a, what they called a cocoa ah color, and then the next step would be introducing hydrogen. Ah, the hydrogen fluoride to produce the UO₃. Plant 4 was bad, the HF area was in the north end.

07:19:17

A:

In the north end it, it, it was the depleted HF in a liquid form and we had pictures in medical of a, of a, a general, a area foreman in maintenance walking through this water. Ahh this won't hurt you, you know, and it just eat the shoes right off your feet. And his feet got that big (demonstrates with hands spread out) ah, and all full of blisters and sores and stuff, and they've, they've got the pictures out there I'm sure yet. But he's, he's dead now too.

07:19:51

A:

This would go over leave there, but anyway let's say on these, go back to denitration, boil down spurge tanks exhausted the atmosphere. There was no entrainment separator in there at all. And this, get a little hot in there, it just belch out and go out, fall down on the ground, and kind of turn it yellowish

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

like.

07:20:18

A:

Plant 4, when they would work over there, they'd have some problems. If snow was on the roof of Plant 4, it just looked like ah green ah grass growing up there, it was all green. If you'll notice Plant 4 windows today, like that, you can't see out of 'em. There tar, ah etched in that, hydrogen fluoride has etched those ah glasses, that you can't even see out of 'em.

07:20:48

A:

When it leaves Plant 4, it's green salt, it goes to Plan 5, in ah, 20 gallon can, I guess. Or a, and they would dump it in a _____, in the F machines along with the magnesium. Then it would go in a Rockwell furnace. And these Rockwell furnaces didn't have any vacuum on them or nothing else. And some times they would half fire or something, and it would just come right out in the atmosphere. And these people went right in and operated, it didn't bother them any. They made them stay right there and operate. Two, three, four a night would blow out sometimes.

07:21:27

A:

And then, usually you'd get an impure derby at the time. Ah, when they broke them out up there, you could just about tell which one was gonna catch on fire. You, you could see the impurities in it. At, these had ah, these ah, in ah A Area Five, they had _____ in there. And that they put down in these ah _____ at to make ah, no mandrels. And they would put seal liner around the top and would jolt this for so many hours. And that thing just drove you crazy.

07:22:06

A:

With ear plugs and everything else, it just. I think everybody that worked over there's got hearing aid. It was just awful. But then when it was fired in the Rockwell furnace, you'd get a derby that weighed about 320 pounds. Re-melt furnaces is next, back in ah, ah, B Area. And, then you had the breakout area in the back. And then the ingot would go to Plant 6.

07:22:34

A:

Where they rolled it out. Cut it into 9 pound rods, you know. They had heat treatment systems over in Plant ah, 6, and ah, if I'm not mistaken they called it a new saw furnace. It was a salt ah, bath in the south end of plant 6. And ah, I, I got an award here one time ah for, any time we went to make an inspection when I was in Fire and Safety, and you found something that was unsafe, you had to write down a way you could ah, correct that.

07:23:14

A:

Well, people were turning these 1360 pound ingots by hand. I don't know how in the world they were

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

doing it. So I made ah, lot of ah, injury investigations. I told them I wasn't the no mechanical engineer, but the ah, ingots should have a mechanical, or electrical turn over system where they could turn them over. And they finally did do that and then they'd go in this bath, ah salt bath. I'm, I'm sure that the reason they did that would drive the impurities out, the gases like hydrogen and stuff like that, ah I'll tell you later on in the Pilot Plant.

07:23:59

A:

What they made out of those flats, ah. Then they would leave there as rods and go over in Plant 6 machining and they would cut them into 9 pound slugs. Then they had to heat treat those too. Ah, there is a machine over in 6 that replaced a lot of their workers, say like a hundred on a shift, it's called a cross transmatic machine. And one person can operate this. And they had a big conveyor underneath.

07:24:31

A:

And ah, the conveyor belt on it, where the turnings fell on it, and it went up to a check, check pressure and when, a lot of times this would get on fire. And we had to get down in there and get those fires out. And we'd sometimes spend 6 to 8 hours down in there. When I was in Fire and Safety.

07:24:49

A:

Ah, I was in Fire and Safety, well I don't want to go into that yet. The time's kind of running up to about 1971. They let me go, but when I was in Fire and Safety in 1960 to '71, some where along in the early '60's I had 365 drums of turnings on fire at one time in Plant 6, on the east pad of Plant 6.

07:25:14

A:

But, ah, I think ah, I should tell you about Mallinckrodt, was a, in St. Louis, they were kind of a competitor. These are the only two parts that made ah, ah UO₃. And ah when they started to shut down, close down, they would send their turnings up here in 65 gallon drums. And they'd have them under coolant, but if it's in the summer time, they got hot.

07:25:42

A:

And they, and they would explode, just blow the atmosphere. And they, they brought a load in out of St. Louis, about 11 o'clock and they parked up there on the north end of Plant 1 pad up there. They might have two or three trailers following each other coming in. And they would ah, they would start burning and uranium metal is powerific in nature, it produces its own heat.

07:26:08

A:

And I was working third shift, and as it cooled down, those drums started going. And it burnt the tops off those trailers, the tires blew out and everything. And so we, we got the fires put out but there

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

wasn't nothing left of the trailers. You still had your black oxide. But what went in the atmosphere was something else.

07:26:32

A:

Ah, when I went back in 19 and 80, ah you don't want to get those pictures out now do ya?

Q:

No, we'll shoot those later.

A:

Yeah, Ok. But in 19 and 80 when I came back, I started to working in 2 and 3 ah 4, 5 ah Pilot Plant. They had changed then so that they could ah, work you in any place they wanted too. Not like back in the '50's where you could only work in one plant.

(Pauses to take a drink)

07:27:08

A:

Back in the early years in the Pilot Plant they had ah, one reactor. Ah, you remember seeing those flat bed trailers that they haul stuff around on. They had one of those that they were using from _____ they had a hood that they just set down over top of it. And they, talk, talk about calling this safety, ah they would heat this up, and they would do everything manually like this. And they'd get it up, the temperature up 250 some degrees ah, but the, started feeding it to a reactor there.

07:27:50

A:

But in February 1965, ah, I guess they had, got ready to start up and found out they couldn't. So they was told to put the a, close the valve manually to the cylinder. Ah, then I guess the operator turned it the wrong way, and he turned it out, and that 14 ton depleted cylinder went to the atmosphere.

07:28:21

A:

Fire department moved on it with deck guns and stuff like that trying to cool it down, but it was too late. Fourteen tons went to the atmosphere. And ah, in this mean time, then ah they hit anything that they had on the project anywhere, they did it in the Pilot Plant first. You know what I mean. They had Rockwell furnaces, they had reduction furnaces, ah grit blasters. These crucibles, when they come from Plant 5, the crucibles were ah, would have ah, gashes in 'em, or something and they would have metal in 'em. All the impurities had to be taken out.

07:29:04

A:

So ah, they had a grit blaster, called Black Beauty, ah, it was just grit like coal. And you had a wand you stuck inside, and this was all made up. And then, then, opened this valve here and that Black

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

Beauty would cut that impurities out of it that. And you talking about black oxide, you'd have it all over you.

07:29:31

A:

In finally when I'd made enough complaints about it, they made you wear a full face respirator and anti C's to work on that. After they'd done it that way for ah, years and years and years. They had a plasma sprayer down at the other end and that thing got up to 2300 degrees. And, and it powders, _____ powder, they had turned the inside of that to white to get all the impurities out. So you'd make a good derby, you know in 5.

07:30:01

A:

But it was terrible. That, one would get loose and blow that black oxide all over the building. And that plasma spray machine, when, when if the guy down there didn't get all the uranium out of it, when the plasma spray hit it, it would just burn right there, you know

Q:

All my gosh. We need to change tapes. So we're gonna pause for just a second.

Tape FLHP0033

08:01:02

Ok. We're rolling. I'm sorry.

08:01:06

A:

Ah, we were back by the Pilot Plant on the grit blaster and the ah, plasma spray. That was, that was terrible, terrible time. And ah, I ah, can go from there and tell ya about a person working in Plant 6. No, no. Let me get to some more of the operations.

08:01:32

A:

Ah, I was gonna tell you about the airport material coming to ah, from Manhattan. This came in ah, by gondola cars from ah, the Manhattan Project. And this is referred to as the airport material, because I think it was next to an airport. And it was supposed to take 20 to 25 years to run this out.

08:01:57

A:

It came in and was unloaded, but these gondolas came open. And you could tell how much of this stuff got airborne coming here from Manhattan. Ah, they were brought over to the east side of 6, and this material, they used clam shells and picked this up. And you know, the teeth don't close off good. It just spreads every where, they go above the pile and opened her up.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

08:02:25

A:

The wind was blowing, it blew that stuff every where. Contamination. But they ran this into Plant ah 8. Plant 8 was known as a scrap plant. All the scraps from all over the United States come in here. Ah, I had one of my fireman, he came out of Plant 8, and we trained these firemen. And this operator's name was Russell Craig, he was feeding ah, the Burntwood stove kiln with thorium nitrate.

08:02:57

A:

Now this is sweeping compounds and everything else that came out of the Pilot Plant. Ah, they ran a series of materials for ah Westinghouse trying to find a way to use up this thorium. It was called the Bettis, B-E-T-T-I-S, Bettis Project. And ah, he was feeding this to the kiln, and when he opened up the trap door to throw a shovelful in, it belched out at him and burned him.

08:03:30

A:

It, it just looked about half-done hamburger, his face, and it busted his eardrums and stuff like that. But when we got him over to the hospital, I packed him in ice, and sent him to Fort Hamilton Hospital. So I, I guess he's done alright. He's still living, last I heard.

08:03:49

A:

Ah, there's a box furnace on the east end of Plant 8. That's still on the north side, and they'd get oil, ah contaminated oil filters all over the project. And shipped here too, oily rags and stuff. And ah, at night, during the day they couldn't feed this box furnace 'cause black smoke would go out of it. So they got so that they wouldn't run the furnace during day shift but second, third shift, they'd throw all that they could in there and just let her go into the atmosphere.

08:04:22

A:

Ah, we had HF dumpsters round over the project, they'd be diluted and when they'd come back they'd dump it in Plant 8 on the floor and they'd pump it up into a tank and we digested along with other material. But in Plant 8 half of the time that floor was wet, um four to five inches deep and people walked over it. The control room was so hot down there that they shut it down back in the 80's because you couldn't go in there without anti-Cs and a full face respirator. Operators stayed in there 8 hours a day to operate, you know, and this is what's so amazing about this whole thing. The average individual thinks that you have to see radiation, to see it there. You have to measure, you can't see radiation, you have to use a Geiger counter and these people couldn't see no harm, you know.

08:05:24

A:

But it was there. And Plant 6 I wanted to tell you the story about Don Wilson. His brother Pud worked as a mail carrier and he died not too long ago, he was 84, 85, but Don, uh broke out in sores all over his body, just big sores. So medical brought him in and taped his fingernails and said that

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

you're scratching yourself, but that coolant over in Plant 6, you saw all types of coolant and they was forever trying to get the right one

08:06:05

A:

As these was grinding and if they didn't have coolant going in it, it would just burn, you know. But they brought Don in there and I guess they kept him two, three weeks, maybe a month. And they had a nurse and I had to check on him every so often to make sure that he didn't take any tape off his fingers and stuff like that, but he died and his wife had two children and she raised them by herself. The reason why I know all about this story is that my son married one of the daughters, later years.

08:06:41

A:

Now any place, do you want to go back to the Pilot Plant for a little bit? These, uh ballants that they put in tanks, like they do in Desert Storm, people wanted to know on television and ,around how were we getting radioactive material in this and we, uh these ballants that they put in tanks were thin flats about like that and about 4 inches thick and we put them in the furnaces down there to drive out the off gases. It's called degassing.

08:07:22

A:

But they put this in, and this is depleted now, and they put this ballants in the tank, and they didn't have no weapon that could penetrate our tanks but they made penetrators over in Plant 6 that would go through their tanks just like they were paper and then if it got inside the tank it would just go round and round and of course burned itself up and that's how you got radiation over in Desert Storm because these people was coming back saying that they had things wrong with them, they had diarrhea and uh, uranium in a burning form will produce diarrhea.

08:08:08

A:

I've tried to prove that to them and I can't but all the books says it's true, it will. But we started that Plant, the Pilot Plant, they put two new reactors in, they had the Fox Borrough control center that you saw the certificate for, you all paraded valves in different areas, by pressing a button. And uh they had outer claves in the back. There were big round cylinders that they could put these big 14 ton cylinders in and heat them up. A cylinder of UF₆, if you was to take the plug out of the end of it and reach in there and pull it out, I don't think, nobody, I don't think around knows that that's in a granular form and it almost looks like sand.

08:09:09

A:

Until you start heating it up and it goes through three stages and the last stage is in a gaseous form and you feed that to a reactor. I have safety reports that I filed on that. If a outer clave was all computerized and if the valve says close, it'll close that valve and they knew, the general foreman knew that outer clave was full yet. And they said the valve was closed there was no way that you could start

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

that up again. So he opened it up, their supposed to cool back down to 78 degree something like this into a solid form. They went in there and opened that up, no respirator, no raincoats or anything to keep, if that had let loose. Now there's a pigtail that screws on the end and that feeds into a header that goes into the reactor and that being that hot of, if you dropped a rancher on that or something, you know you're going to break that copper tubing being that hot.

08:10:39

A:

And I filed a safety report on that, you ought to see the report that I got, that was a DOE report. Uh, when they uh had so many of them going in I could write one up in five minutes just like that, and I did it when I went back. I was a hourly employee and I knew they couldn't do anything with me then. I wrote DOE before but I don't know if anyone else ever filed any or not, I know nobody ever filed a safety complaint and I, they got to be stacks of them over there when I went back.

08:11:22

A:

That's where you got thorium gas over there, the Pilot Plant being west side is where extraction was and there were glass, six inch columns out of glass. And then you had your digestion, you had Bettis equipment in there, where they're laying those for Westinghouse and they had dryers in there where they dried thoran. But when I went over there in 1980 they had stuff all over that project just sitting in glass jars, and cans and a little bit of this, all along the ledges. They had 30 gallon drums sitting in a corner with all kinds of stuff in them and didn't know what it was, so I filed safety reports on that and finally got all of that stuff out. But when you do this, you get on the wrong side of the supervisors, when you do something like this and you're the only ones doing it and they don't understand why isn't somebody else not writing something up, you know.

08:12:21

A:

But I did that, and uh I got in trouble with them a few times but by this time, Westinghouse had closed off that area west of where we were working there. To punish us for things that we did like that, they would say that we're going to start up extraction back there, we want you fellas to go back and chip off all the paint off the stairwell and stuff like that. Now this is strictly an area off limits, we just put a cup and respirator on and went back there to chip paint and he could have spent 8 hours of a day trying to make us be better boys, you know. I thought that was just outrageous to do something like that. They put camcorders in, Westinghouse did, with red lights on them, if the camcorder read the thorium gas uh, they would open up all the doors and go ahead and operate on second and third shift. It's unbelievable.

08:13:27

A:

There's supposed to shut it down, but these people was trying to make tonnage. I was going to tell you about the thoran gas and radon gas, and the radon gas came from K-65, thoran gas from Pilot Plant. They had, I was at the Plantation about two years ago and uh they had about 25, 30, 40 doctors sitting around the conference table. This professor got up and he had a book about the size of a Reader's

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

Digest on the thoron and radon gas did not effect the people in the general area. So he had the most beautiful graphs and bars that you ever saw in this book. And when he got through with his lecture, he asked for questions and answers and I popped up in the general public area back there and he said, no, no you sit down you can't talk now this is for the panel.

08:14:45

A:

I said, I'm standing up so I'm going to talk. So the question I put to the professor when did they have an instrument that they could read thoron gas? Well he didn't know that or radon gas. Mike Boback was in charge of the lab in Health and Safety at that time, he finally became department head. I have books, well they've got them at Drake down there where um it says that Mike Boback had an instrument that read radon gas but it was broken and that's as far as they went on that, so I said sir where did you get your information from to make this beautiful bars and graphs and book that you have here. Well he said do you know Nagasaki Hiroshima and I said that I absolutely did and that I was in the area when they were dropped.

08:15:50

A:

We were getting ready to invade Japan. Well he said, you know, that we took it from the readouts of a detonated and that's when I tried to explain to him, you have used an instrument here and got graphs and bars on Nagasaki, Hiroshima and those that were detonated, and stuff in K-65, Pilot Plant, radon gas was decayed, so now I know they have disposed of this book, it took \$2 million to print it you know and write it up, and now they're going to redo the whole works again, so there's over \$2 million gone there. If we could have had some of this money when we was operating out there we wouldn't have all this mess that's out there.

Q:

A:

Let's talk a little bit about your impressions of the work that's going on at Fernald now?

08:16:59

A:

Oh, I don't think there much work going on because like I say, they've, I understood the number was 150, but I don't know of rad-techs, is quite a few. I don't know how many industrial hygienists they've got, but it don't seem to me like they can get anything done besides getting in and out of anti-C's and the plant's been down all of these years. Uh, just a little big about the safe shutdown is still in the units, you know what I mean? Like in the, I think the two reactors down at the Pilot Plant has got slag in them yet, I'm not sure, I never did hear of them being deslagged.

08:17:46

A:

It's just unbelievable the way they're wasting money now, uh, but all of your scrap like I said, came from other plants. Down at Piketon, Martin Marietta's got that now? Uh, these hex cylinders they're just laying like eggs all over hundreds of acres down there. Did you know that? (Response: Are you

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

talking about the gaseous diffusion pits?) Yes, yes, but these tanks are full of UF₆. Now I've been up on 32 not too long ago moving towards Paducah, now whether they're full or empty I don't know.

08:18:38

A:

I don't know what's going on. But the thing about this, the general public didn't know that as a amateur, they think that if you open a plug in a cylinder that this is going to come out at you, it's under a vacuum and all it's going to do is suck into atmospheric pressure and, but if one of these plugs was removed and a quart of oil, motor oil dumped into that, what a reaction it'd have and think of Piketon down there with all of those cylinders just sitting around. Anything else?

08:19:27

Q:

Um, let's talk a little bit about um, I'm sure you were aware of the media attention in the mid-80s, when it came to light there was a dust collector leak out at Plant 9. Can you tell us about those years, what was your reaction and what exactly happened then?

08:19:53

A:

Well to start with the dust collector system was inadequate to start with, uh, they weren't made for that type of material. They had dust collectors and just sold 'em to them, I guess they did help some, it was better than nothing, but they were just inadequate, they weren't built for that purpose. I've been told that on your dust collector you'll lose pressure and it'll go to a vacuum like an inch or two if there's a hole in a bag or something and somebody's told me that they've done several things, put something behind the camcorder to make it run straight, like it were running good.

08:20:44

A:

I know down at the Pilot Plant at the southeast corner they've got a system down there but I forget whether it was a sly or what the manufacturer was, but it had 164 bags in it and you could of had holes in some of those bags and never show any loss. So, but as I said, I thought it was inadequate to start with and uh, I understand they got rid of an individual over that um, situation too.

Q:

They did what they call a hot shutdown. They just shut the plant down with materials on the line and everything. What was your impression of that when you heard that they were going to do that?

08:21:27

A:

Well, I was getting ready to retire and uh, those that were running, were running Plant 8, I thought, would run forever because the scrap around there and then they got all the contaminated water from the other plants there but I understand it's completely shut down. Um, tell ya a little bit about some things that went on. Uh, the products they was using, Stores was buying it and they didn't have anybody down there that was interested in the data sheets that comes with it, there's a word before the data

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

sheet, what's that called?

08:22:12

A:

Uh, (comment - MSDS? Material Safety Data Sheet?) Yeah, uh, they got in back when I had went back out there in the '80's, all these drums of shavings from the Amco's and Oliver's was stored in Plant 1 pad and they was going to recondition them if they had holes in there or what. You'd go down there and if they had holes in the side of it, you'd dump that drum into another one, and they had us working on that when the reactors were down. Uh, they took black paint and painted this you know, these drums and made them look like new again.

08:22:58

A:

They might last 6 weeks or a month and they had liners in them but they still eat through. Uh, they sent us some paint down there without a material data sheet and I tried to get one and I couldn't get it. I read up on some of the stuff in this book right here. The union had sent me to St. Louis to this school and this will tell you the effects of tricetylene, uranium, anything that you want to know. This is a hand bible and nobody out at the plant has it. I tried to give it to somebody before I left, they didn't want it.

08:23:46

A:

Uh, they was using this black paint down there, and it had formaldehyde in it, and, you know, that formaldehyde will take your taste away, that's why funeral directors uh can't smell anything, their sense of smell is gone. And we was painting these, and I said we gotta have a data sheet on this, and I got on about file safety complaints. Months and months went by and finally I got a sheet on it, and it tell you how the formaldehyde will affect the nervous system and a lot of different things, it will tell you everything right here in this book.

08:24:31

A:

The reason I got interested in it to start with, they'd have the doors up down there during the day, have these drums in there on skids, you'd paint them, put them on another skid if that skid was broken, take them back out. Then at night, nobody was working, they'd put the doors down. You'd go in the next morning start looking around on the floor, there'd be flies, be dead in there, just black, just like blackberries, just all over the floor.

08:25:02

A:

So you know that it was dangerous and shouldn't be working in it. It was just unbelievable and the triacetalene, they'd tell you was using in the garage to clean parts with. That's another agent that will affect the nervous system and they was using this in the laundry. Harry Phillips, you've heard of him, haven't you? He's not still out there is he, he's gone. (Comment - I don't think so). But he dry cleaned these gloves with tricetylene and for years we used these gloves, they'd take them in and wash

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

them.

08:25:40

A:

But they never monitored them or anything, they sat right out the back of the plant and they were hotter than anything you was working on and you'd wear them again, throw them in the barrel when they got dirty, go over them and laundry them again, bring them back over. And this was, somebody wasn't doing their job you know. That's why I say they ought to have more Industrial Hygienists and Nuclear Safety people.

08:26:05

Q:

Would you like to discuss some of your health problems? Are you comfortable doing that?

A:

Well sure.

Q:

OK.

A:

Doesn't bother me. Well my lungs, if this was a chart here, my lungs at my age should go up something like that. I recently, well not recently, I'll tell ya about that in just a second. Mine comes up about an inch or two and goes straight across. And hydrogen fluoride, see all through your lungs there's just holes in there and uh they got, they just got like welded shut. Uh, big bars on them you know, spot like that.

08:26:50

A:

But anyway that's why I'm taking, I found a good pulmonologist and he's helping me some. Uh, I recently filed for state compensation and you can say well, state compensation. I filed for it on the fact is that under the conditions I was working under, they've hurt my lungs. My lungs is gone. Uh, I don't know how long I'll have to do this, but I won my case. The three doctors, one from California, Cincinnati and New York, uh, we took it to a state compensation board and they told me that they heard the case and I didn't know it at the time but when my lawyer and I went in to see the lady that was hearing the case, she had a friend and she was a woman lawyer.

08:27:50

A:

So the woman lawyer sat there and me here and they went over here and at the end she said to you have anything to ask Mr. Alace. She said yes. This is 1984 is when this, when my lungs went really bad. Over the years I supposed it had been building up. But her question was uh, the doctor that you're going to, what did he say about it? I said nothing. I said he, doctors and lawyers is like most people that don't know anything about uranium. Uh, if you would tell them that you got reading so many

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

millirems or rems on a certain piece of equipment or something uh, they would say I don't know anything about this.

08:28:47

A:

They would just give you, and that's same thing you're asking now. You can't see radiation, you've got to measure it by Geiger counter. So I won my case. I have to have, I went to pulmonologist, he's treating me now, and when he sends them back a report I should get uh compensation. Uh, I had a friend of mine, he was a welder and he got one centimeter of asbestos in his lungs, of course he died. She got a mint. I won't tell you how much she got but I helped her get that. I helped Paul Savage wife after Paul died get his and she's getting his plus a pension. This is what people say, you're 65 and retired, yeah. How do you expect to get compensation? It's what they did to my lungs you know.

08:29:58

Q:

We need to change tapes here real quick, but hold that thought.

FLPH0033

09:01:10

Q:

Go ahead and tell me...

A:

The north end of Plant 4, I was telling you about this area foreman walking through the HF and his feet got in this mess like that. Uh, these ammonia disassociators to start up Plant 4, you have to start these ammonia disassociators to start up the Pilot Plant, you have to use these ammonia disassociators 'cause what you're doing, your cranking ammonia, raw ammonia and getting hydrogen off of it you understand. And this is supposed to be a Class C area safety wise. All light bulbs, all wiring had to be in rigid conduit and enclosed light bulbs you know to prevent electrical spark.

09:02:06

A:

I'd wrote up Plant 4, the Pilot Plant a thousand one times. I said you gonna have one here. They did, I don't remember the year but it blew out the whole north end of Plant 4. Somebody had went up there and started up a disassociator, and the hydrogen was leaked someplace, and she went boom, they blew it. Uh, right at the northeast end of the Plant 3 control room, there was a small building not much bigger than this room. They had three ozone generators sitting over here, big, they had dryers over on this side.

09:02:58

A:

When they pumped ozone into the 23rd tray of the concentrator, nitric acid recovery system to recover the nitric acid, because this was stuff that was going in there had fluorides in it and it would eat up

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

stainless steel work caps, just eat them up. Uh, then we had to dry it before we turned it into a ozone generator because it would have damaged if we hadn't.

09:03:32

A:

But those generators all are gone now and like I say, people didn't know this was there. Um, I don't know where, I told you about the paint and I, one thing I wanted to tell you about was they overfilled five ace cylinders. That was in the cold trap in the Pilot Plant. When you shut one of these HF cylinders down, it had to cool down before you can take it out. You had one feeding, one heating up and one cooling down.

09:04:17

A:

Uh, when you shut this off, you had to evacuate that pigtail and out before you could take it off or this would come out in your face. They had a compressor system over there where they pulled the vacuum and they overfilled these five ace cylinders, they weren't too big. And they had several of them on the project and they'd never, you can't leave anything overfilled I guess, too much pressure on it. So Russ Keeble operated the control room and I worked on the outside around the hot, cold trap and we reduced them down to legal weights. And that's the first time that they say, that's ever been done. So that's a pretty nice little project.

09:05:01

Q:

Can you tell me um, how it affected your health when you were cleaning out areas of Plant 2/3?

A:

Um, well they had, you know, HF fumes, they'll choke ya to death, I mean you can't breathe in many of those. Like I told you before, the vacuum system was just inadequate for anything and the way they operated was just unsafe in every bit of the word. Like I said, those Connerville's, see what they did, they pulled this over, it went down underneath, down to the ground level and this entered the absorber tower and I forget the trays that was in one of them. They had two of them, and the gases went through that, and right out into the atmosphere, you know, and you could just see streams of, you know, - HF fumes going out.

09:06:03

A:

Later years they got Knox counters and they'd shut you down, now they, of course they're shut down anyway. But there's nitric acid had eaten up this tower sitting there. Take a look at it sometime when you go over there, it was ready to fall down. It would just eat gravel up like nothing else and that's all there is out there is gravel. And leaks down to the floor and everything. They had to go in there and pour tons and tons of cement in there to jack that back up. Several times they did that when we worked there. Go ahead with another question.

09:06:42

Q:

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

Um, let's see. I'll just check through my list here. Let me know when you're ready.

09:07:01

Q:

Um, when you were a chemical operator what kind of training did you get to prepare you for your job?

A:

As a chemical operator? Oh, we just read the SOP's and started that.

09:07:19

Q:

And what is an SOP?

A:

Standard Operating Procedure. It's just like a black book, like one of those over there or you know. Uh, nobody knew what was going to happen till we did it. The thing that I think was the most outrageous things, NLO never, people never got around to say, you've got to wear a respirator on this job and if they caught you on it, well you better go get a respirator, you know. And we didn't have them set up as type of respirators that Walt did. Walt's done a magnificent job out there I think.

09:08:02

A:

How to wear one, how do one fit you and like I told you there, I've got tons of safety things that I mentioned and that was one of them on the respirator cartridges, I saved them a lot of money. Far as, when I went to Fire and Safety, I didn't know much about uranium fires, magnesium fires, but I had enough background that I could study, and I did.

09:08:37

A:

And then I went to school in Norfolk, Virginia, a Naval Base School on fire and safety. I went to Memphis, Tennessee. I was really one of the early first graduates of the Multimedia First Aid Instructors. There's one from the Cincinnati Fire Department and myself, went to Memphis to take that training, but they got rid of me before I could even teach the class. At that time, I had four kids and two of them in college.

09:09:10

Q:

And how did that come about?

A:

Well, a lot of things. Like I said Doc Quigley and I never got along one bit. We argued every pay day. Got paid every two weeks and there's my little check and I wanted to get paid for some of those other hats that I was wearing. They told me in Memphis that no man should have to take that much responsibility. And the others didn't care because they didn't know. They had two non-veterans that

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

were already 65 and they said I was the youngest man in the department so I'd have to go. So they stayed there and worked, and me with four kids, both of them are dead now.

09:09:58

A:

There's three of us living, the original Jim Kloth, Bob Ronick and myself. But I was only there 11 years and when I came back, they hired me as a chemical operator and uh, take the training like I took when I went back. All my health problems, you asked me a while ago, uh, my heart's out of rhythm, it's enlarged and I've got some kind of heart disease. I don't know what it is, I don't know if they know what it is. And the lung problem.

09:10:40

Q:

There's a term that they're sort of using on site now for people that worked at Fernald for a number of years and uh that's the Cold War warrior. How do you feel about that term?

A:

Well like I told you when you first come in, uh, I majored in history. Anything that's documented I watch or tape, my wife and my daughters gets mad at me, I got boxes of tapes down there. Uh, I want to tell you two things about that. First, I don't want it. I was in a combat zone for a lot of years as an 18 years old, as a squad leader at 18, and uh, I think we had been done wrong from the beginning. I'm not only trying to help the people out there now, to file complaints. When I retired, we made a trip to Paris, to Jerusalem, and to Egypt.

09:12:00

A:

Came back and I started getting all my medical records together from the doctors, the hospitals and all these such people. And I started filing for state compensation, so finally, they got Fernald workers down there you know, now if she wanted to file state compensation case, all she has to do is to call down to the Fernald workers and they will do it for you, everything which I did by myself and I even mailed it to them on my own money. The award, I don't want no part of it. I see that they're trying to write something that is wrong and was wrong, that's why I went to Doc Quigley every two weeks, this is, we should study this.

09:12:51

A:

But they said get production, get production. There was one little incident, maybe two, no one because, I won't mention the other but the people around Ross has got tons of money out of this thing, because they thought they made dog food with that checkerboard out there on the water tower you know. A friend of mine I've known for 50 years is dead now. He got \$30,000 on his home devalue. He got \$20,000 for emotional stress. He lived ½ mile from my wife's house where we lived. She got \$100 and my daughters got \$100. I got nothing.

09:13:42

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

A:

Everybody, because you worked there, you get no depreciation on your house you see. And is that fair? I just feel that it's, so many got money out there that, I don't know if they deserved it or not but I certainly know that I didn't get any of it. And as far as the award, I want no part of that, no part of it. I guess this is off of record a little bit (comment - do you want to stop rolling, because we're rolling?).

09:14:22

A:

The things was, I was in the Pacific during World War II, if you had a pair of socks on and your boots on, they stayed wet, time and time especially in the fox hole. I had that jungle rot in my feet. After I got through college and retired I went back and wrote all of this stuff down and filed a complaint with the government. Of course my records were lost in St. Louis, they burnt in a fire down there. But they didn't have hospitals in the Pacific, they'd put up a little tent. This is medical. You go to them, they give you two aspirin's and Desenex for your feet and that's it.

09:15:04

A:

But anyway, I had to have all of my toenails removed and the government has been sending, it eats the quick out under there, and that's the only place I had been, the Pacific and back to college and out there. But they keep denying, denying and denying. The Veteran's Administration, they said ways and means. Mr. Alvis, you own your own home, you got a bank account, a savings account, said you can afford your own medical needs. But if a person fell off a bar stool and broke an arm, they'll treat his grandchildren even, you go up there, but they turn me away.

09:15:52

A:

You say this is right? I keep getting letters back from the, that's the way I feel about this place out here. And I'm hoping some day I can just throw this stuff away and forget about it but I get calls everyday, everyday. Now I'm getting a lot of calls on, not only prostate, but colon cancer, and I'm hurtling with them down there, we can get colonoscopy's down there, they got something going now but you can't do anything for you down there. Just say well, see your family doctor. But I've helped a lot of people get claims settled and I hope now, since report goes from my pulmonologist down to my lawyer that I can start receiving some benefits.

09:16:40

A:

But you go out and talk to some of these people, and uh, but I'm retired and, you know, but the thing is it's what damage that was done to you when you worked there. And for years, and years, and years until OSHA got into it, we didn't have a MS - or anything to go on. We needed a book like that. But what made me terribly disgusted, I was at a dinner not too long ago and I saw this lady and I know her, I don't know her name, but all the people that worked out there I either knew their name, their children or something.

09:17:27

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

A:

And I got talking, talking to her and she said Mr. Alvis you know what, she said, when you retired that made them the happiest people in the world. I never accepted one of their returns, answer to their safety report that I turned in, not one. So they shredded those. But I got boxes full of them out here yet. Any more questions?

09:17:56

Q:

Since you were in the military and you gave so much of yourself to the country, how do you feel about our government now?

A:

Well, first thing and about every time you hear somebody speaking of uh, Bill Clinton, how can you be a head of our military forces, Commander in Chief when you refuse to go to the Army yourself? How would you feel fighting another war like that? I couldn't. I couldn't. You should take somebody like Dole, Bush, Bush shot down, Dole had to recuperate for 4 or 5 years and still left with an arm that's not working right. That's the kind of people I go for. And this is what they told us out there, we've got to get this done, so don't discuss it with nobody, let's get this job done.

09:19:06

A:

Uh, I wanted to tell you another thing about the problems with this combined raffinate. That was a thorn in the side of everybody out there. Uh, getting rid of this or drumming it up. They, I forget the year but I know that we pumped 2, 3 tanks maybe 20,000 gallons of this raffinate, this byproduct from the extraction after they got the uranium out of it. Uh, they pumped it directly over to Plant 2, general sump. Now water treatment operates part of it now. Plant 2 operated a little of it and the general sump was operated by water treatment.

09:20:09

A:

We pumped that over and when a big rain come they just dumped it right into Paddy's Run down there and it went right on down to the Miami and this was illegal as it could be. Illegal. And people that's worked there and works there, we told people these stories when we were, before we left out there, you know, new guys coming in. Uh, but that's about it on that. Uh.

09:20:42

Q:

OK. Is there anything that we didn't cover that you'd like to cover? Or anything you'd like to add?

A:

Well, not until we maybe get into the pictures or something like that.

Q:

OK.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

A:

Uh, did you understand that calciner business?

Q:

Uh-huh.

A:

It's gone now, it's not there.

09:20:59

Q:

Right. Yeah. Yeah, well lot's of, let's see Plant 1 is completely gone, Plant 7 is gone, Plant 4 is gone, the Boiler Plant is gone. Plant 9 has been torn down.

A:

Are we still on? (Comment - Uh-huh, you wanna stop?) No. I wanted to clear something up and you can ask George the same question. Those silos that were up there at Plant 1, are they still there?

Q:

No. Those are gone.

A:

Those are gone?

Q:

Uh-huh, they were torn down.

A:

They were never used for nothing. They tried to run some material over there under the road, over to digestion. One time...

09:21:44

Q:

OK.

A:

Now what do you want to go to?

Q:

Uh, you were about to tell me something I could have asked Charlie about?

A:

George.

FER\FLHP\TRANS\FLHP-16.WPD\February 23, 2005 9:45AM

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

Q:
George, I'm sorry.

A:
Just to confirm the story of those silos up there. And he called me the other day on it and I, George is a little bit funny, we always go together and I lead him into things, you know, and he's had four bypasses and I take him different places and he's getting better all the time. Would you care to go into the pictures?

09:22:16

Q:
Sure. Let's go ahead and shoot pictures.

A:
Don't forget the....

SHOWING PICTURES AND DISCUSSION

09:22:23

Q:
And uh, what is this picture?

A:
This is a, the company sent me to Norfolk Naval Base for a class in the Fire and Safety Department and I went down there to get school in 1960, when I went over there. That's about all.

09:22:45

Next picture...

A:
NLO had a safety campaign going and first time I could remember that they ever gave anything away. They gave this steak dinner and \$125 for having come up with the best safety suggestion. These are some of the runners up and I have a picture next is one that...

09:23:08

Next picture

A:
This is the final four in the runner up, in the for the steak dinner award. Somebody got a little, maybe \$250, I got \$125. So I don't remember what the one was, but somebody got the better money-wise than I did.

09:23:31

FER\FLHP\TRANS\FLHP-16.WPD\February 23, 2005 9:45AM

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

Next picture

A:

This is Plant 8 operators. I was assigned to Plant 8 during that particular time. I'm the guy without the shirt sleeves and you can see now that they're wearing, should be wearing these short sleeves, they changed it just before I left. But they tore the sleeves out. You get the pair that fit you, you would as one, I guess, there's two of us on the left there that's left. All the other people's gone. Either laid off or fired or gone for good.

09:24:09

Next picture

A:

This is down at the Rumpke's Ball Park. The guy on the right is named Satchwell and his wife, Satch died not too long ago and I'm on the left there and that's all there is on that picture.

09:24:24

Next picture

A:

This is a K-65 and at this particular time, that's a G-Hopper up there and Hopper and they had decided with all the ----- liners in Plant 5 over there they were going to try to put it in, store it in these. I guess they did store it in these and we were going to dump it in K-65. That had to be in the real early '80's because in '86 they found out that there radon gas was out there. I'm even smoking a cigarette. I was smoking then. I quit smoking in '84. But there I am with no long sleeves on or nothing, you know, no respirator, no nothing.

09:25:07

Next picture

A:

That's in Robert Gardner's office. He was general Superintendent then of production. And he's, see my wife, this is the watch. He's presenting me my 25 year pin. That's it.

09:25:24

Next picture

A:

This man Dan Billingsley, I think it was in the Pilot Plant supervisor's office and that's ole Dan on the right and I'm on the left. That's all on that one.

09:25:38

Next picture

A:

That's our fire and rescue truck, radio number 303. Or 301, I don't remember which is was now. But anyway we carried everything. The respirators, -----, fire extinguishers and when we'd go out, you

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Transcript

never knew when you was going to have a fire, have a ambulance run, or issue a welding permit, or some kind of a rescue. But that's one of the older ones. I'd say that's about 1960 or somewhere along there.

09:26:16

Next picture

A:

So is Jim in good health?

Q:

Yeah, he seems to be doing well. Tom didn't want to be interviewed. He says he doesn't like cameras much.

09:26:29

Next picture

A:

No explanation.

09:26:45

Next picture

A:

You're rolling now? I'd like to add if you've still got it on, that's the Cincinnati Enquirer and George Bassitt and I were interviewed together about this writer and he wrote this story about ----- didn't want to be in the picture but he wanted to help, you know, so I ended up being the one that had the picture in the paper.

09:27:28

This is nat sound.