

## **NOTICE**

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**FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT**  
**Transcript**

Name: Rudy Crawford

Date Interviewed: 9/28/99

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Tape: 96

Project Number 20012

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**Tape FLHP0227**

11:01:01

(Cameraman: Rolling)

Q:

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

A:

Okay, he's, he's really to flip it on.

Q:

Yeah, he's rolling.

(Cameraman: I'm rolling, whenever you're ready)

Q:

Yeah.

11:01:12

A:

Okay.

Q:

And you can just look at me.

11:01:15

A:

All right. I'm Rudy P. Crawford and that's spelled, R-U-D-Y, Rudy and P is for Peter, and Crawford is spelled C-R-A-W-F-O-R-D.

Q:

Good.

A:

And that's senior. Ah, I was hired in at the Fernald project in 1952, the fall of 1952 and I worked until 1987, June the 30<sup>th</sup> of 1987. And that was all during the full production ah, era of the project. And I was actually hired by Lee Skillman, which was one of our first production officers.

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11:02:00

A:

And Lee advised me being a friend; I had worked with his Dad and some of the other people at Champion. And that ah, they needed certain people to come and work in the project, in the operating project and to correlate the work so that they would get a, a good, accurate recording. And to do so we had to work right with the operators and make sure that they thoroughly understood and advise 'em on, on ah, how to ah, do the recording and, and give us the correct data so that we could pass it on.

11:02:48

A:

And put it into the tapes in case we had problems with the ah, reactor or if we had espionage. Most of the fellows that worked there were all ex-service ah, people, honorable discharged, that way it ah, was easy to get them into the area without a lot of ah, FBI ah, background search.

11:03:17

A:

And I was one of those people too, so ah, Lee brought me into the accountability. And accountability at that time was Dr. Waldon, and Paul MacKerie, and ah, they had ah, a local man, which was Paul Fiest, which is our immediate ah, supervisor. Now I came in at the same time with Loyd Smith, another pretty good athlete, tried out for the Olympics and he too was being in, indoctrinated to going to the area and work the with ah, ah, the hourly people.

11:04:02

A:

And get the same types of results. This way there wouldn't be no breakdown between salary and hourly. And ah, so we were told what to do and get involved with all ah, regular sports or different fields and just be ourself. Which, which was fine and dandy with he and myself both.

11:04:25

A:

So ah, we ah, we were taken to the area and in the meantime we found out after we got out into the area the place was so new, no one really could even break us in on a job. Because no one had really a thorough knowledge of what was going on.

11:04:46

A:

Ah, we're not talking about the ah, being an atomic plant, but just what were we supposed to do and how should we go about it. The forms were inaccurate, not in any way portrayed the production flows. So it's just by sheer luck that I had done some of this type of work at Champion Paper and Fiber Company.

11:05:14

A:

And ah, to build new forms. Well the ah, we took off and I worked with a engineer by the name of Dave Tippinower. Which in turn he and I designed quite a few of the ah, the forms and got ourself in a, in a forward motion to where we were recording the ah, data as the materials coming through.

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11:05:48

A:

And ah, this was ah, this brought about a real good portrayal of what was going on with the ah, productions. And then in the meantime we were working with the operators which, in turn; they were willing to work with 'em because uh, we were involved in sports and things of the nature that they liked. And so it was their bag o' tea so, they uh, they really came to liking us and we liked them.

11:06:25

A:

And we picked out our favorite guys, which was willin' to do good jobs you know, and we had 'em to do the work. And their, their management people allowed us to be our, do it, you know, be our thing because it was part o' their job. So that's the way it went from, for about the first ten years. Uh, now the project itself, was a, it was encompassed on the fence.

11:06:59

A:

And on that fence, about every 200 feet, was a tower. And in that tower was a guard, armed. And no one was to go over or molest that fence in any way. He had to go through and out different turnstiles. Every building had its own turnstile. And it was, it was manned also with a, with the uh, security officer. And Plant 6, which Loyd and myself both were in, there was two turnstiles, one for the ruling and one for the machining.

11:07:38

A:

And that was, we reported in, we put our one little slide badge in you know, and they gave us one to go in, and a film badge to go with it, and go into the operating areas. Now uh, I was given instructions to go into ruling and machining, sometimes this was a little bit tedious but uh, they did a lot, so. There was some humor to it, too.

11:08:04

A:

Uh, one day a fellow by the name of Ed Hartman dusted his cigarette into the red paper basket, which was to get rid of uh, the security type papers. And it caught a-fire, and the guard thought sure that he had, he had an espionage goin' on (laughing). And from then on, he was stopped at ever turnstile, and they searched him down good. So uh, but anyway, that was the part of the face of the project that we had to go through at that time.

11:08:46

A:

Now the uh, medical was underneath the cafeteria. And low and behold, you'd think everything would be goin' along real smooth, but it wasn't. We had to uh, shove trucks out o' the mud too, as they brought equipment in, and they were be, goin' up and down the road, and the road was nothin' but a, a mud bed. In this one particular day, myself and Homer Bruce was comin' back from lunch.

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11:09:16

A:

And a truck threw a, a mud ball up a, a size of a human fist with a rock in it. And it brought me down on the road, right now, and my nose was bleedin', and they had to limp me over to Medical, so I found out where Medical was (laughing) in a, in a hard way. And uh, it wasn't long after that, it, there was another accident which, which occurred, it was the first one on the project.

11:09:45

A:

It was between a contractor and lo and behold, it was me. Was walkin' between the Administration Building and the Service Building. And popped out in the spring of '53, and the wind was blowing real hard and it flipped his aluminum off, his hardhat. And caught me across the bridge o' the nose, and underneath the chin.

11:10:08

A:

It choked me for a minute, and then I was bleeding from the, the cut in my nose, and couldn't get my breath, so they took me back to the hospital. And we had to write that up as an incident report, which brought quite a bit of the tensions of (laughs) law management people. So that was uh, my experience with the uh, Medical. And their clothing and everything was down in the uh, underneath the cafeteria, in the southeast corner, and everyone had to share their locker with whoever.

11:10:45

A:

They had mainly the salary in one area, and the hourly in the other. But uh, it seemed to go along pretty good about that. But except some guys would in the, goin' in and changin' their shoes so often, like myself, I'd be goin' to a meeting in the Administration Building or later on, the Health and Safety Building when they got that built.

11:11:12

A:

And uh, we would be puttin' our shoes on, takin' 'em off, this that and the other. And one particular fellow, he put uh, he forgets things. And he put his, his uh, protective shoes on, and went up to the cafeteria and ate, and he looked down and saw 'em, and he says, "oh my gosh," he says, "I got protection clothes here." So he says, "well, I'll go downstairs and change 'em."

11:11:39

A:

Well, he changed and put on his street shoes and went out in the area. And then he got so flabbergasted about that, when he got over there that night, he put on his hard shoes and went home (chuckles). So being in the locker with a lot o' people like that, you know, it got even kind o' exciting, it was quite humorous, and we didn't forget about it, and we didn't let him forget about it either.

11:12:09

A:

So uh, the uh, we had uh, we had guards sittin' in Plant 6 between the rolling mill and Inspection. And this, like I say, it had created some disturbances. If he didn't have the list with him, and I'd be going

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through the rolling mill and want to cut over into the uh, machining part, I had to explain it to this individual, whoever the guard was at that time. A little later down the road, they become aware of who I was and what I was doin'.

11:12:48

A:

And this gave me a little bit more liberty of goin' through without sittin' there 20 minutes of explanation what was, what we were up to. Uh, the uh, one o' the most peculiar thing about ah, the office was moved back into the inspection department, and we had a national security check, in which we had to uh, they went through with all the uh, dos and don'ts on security measures.

11:13:31

A:

No lockin' the safe, no writin' it down and puttin' in your wallet, ah, the whole pitch. And they also went through all the forms that we had had, and made sure that they were in the right classification. This was fine and dandy, but they didn't tell me they were comin' into our place first. And one of our boys had a whole safe full of, of books that he hadn't started to, to processing for classification.

11:14:06

A:

And that was about the first search and specially with, the officer that came was a woman, and she went through everything that we had with the exception of that one safe. He ducked out, left it. And she didn't even ask any questions about it, but boy it did leave us in a big scare, because we knew by the next year, we were gonna have it over again. And more than likely this time, we were gonna get caught.

11:14:38

A:

So uh, the mean time, I had to go to second shift over there at the, in the machining, to devise up more forms, because now we were into the eyes of national security. National security was going to have a fake program, where every so often, they would call in with little bits of some of the numbers, or the assignments, or off the pieces, and we had to identify it until the complete history of it.

11:15:18

A:

Or when or where it left the project and all the details that we could supply. This means that we had to go back again, over all the production flow, and make sure that everything was in the assignments and then write it up and supply security with all these facts. And uh, this was quite a working ordeal, so then I got slammed into the second shift, and was there for about a year.

11:15:56

A:

So it uh, it was a kind of a big blow, and it was a big thing for the project. Now uh, we had uh, ah, we had the reviews of, of quite a, people that came in. And each one of them had to be, you know, go through the screening uh, check. That was the local, or the state, federal, FBI. And at that time, a quite a few fellows would come in and then they would leave. I mean we had to go and hunt and search for new uh, new people.

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11:16:52

A:

And uh, we ran into an awful lot of peculiar things and happenings with these. Now I also ah, we had one that was, one of the boys from ah, Ross, Ohio, Tom Rupert. And Tom hadn't worked there too long and he was in transportation and that evening he ran out of gas, his automobile, down at, close to Ross.

11:17:24

A:

So he thought maybe he could go over and purchase some gasoline from, from ah, the a garage and go through security and go to the garage. Well in the meantime he, he climbed the fence and went over it. And when he got in at the guardhouse, the guard asked, he was going to get him the gas, he was gonna give him one right off of one of the patrol car and he says, how'd you get here.

11:17:53

A:

And he said I climbed the fence cross the, and come across the access road into here and they had to fire him right on the spot 'cause one of the guards may have shot 'em. That's how tight security was and then ah, the security officer would've been, had to live with it for the rest of his life. Find out that he had shot an innocent person.

11:18:18

A:

So ah, this shows you how seriously security was. You had a Krushev standing up at the podium in the UN slamming his shoe on, on the podium and saying we're gonna, we're gonna bury ya and all these guys are veterans. They didn't, they didn't take kindly to that.

11:18:41

A:

I didn't myself either, in fact I can't never forget it. So ah, we ah, we just had to learn that security was security and the officer over security at that time was Clyde Bingham and he was a Lieutenant he was Lieutenant Colonel from G2 and he pounded on good practices. Watch your badge, carry your badge, be in, at the proper place and so on and so forth.

11:19:17

A:

Well, that sounds like we had the project really going in great detail and right down the smooth roads, not so, nope. A small plane landed out in the fields, (laughing) on the project, two men were in it and they were intoxicated. They had to go out and arrest them and they took 'em in and left the plane there on the project.

11:19:44

A:

Now eventually they had to cut the plane up, cut the wings off, and put it on a trailer and get it out of there. So ah, that was one ah, blow for security. And then there was a young boy about 14, 15 years old, and he was asleep in ah, one of the ah, open cars, railroad cars.

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11:20:12

A:

And they hauled him into the project. He woke up and he was looking around, I even saw the individual myself, but I didn't know that this was all going on. And here he was, he saw, he didn't have his protective clothing on, and somebody had all ready tipped off security and they were out looking for him and they caught him and here he is just a young boy runaway.

11:20:36

A:

And it, he was so frightened he didn't know what to do, and so they captured him and they took him down and they grilled him and they found out by far that he was legitimate. Because they had contacted his parents and knew he was just a runaway. And so, they ah, they turned him loose, gave him some money.

11:20:00

A:

And ah, it wasn't too long after that, we had a helicopter to land right outside the ah, administration building. And this give everybody a fright this, I mean, this is right between the parking lot and the administration building. And they came down and the aviator got out and he says, "is this Proctor and Gamble?" (Laughing) And they said no mister you; you've got another river to cross before you get there.

11:21:29

A:

So ah, security was there, they were boy, right on it. So they, they helped him leave the project in a hurry. And it was some time after that there was a rumor that we had a UFO hovered over the project. And security was all called in, so ah, it brought about you know, more security and all of us was had meetings to keep our eyes open.

11:22:08

A:

And ah, then there was another gentleman broke in, or he got into the project through, by mishap, I think his was also the railroad. And that ah, he thought he had broke into prison and he was wondering how he was gonna get out of there (laughing).

11:22:28

A:

Now he's in, how's he gonna get out (laughing) so, security arrested him and sent him through and so, by then we've, they brought about they were gonna have once a year meetings update everybody on ah, on being secured with security.

11:22:51

A:

Now a little later on another big event happened and that was, it was working, and ah, as, at that time we had just let the girls come in on the project. And I had um, Pam Eldridge and I had ah, oh I had ah, a lady from ah, Stigerwalt, Marianne Stigerwalt.



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11:23:18

A:

And ah, Oscar Moore came in and he said ah, "Rudy," he says, "we need people to go out in the area and hunt for, see if there's an individual still sleeping up in the motor mounts or I-beams or some of the other rooms and different things." He says, "we've got to find this guy." He says, "he's supposed to have rang out at 8:00 this morning, but he's not."

11:23:40

A:

They haven't seen him, they don't know, they know he came in, his radio is missing, his badge, everything. His car keys is in the locker, his money, his wallet. So I said, "who is that?" And he says, "it's David Box." And I says, "well, I see him every morning, but I don't recall seeing him this morning."

11:24:02

A:

He says, "No, nobody has." So we searched and we searched and this went on for a couple of days, and then they believe that he was put into one of the furnaces, because they found some parts that give reflection that he had been, got into the furnace.

11:24:27

A:

So ah, security and all the things that were done to make the project run real smooth, we still, and it was enclosed ah, we were supposed to be ho-ho hum, and boring work, you know, and this that and the other, but we had more excitement going on in there than Channel 5 could care on their television. So ah, this ah, this is some of the big things that happened, still happening.

11:25:06

A:

Why after that we had ah, Cooper, the guy that I helped, or he and I both worked real hard on changing all the forms to meet the production flows, meet the national requirements and so forth. And he was in the ah, in the ah, over all the ah, operators, the telephone operators and, and the ah, different ones in the ah, vault.

11:25:33

A:

And plus making forms. Well, he was seen at a, at one of the company parties, in fact I was there, but I didn't know som-, anything about it until after it was, it was about three old. He had ah, he came in at the party with his wife and sat down and he sat with John Pool, which was his boss and his wife.

11:26:05

A:

Well Earl was over there talking to 'em, I saw that much, and ah, ah, he ah, everything seemed all right. And she had said that she's going into the hospital, John Cooper's wife was going to the hospital, and that ah, he would be there by himself and everything.

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11:26:23

A:

But ah, he'd be okay and went, went a little later in the ah, week. And I had heard he had come in and he asked for the rest of the day off 'cause he wasn't feeling too good. And he wanted to ah, ah, go home and see a doctor or something. And ah, so he went home and well the next day he didn't come in, and the next day he didn't come in, next day he didn't come in.

11:26:54

A:

A week went by, two weeks went by, past the end of the month and so we had been warned if you stay too long and don't let yourself be known or call in, FBI'll be looking for ya. So his date, his time was running out and they was ready to file ah, missing person with the FBI and go and search for him, but he called in.

11:27:27

A:

And he said he had let some stuff there, he wanted to come and pick it up, but then he'd be back a little later on. Well, this settled it down. Well, meantime his wife was in the hospital and she kept saying where's my son? That was his stepson.

11:27:45

A:

He kept saying, well he's just running around with everybody, and this that and the other, you know, and, and the two of 'em's, not very compatible. So this kept going on and finally she came home and the house was a mess and things were just a-skewed that weren't supposed to be, you know. And she kept saying, where is he, and finally John told him, told her that he was dead.

11:28:19

A:

That they got in an argument, he threw an ashtray at him and ah, it killed the boy, and he took him down in the basement and cut him up and took a trip down to Florida and depositing his body all the way down to Florida. And that really shook everybody. This was one of the worse cases they had in Cincinnati.

11:28:44

A:

And that ah, the girls that worked in document control there, in down in the basement, there was even little gimmicks about they'd find the head in the safe, and, or some o' the files, and it had everybody kind o' uptight. So uh, that was uh, the, the biggest thing that went down on the project, you know, and just.

Q:

Could we pause just a second, 'cause we need to change tapes?

A:

Okay.

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11:29:19

Q:

You're doin' great.

**Tape FLHP0228**

12:01:08

(Off camera: I'm sorry, do what you like [laughs] just don't look at me.)

A:

It's just a natural reaction with me.

Q:

Oh, yeah.

A:

I used to close my eyes in meetings, and they'd think I was asleep.

Q:

(Laughs) "I'm thinkin'!"

A:

They'd come out o' there and ask me a question, and I'd give 'em the answer, and they didn't even know it (both laughing).

Q:

Sometimes it's sensory overload. Like I'm a musician, and to really play, like I close my eyes to really play, because it's like if I'm lookin' at somethin'.

(Cameraman: Yeah, we're rolling.)

12:01:36

A:

We just finished uh, David Box. We're gonna, are we ready?

Q:

Yeah. We're rollin'. Um-hmm.

A:

All right. We're gonna get into the sport aspects o' this for all the people have that worked, worked there and still do. At uh, we'd formed the credit union, and now had formed the um, FEAA. It was the NEAA at that time, National Lead. And there, they covered the uh bowling, golf, softball, dances, picnic, and worked on the committees there for, quite a few years before I kind o' cashed back in.

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12:02:24

A:

And then a little later, I picked it back up when I, for the retirees. Now uh, there was a special committee at one time appointed. And it was headed by Jack Walsh. And Jack was given a hundred dollars to start it off by the head of the Maintenance group, Hal Martin. And was supposed to be given to the most sports-minded person for a year; they can only get it one time.

12:03:04

A:

And they started it out, and they had a lot of people that was involved, and the different ones that they had up for to be given the money, a lot of us didn't even know it was even goin' on, including myself. And it went on for, oh, I guess four or five months. And they formed this committee, and this committee was down to, had two names.

12:03:38

A:

Jack Williamson and Rudy Crawford. Now, you didn't have to be the best in the sport, but you gotta be part o' the participation. In other words, part o' the uh, f-, formulation to get it goin', you know, treasurer, secretary, whatever. And uh, it was up to those two people, and they was hackling around to who's gonna get the hundred dollars.

12:04:06

A:

And it wound up, Jack Williamson, who just passed away here about two weeks ago, won it by a thread. So I was a second place person in that. And uh, it kind o' died down and it was kind o' left. But then we had a sports thing from Plant 6, which involved quite a few boys, and we called it the National Lead Olympics. And in there, we elected to do bowling, softball, golf, horseshoes, uh, any type o' sport you wanted to throw into it.

12:04:50

A:

And we took off, and they would, you won it by, whatever you was in, you won it by points, and they accumulated those for the summer. Well, this went on fine and dandy, and about the close to the end, I couldn't participate in everything because I had a daughter that was, second oldest daughter was hospitalized with rheumatic fever, she was in the hospital for about a year.

12:05:20

A:

And this kept me more or less, out of a lot of the social functions. And uh, the accumulation that I had brought me in third place for, for the project athlete of the year. Now it was won by Jeff S-, I forget his last name from Inspection. Loyd Smith was second, and I was third, and Ray Bauer from the Lab was fourth. So uh, these were kind o' things have been forgotten about.

12:05:58

A:

And like I say, the plant itself, was encompassed with fences, and, and regulations, and you wasn't allowed the freedom of movin' around, and, but yet we devised up different activities and different

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things to, to uh, have a uh, kind of a good get-together. And it went right back to the day one when we hired in, was to work with these guys, you know, and get 'em into a good relationship.

12:06:35

A:

In which we were doin', and we felt real good about it, Loyd and myself both. We had a trap shoot, too. That started the Trap Club, fishing. 'Course, I was notorious in the fishing part. Even got my mother involved in buying a \_\_\_\_, and had my stepfather to uh, for his health, to come out and stay with the lake, you know, and run the business, and it was profitable.

12:07:05

A:

And it was a lot o' fun, and I took a lot o' guys out there from the project. We had a, uh, another guy that came in. He was kind o' into more or less, the sports field, too. And he was an old, well, at that time, I had forgot about him, hadn't seen him and, but he got a, he got a job, and he worked for Joe Padgeon.

12:07:31

A:

Now, Joe was the kind of individual that, he was, might say he was laid back, he was way back so far that (laughs) nothing bothered him. He had a stack o' paper on his desk was about ten inches deep of jobs to do, and he hadn't got around to it. So he hired this gentlemen, and his name was Don Shearer. And he came in as Joe's assistant, to help him delete that stack of jobs.

12:08:05

A:

In fact, I had quite a few on, on that stack myself, for him to look into or get done. When I saw the individual, and I says, "hey, I know that guy. I've seen him somewhere, but I just can't put my finger on it. But I just know him." And uh, so they brought him around and they was introducing him.

12:08:28

A:

And I saw him at the, in the cafeteria, among all the other people, and that was no place to you know, go up and just try and rehash our old get-together somewhere. And Don uh, he saw me and I saw him, and I says, "Hey, I know you." And he says, "you ought to!" He says, "you belittled our, our school team down at ah, Purcell."

12:08:53

A:

I said, "I know you from," I says, "you're Don Chair." And he says, "that's right." And ah, it was kind of like a happy reunion. Here we are way out in the middle of nowhere in a field of 900 and some acres (laughing) and run into a former buddy. We were buddies, we wouldn't tell each other that.

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12:09:20

A:

Now Don was a, he was always wanting to get back, so a real good interesting story and everyone was behind it. I mean, people from six and all over the project. Well, Don would always say that, you know, he could show me up in anything I wanted to do. Just kind of a little total war.

12:09:47

A:

And I said "you better leave me alone 'cause I'm a 192 pounds of wildcat." And he'd say, "oh, you're 178 pounds of flubber." I said, "Don, now this kept going, you know," and every time he'd come into the office, you know, he was gonna do this and do that. Well in the meantime Jim Clemmets from inspection, that's when you had the offices in the back, all three of 'em.

12:10:09

A:

There were three different, separate, inner-offices. And he says, "why don't you do something about that." And I says, "ah, well, I've been thinking about it" and I says, "you know" I says, "if I'm gonna do this, put some weights somewhere and go out there and stand on that scale. I can get him worked up, I'm gonna let him, take him out there."

12:10:28

A:

So ah, this one morning he came in and he wanted some ah, the monthly report and I was just finishing it up as he walked in. I was checking, making sure all the math and that was correct, I was running it on the computer. And he felt my arm, see he felt all over me and he says, "you lucky to weight 174 pounds."

12:10:53

A:

And at that time he was topping at about 200, and I said, "oh I'm way past you Don." He said, "no." So, wo, wait a minute I think I've got a mistake here and I said hold on, and he's in there talking to all the boys, you know, just hee-hawing, and they knew what we were up to.

12:11:12

A:

All the boys in the office, everyone in that inspection department knew. So, ah, I went over and I said, "Jim, he's there." And he says, "I seen him," he says, "I thought maybe this was the day." And they had chem wipes they put 'em around my legs and they strapped a leg on, on ah, a slug on each leg and I go back in like there's nothing happening.

12:11:36

A:

And I says, "oh's, I was just me I looked at the wrong one." I says, "you better have this report." And he says, "ah, I've got a few minutes" he says, "ah, put your money where your mouth is." And I says, "what's that?" He says, "you don't weigh no 192 pounds." And I says, "Don, don't make me do it," and I said, "I don't want your money."

**FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT**  
**Transcript**

12:11:55

A:

And ah, he says, “don’t worry about it,” he says, “how much you want to bet?” And usually in those times we only bet a dime and I says, “Don, don’t make me do it.” I said, “I’ll have to make it 50 cents.” And ah, he says, “make it 50 cents.” And I said, “Ed, here’s my 50 cents; Don give me your 50 cents,” and he did, Ed Boss, he’s worked, he was one of my boys.

12:12:25

A:

And so I said, “wait a minute, I’ll get my smock on and my hat.” And I said, “we’ll go over here to the inspection scale, there’s a platform scale.” Which is oh, a good 14 – 15 inches higher than the floor. It’s up and it had a great big read out on it in the back and, you know, it had a cradle hook that they’d trip and it came on.

12:12:49

A:

And, you know, Don said, “let me check it first.” And he jumps up on it and weighed and he was right on his close to 200. So he gets, he said, “now let’s see you.” I said, “well I haven’t been, I haven’t been active about last month or so,” I said, “I’m gonna run it up there pretty high.” And I said, “anyway I’ve got, you know, shoes, smock on.”

12:13:11

A:

He said, “ah, don’t even worry about it, that’s five or six pounds.” I said, “yeah, you’re right.” I stepped on it and it went way over 230. He could not believe it. He made me get off that scale and he got up and he tripped it backwards and forwards. He got on it again; he put test weights on there, and made me get back on again. And he made me take smock off and there was a cold breeze blowing from the big door out there in that back end.

12:13:37

A:

And finally he says, “ah, get on.” And I got on and right back up there again over 235, 238 so I says, “that’s it. I’m going back in before I get pneumonia.” And I said, “it ain’t even worth 50 cents anyway.” And I got to the elevators, Darryl and I yelled back at him, he’s still at the ah, the scales and he says, “I don’t believe he got.” And I says, “thanks, Don” (laughing).

12:14:08

A:

So this went on for quite a while and ah, then we had a race, and his little legs, he did fool me, he was a lot faster than I thought he was. And I saw him running when he was in a football uniform and then he wasn’t that fast, but without it he was pretty tough to catch.

12:14:29

A:

And ah, but anyway he found out later about the, the 50 cents, and oh, gee I was the worst villain on the project, you know. And I’ll bet today, if you run into him and you was to ask him, you know Rudy Crawford, he’d say, yeah he owes me 50 cents (laughing).

**FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT**  
**Transcript**

12:14:44

A:

So ah, that was ah, Don and our experiences with ah, with the sports activities. And ah, then we had to ah, we had a our beloved leader Weldon Adams. Weldon was a good golfer, he was a decent bowler, rather an obnoxious person, but he, he was Weldon Adams.

12:15:27

A:

So ah, anyway he was in charge of the maintenance crew after Hal Martin. And he tried to make the men toe to whatever the rules were. He didn't, he didn't go out of his, his way to invent different types of rules, they were there on the books and they were supposed to be abiding by them, but they didn't.

12:15:57

A:

'Course if they had their work done, they was all clean up, they'd line up at the clock and ring out and go over and take a shower and ring out again over at the time stile. But, no if they lined up five minutes early that meant Weldon should get after them.

12:16:15

A:

And so, he warned them, had a private meeting, he says, "I'm gonna catch you guys" and he says, "I'm gonna give you a reprimand, everyone of ya's." You know, gave 'em a big verbal threat, you know, and so ah, the office at that time when this started out, I had the old Joe Carvetti's office between 2, 2/3 and between Plant 8. It was in an alleyway there.

12:16:43

A:

It was a building all by itself and in the back of it was a ah, conference room. So ah, we were there and we could see all the action from the ah, cause right across the alley is the maintenance group. And the maintenance group would go over and they'd be right in front time clock and they'd be 10, 15 minutes early and they'd be, stand there and shooting the breeze about whatever happened that day.

12:17:08

A:

And so Weldon went and drilled him a hole in the side of the building and he brought a camera in and he had it all ready and rigged. You know, that so ah, at quitting time that particular day they felt they had, they knew that was gonna be the day he was gonna be taking pictures of them being lined up.

12:17:27

A:

So ah, he gets down and he gets this camera aimed right at the, the clock and kind of something happened and Weldon dropped the camera and looked through the hole and at that time they threw a bucket of water right on him, all over him. Well, in the meantime, Weldon got him senses together; he put everything down and ran outside.

12:17:55



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**Transcript**

A:

He ran all the way around the building and there was no one there. They all (laughing) left. And he, to this day he's told that story on himself umpteen times. And it is true, we saw it happen and boy he was really hot in the collar and this kept going on. Well ah, then he, he was, he went to another area. He went into the, the east side of Plant 7 and that was, at that time, that was the tallest building on the project.

12:18:30

A:

And each floor in that one corner on the ah, east, southeast corner, there was crating all the way up on each floor. Crisscross cratings and I guess it was six to eight foot in big square, you know. Straight up, each floor same thing all the way up sixth, seventh floor.

12:18:52

A:

So Weldon was parked in the doorway there, peeping around and watching those ah, guys at the turnstile, was gonna write down their names and this that and the other. In the meantime, somebody had spied him being in there before, so they doctored up a great big bucket of water again, went all the way up to that top floor and they put it on a frame where as they lowered a rope on the outside of the building.

12:19:24

A:

That building where he was at and while he was starting to make an account of who all was over there they pulled the bucket and it tilted it over. And he could hear it coming but he didn't know what it was. And by the time he looked up, it was all over him. And there was about 30 gallons of water hit him (laughing) hit him real hard.

12:19:52

A:

So ah, that, that really took him. Then in the office of Plant 6, they had brought into the inspection department, a tank. And in this tank they had a, a ah, ultrasonic testing device that was going to test the metal portions of the slug and make sure that there was no pits or crevices or some fault in there that it would do harm to the reactor.

12:20:29

A:

And they had it and it had an automatic injection system to it and everything. And it was pure water in it, rollers and this sonic ah, equipment. And ah, that was his height and glory, you know, so this one particular morning they were all gonna come over and he was gonna demonstrate.

12:20:49

A:

The, the functions of this piece of machinery and the monies they had invested into it and to get everything done. Well, this happened to be right outside my window. In fact I could reach, if I could reach through the glass I could reach out and pat the machine. It was right up against it, the, my

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**Transcript**

window.

12:21:15

A:

Well, it just so happened there was about five or six maintenance foremen in my office and I thought, hey, what's going on, you know. Ah, Joe Clemmet, Chuck Smit, ah, there was Elmer Tendenson, I don't know who all was in there and they were all ho-hoeing, and tee-heeing, you know, and I thought what have I done, what do they want of me, you know.

12:21:34

A:

And ah, then all of a sudden I looked around, and I looked outside and there was a cardboard guy, a silhouette like, he was sitting on the edge of that tank. In his hands was a pole and a line on it, like he was fishing in that tank. I looked in the tank and here was live goldfish swimming around (laughing) and this piece of equipment and Weldon come walking up and boy, I mean, he saw that and he falls apart anytime he got stuck with something of that nature, you know.

12:22:12

A:

And he just absolutely just, he just threw up his hands and yelled and he walked out of there screaming and yelling, "damn fools! They make jokes out of a hundred thousand dollar piece of equipment and blah -blah." And he left it and at dinnertime he come walking across the floor and one of the instrument mechanic's looked up and said, "hey blue eyes; you going fishing?"

12:22:39

A:

And he become aggravated again and left he says, "I find the guys that are guilty of this, they're gonna count him right on the spot." And ah, he went out of the cafeteria and he was, months before he came back. So ah, he was involved in quite a few other things but ah, these are the things I can attest to because I was there, saw it. It was part of the going on, on the project that ah, was outlined as, was supposed to be a complete hardcore working atmosphere and this that and the other.

12:23:25

A:

But there was still a lot of life in a lot of the fellows, but ah, still they got the job done. They produced cores so fast that Hanford and Savannah River couldn't accept them. They had 'em backlogged; they had boxes back, back because the boys did do their work. Even though there was a lot of shenanigans going on, there was still, and like I say, you would think it, it was not, not to be.

12:23:57

A:

But it ah, it was and you just didn't have to look. Even though I had, some operators are so really good, and I'd have to give a lot of praise. The other day on a tour, one of 'em was with us and he's been going through a lot of ah, health problems and his name is George Bassitt.

12:24:18

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A:

Now George was degreed in, out of West Virginia. But he took a laborer's job, and I had him on different cleanups, different ah, ordeals, and I, even, I had him in, in the back end sawing ingots. Ah, I'd have him cut up ah, whatever they were out for by a certain portion of weight to go back into the re-melt.

12:24:44

A:

And George was, go back there and most the time you could get five or six of a regular operator, George would cut about 14 or 15. And I mean, he didn't go like a maniac, he, he did, but he was such a cool operator that he was far beyond the reach of most of 'em.

12:25:07

A:

And we had ah, he was in the tour and somebody was kidding him and said well, do you could think you could find a place in there to goof off? And he said, "I didn't to that," he says, "there was Rudy at that, Rudy tell 'em how it worked." And I did (laughing) I had to stand up and say he was one of the best. And we had Russ Keyborne, Lou Ingle and ah, some of those guys you'd give 'em jobs, walk away and it was done.

12:25:38

A:

So, all in all, it was, all the criteria's that we had and all the deadlines and dates, we met 'em. And actually I think it's because it's going right back to the, the ah, orientations that I had from Dr. Waldon, Paul Feist, or Paul Macurie, and Paul Feist.

A:

The different guys that we worked with, different religions, different work habits, different environments, from different services that we worked in a real total ah, unique way. But we accomplished more than I believe, that normal, if they were just off the street people, you know, and we were underneath ah, Proctor and Gamble or whoever, and making dog food as we were accused of, but we accomplished more because of the fact of the way we went at it.

12:26:48

A:

That it brought better results and I still get with these guys, and I am their retirees representative, and we still have the same little jibs for each other, but all in all those guys were a real good crew. And ah, I'm not saying that I really love the job but it was a job and I did survive and ah, had four children and ah, several cars and a home and different things.

12:27:21

A:

So, I can't knock my working there, and what made the whole thing really enjoyable was the fact, the unions, unions of the individuals that I had working with me. So I'd like to bring this out as part of

the history and even on the ah, the one day that the project had for ah, for the families, family day.

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**Transcript**

And the pictures we had down there in that one tent, old pictures that was over, ah at that time 40 years old, we named about everyone on there with the exception of two or three.

12:28:14

A:

I saw George and I had him come down and we rounded 'em all off, Bob Kispert, myself and George Bassitt. And the old-time operators that only been there maybe two, three years but somewhere along the line we re-hashed who they were.

12:28:33

A:

So, I, that's why I'm saying, I think my portion of the Living History would be in recognition of, of these individuals and time spent over there. And like I say, you could have worked anywhere and done anything, but to have a bunch of guys come together from Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan. We had people from Pennsylvania, we had 'em from West Virginia and it was a job to get 'em correlated.

12:29:03

A:

But we did it and we met the government's criteria of security, the forms if, when they did call we, we could spot the material for them and tell them the full history of it and it only took just a matter of minutes. And we didn't have computers at that time, we did it manual.

12:29:26

A:

But, ah, if ah, if there'd been a piece of sabotage or different thing, we could have even implied more. So, I'd just like to say, thanks for giving me the opportunity to kind of give back to and some of my thanks that ah, the few people on the job and so forth and so on. I guess that's about it.

12:29:53

Q:

Great, well we need to change tapes anyhow.

**TAPE FLHP0229**

13:01:01

Q:

Um, one of the questions I had for you was um, when you worked in accountability why was it so important to make sure that we knew where all the material was?

A:

Inventories, inventories and cost figures. Now I worked with ah, also cost accountings on particular jobs, special jobs that required ah, kind of a separate, individual transactions in getting the job or a piece ah, maybe with a different type of piece of equipment. Or, or special type of tooling, or whatever and we actually keep the ah, the material in which we were doing for special lab works from all over the United States.

13:01:51

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A:

Chicago, Bridgeport, or the Los Alamos or whoever, and ah, to met what they needed we had to ah, have the cost figures on it. And that was the, that and inventory, special materials reporting inventory. And we had to know where it was and identify it with what they called a production order number and that was the big reason we had to keep ah, kind of separate from any of the other type of materials.

13:02:31

A:

Yes, it was, it was definitely used and needed, cause I had this, I cost accounting field with those figures, time, machinery, how much and whatever. So, ah, that's the only answer to that, that I know, that, you know. Anything else?

13:02:56

Q:

And how valuable is and was uranium then?

A:

Well, ah, at that time we could figure one ingot was the equivalent of a home. A home at that time was around ah, between \$15 and \$20,000 in 1952. One ingot, one enriched ingot was a deluxe home maybe half again as much.

13:03:27

A:

But at that time we were only dealing with normal and enriched. Now depleted, this is not so. So ah, actually it broke down to somewhere in the fields of around ah, \$40 an ounce. Now this is, this is the material, the cost of ah, refinement, machining, and out the door. This is all the cost figures on it. So, but at that time that was one of the biggest carryovers in security.

13:04:12

A:

Even after the, we could tell our neighbors we was making uranium, but we couldn't tell them the cost figures or how much we were producing. That was still ah, no-no.

Q:

Those were the secrets of Fernald, right?

A:

That was one of the lingering secrets, right.

13:04:29

Q:

Now why could you not disclose to any of your friends or neighbors or anything, how much uranium was being made?

A:

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**Transcript**

Because at that time we were very silent about it because of Kruschev, and his ordeals. We didn't want him to know that we were in reality ahead of Russia. At that time he was our only competitor and that we was trying to keep the ah, the secrets away from him.

13:05:09

A:

He knew that we had the atomic bomb because we dropped it on Japan, so he knew we had to have uranium, but how much, how fast were we doing it, how, would it be practical or feasible for him to start a war and us with a boat load of materials that we could clobber him with. So, that was, that's why. He was, we were in war with him with words and other physical acts.

13:05:44

Q:

Now let's talk a little bit about the Cold War too, because I find that a really important part of Fernald's history. What was the typical Americans mindset during the Cold War?

A:

What was our?

Q:

Or how were you feeling about the Cold War while you were working at Fernald?

13:06:00

A:

Well, as I told you we were all ex-service fellows. We knew what it was like to be stuck in the military against mainly our will really. Of course we wanted to, we felt like we had an obligation, but in the, the total ah, the total view of the thing, we didn't like it. I didn't like it. I was taken away, you know, and I even, my godfather was the coach at the Hamilton Catholic, he wanted me to go to Kentucky as a, as a basketball player.

13:06:39

A:

And I, I meet with him, he offered up at Shermer's ah, restaurant and there was a discussion, but before I could turn around I was in the military and ah, ah, there I was, you know. I felt like, I was pushed around but against my will. And it just, when I come out I was just, sour about it.

13:07:06

A:

And I think most of the guys are that way. So ah, yeah, I was inducted and left from Hamilton, Hamilton, Ohio, so, ah, one of the last few names that ah, left Hamilton, it's on the, in monument, the Soldiers, Sailors Monument there along the bridge ah, where, we're about the last few on the board there because we did go in at the tail end of the war.

13:07:39

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A:

But we was still, you know, inducted and shoved into the service. But that is what are feelings was, is that the ah, we didn't like it and we knew our kids wasn't gonna like it. Even more so, you know, being stuck in the military. Ah, was this a country of freedom or was this a country that you had to bow down to our government, you know.

13:08:07

A:

Ah, kind of leaves you with a dissatisfied taste. It was, we didn't want to be a trigger, and yet we didn't want to be pushed around like that.

Q:

Great and ah, how, how did Fernald and your job at Fernald, how did that help America meet its goals during the Cold War?

A:

How did it help? Because I'm quite sure that there was a lot of filtered information that got to Russia that ah, we were ahead of 'em. And I'm quite sure that they would have stepped up and tried something if they thought differently. Well, they did, remember one of the emblems that they put into, into our capital building in Washington, DC. it had microphones hidden in the eagle of it.

13:09:15

A:

In fact they may have told you about it in some of your security ah, meets, that they were talking about the hidden microphones that were there. But this was ah; this was the typical thing with ah, with Russia at that time. That they were, they were out to ah, dominate the world. They were.

13:09:37

A:

They were very serious about it, they were either buying, forcing or trading, they even stole some of our scientists right off the streets, here in the United States, Atkins. Off New York streets, there were two, three others I forget who they are right now.

13:09:59

A:

But, so ah, but anyway that was, that was, we felt not like a hero, but we felt that we met our challenge again, you know, to, but here we were being paid for it and we did have some freedom (laughing). A little different than being in, in the services.

A:

Had to get up at a certain time, and to go to bed at a certain time and what you're gonna eat and how you cut your fingernails. And, yeah all these things are dictated to ya and after a while it's, it can get to ya. So, ah that's, that would be the biggest answer that I can see for your question.

13:10:42

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**Transcript**

Q:

Great, yeah, cause we've talked to a lot of people that um, something I always bring up too is you know, they've been talking a lot about work, at work about how folks that worked at Fernald during the Cold War years, they're referring to them as the Cold War Warriors. How do you feel about being called a Cold War Warrior?

A:

That part didn't bother me a bit. Like I say I was out on different sports fields and, you know, they call you everything in the world, you know. But the final gun is what your interested in, and down there we was, when we walked out the door they didn't know what we was doing.

13:11:21

A:

And we got a paycheck, and at that time it was much more than any of the other industries in or around Cincinnati, Butler or the different areas so, we, like I said, we went home to our families and, and ah, with a decent paycheck. Started out kind of little flimsy, but as we went down the road, why it, it came on better. So they could have called me anything. They can call me Rube Rudy and ah, oh there's a lot of names I had tagged to me.

Q:

Now you retired in 1987 but there's a whole lot more sort of to the Fernald story after that because even though you were retired um, and of course in 1984 there were some dust collector releases and ah, can you sort of the media frenzy that happened all around those years.

13:12:22

A:

Are you meaning that uh, some of the eventful things that uh, uh, happened during uh, the ac-, right at the extreme end of the production era?

Q:

Yeah, like '84, '85, right in there.

13:12:38

A:

'84, see it went to '87.

A:

Um-hm.

13:12:41

A:

Uh, I would say uh, we had some releases, some losses that, that were, some were kind of intentional. Believed to be intentional. I, I can't put, I, I, can't truthfully come right out and say but uh, we had tanks filled one day and the next day they'd be empty and we didn't put 'em in the processing stream so I know darn good and well they had to go somewhere, so they, so they released it to the river (laughs).

13:13:13



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A:

Of course at that time ya know it didn't uh, we wasn't quite nervous about the uh, the health problem of the materials. And we felt it was out of sight, out of mind (laughs). So uh, but anyway uh, some of the uh, dust collectors and different things that material is still there. That material is going to come up. Some of it and its going to be into the uh, oxidation forms.

13:13:50

A:

They just haven't hit the right place yet. In fact uh, when I left they was on my back trying to tell, ask me to where it was and I said (shakes head). Not after, not after some of the episodes that I had with some of the other er, er, foremens and engineers. And threats of trying to fire me and uh, come to find out that they were the guilty parties and different things. I says forget it, I'm getting out of here.

13:14:21

A:

You guys find it. I found it. You \_\_\_\_\_. In fact one of my worst enemies was er, er, a fella that I was raised up and around the Oxford area with. And uh, we was at his retirement and that was his last wish. He says find that so he could report it back to New York. I says I already found it. I know where it is. But that's all I would tell him. And I can see it's not really lost. It's there yet.

13:15:01

A:

We did find quite a bit of it uh; they'd start tearing out some of the tanks in uh, in back of uh, two and three, what they called the tank farm. And uh, uh, Tim Huey, I told him in certain tanks there was going to be quite a bit of material that come out of there. And they was about uh, in some of those tanks they was uh, about four, five foot deep of dried materials in those tanks.

13:15:28

A:

And uh, good heavens, we had over three hundred some thousand pounds of coming out of there. But that's not all uranium that was everything from dried acid to rust and uh, rocks, dirt, lot of foreign material.

Q:

So you're saying that a lot of the material they were saying went out of the stacks really didn't go out of the stacks. It's still on site.

13:15:53

A:

Nah, uranium is one of the heaviest elements that's known to mankind. Of about 104 elements it's one of the heaviest. Now can you visualize it blowing out and, and uh, there would be a mountain somewhere out along the fence or the roadway a quarter of mile high. I don't think so. In my honest opinion, huh-uh, no. So uh, like I say, it's, there was materials there.

13:16:33

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They, they and some of it's still to be coughed up yet. But uh, won't be long. They're getting down to the last few \_\_\_\_\_. And I had a real good uh, Harold and, Harold Knue and myself was working and uh, some of the J-hoppers and T-hoppers was coming back from Paducah. And it had, they had set up and caked on the inside of those hoppers and we'd take 'em over to Plant 5 and run 'em through the crushers.

13:17:06

A:

We'd send 'em over at fourteen thousand pounds. They'd come back as only about six, seven thousand pounds. And they were check weighed both leaving down there and check weighed in here and they fourteen thousand was a confirmed figure. But then when we billed it, it was down to six, seven thousand and it was all controlled crushing. Now where did it go?

13:17:31

A:

And we had three hundred, three hundred and some hoppers, J-hoppers, T-hoppers, in the production stream. In fact I, when I left there were still some of them down in Paducah yet. Orange, orange oxide.

Q:

Isn't it what's coming out of Paducah too is a lot of the workers that were ya know saying they were exposed to plutonium without knowing they were exposed to plutonium. If there was material coming to us from Paducah, is that a possibility at Fernald as well?

13:18:02

A:

No, cause, cause most of that material was sent back to us was, was from the horseshoe reactor which it was never put into the reactor. Here again I say and we was stacked up on expediting all these materials to Savannah River, Hanford, Paducah, Ashtabula, uh, the different labs. When they asked for a ton, we'd give 'em two. So uh, a lot of this, most of it. Uh, we did get some materials back.

13:18:37

A:

But, it was in residue form that uh, that had such a minute uh, calculation uh, like we'd send about, they'd send about thirty some drums back and you could have put the plutonium on the head of a pin, the equivalent what they was telling us what was in that materials. Now, it's potent, granted. But it's that minute that it was undetectable by the uh, everything but through the chemical analysis.

13:19:18

A:

And digestion that off in 8. So uh, a lot of plutonium scares were not reality. In fact they, they bought paper suits for the operators to wear to put that stuff in there and we had been getting rid of it for over six, twelve months. Before (coughs), excuse me, before this become a fact. We received and there was some plutonium in the materials. And this covered hundreds of drums. Nothing.

Q:

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**Transcript**

And what was your reaction to the way the surrounding community um, kind of reacted to the announcement that there were some dust collector leaks and, and their concerns about health problems and those kinds of things? What's your reaction to that?

13:20:25

A:

It was, there was dust, airborne. There was more acid fumes airborne which carried maybe some of the uh, oxidation particles, which is very small. As a matter of fact, I'd say the health hazards on the, on the uh, acids was greater than, than the fire risk. Because if it was such a potent ordeal then why didn't our operators drop dead on the floor while they were working? Think of it that way.

13:20:58

A:

I lived in it for 35 years. Oh, I've had a few little things that could be attributed to it but here again uh; the acids and some of the others had just as much consequence on me as radiation. Because radiation is almost really invisible. Now some of the uh, uh, materials, in, in fact I was in on some of the materials I'm not even allowed to tell you what it was. It wasn't uranium.

13:21:36

A:

But it was brought in there because they wanted to run an experiment on it to see if they could uh, doctor this material up and reclaim the metals that was in it. And uh, if the operators, I know him yet and he's still alive today and so am I so uh. Thorium, zirconium, different metals that we had handled which was no, which was no hush-hush now, so uh.

13:22:12

A:

Russ Keble is a good operator. He, he could verify the same thing so. I had him clean up a lot of the, the Plant 6 where we did this cap program, C-A-P, cap. So uh, some of the people, I feel as, as uh, not weighed the situation of, of what the prime purpose of the place was and what it was doing. And what little there wa-, what they're looking fr-, like there's a monetary uh, uh, reward for 'em.

13:23:00

A:

Uh, I even hate to say it but, even some of our union people and different ones in those meetings with uh, the that lawyer. You could see the, the greed and, and different things that they didn't really stop to think what if we were underneath Kruschev. In fact, most of us would be dead. They'd wipe us out because we knew too much about freedom before we was taken over.

13:23:33

A:

And they couldn't have that type of person running, running around the streets. It'd been a fact; we'd have been annihilated.

Q:

**FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT**  
**Transcript**

So when you heard about the two lawsuits, of course there was a class action lawsuit by the workers and a class action lawsuit by the cu-, surrounding community members. Um, how did that make you feel at that point?

13:24:06

A:

Well, actually, if anyone should reaped any rewards, it should of been the workers. Not the lawyer, Stan Chesley, which he grabbed 90 percent of the payload. And the other was uh, hush money to the farmers about there about their depreciation of their properties. Granted, the poor, bad pub, publicity got them in that state of mind. And our news media is the one that's actually in on that behalf.

13:24:44

A:

I'd listen to this one lady on Channel 5, and she says then, "that," uh, she remarked, "dangerous place was out there, and here we had 7100 employees that come through that, those, and worked there." I'm their retirees' representative and I have the stats on all this, you know. If you have 7,100 people, and they were searching for what, 47, 4,800 so, on the class-action suit.

13:25:21

A:

And it was just a handful that they couldn't find. And now these, most o' these people 're still alive at that time, at the, the end o' the class-action suit. This means it wasn't as bad as everybody's, the news media and the lawyers were putting it down. If they're alive, they're gonna drive old age when they get like me, an old fogy (laughing) 72. I'm not expecting another 30 years.

13:25:55

A:

And you gotta look at it in a reasonable way, rational way. And I could go out here and get killed quicker 'n I could workin' at Fernald. Like I say, I can't say that I love the place, and there was a lot of uh, fires and explosions that I went in, was the first one in that turned the machinery off and this, that and the other, but I went in there because we had operators there, and I didn't want nobody to get hurt.

13:26:31

A:

In that Plant 6 explosion, in fact, George Wonder was the head o' the project, and Charoty Murphy went in, and just about the time they exploded, they were the first to exit, on a dead run. Now I went in there and we had about four operators still clinging to machinery and different things. And, I grabbed 'em, and started turning off the machinery, and make sure there were no fire.

13:26:53

A:

And even one o' my own office men run, ran over top o' me to getting' out the door. So uh, yeah, I'm afraid a lot of it is, is bad publicity. Granted, it's not, it's not real safe, but your microwave isn't safe either. I think there's an answer there.

13:27:24

**FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT**  
**Transcript**

Q:

Good. And um, in 1989, 2 years after you retired, the decided to just throw the switch and stop operations for good. When you heard about that, how did it make you feel?

A:

I knew it was comin', sooner or later. In fact, Walter Wen-, Wenchel, back in the um, early years around in the '60s, predicted that the place would be tore down. That, they was only good for 10 years. And that, uh, it would be foreclosed, maybe moved to another place, or rebuilt somewhere, maybe even on the same site, and if they so elect and run this for peace time.

13:28:07

A:

And uh, and at that time, we could, bein' inside, we could see that this was, this was what was gonna happen. In fact, there was a joke ever' day, "who was gonna be the last guy at the door and hang the lock uh, padlock (laughing) on the gate?" And this, this went on for uh, 20 years (laughs). So uh, it was pretty well accepted, by the workers.

Q:

Great, so it wasn't a surprise at least.

A:

No.

13:28:41

Q:

So there's about what, a thousand fifty acres out there, and um, they're cleanin' it up pretty quickly. Um, how do, have you been on a tour lately? You've been on a tour in the last couple of years, haven't you?

13:28:52

A:

Last Monday.

Q:

What was your impression of the cleanup?

A:

Uh, you know, technically, after applying myself for the 34  $\frac{3}{4}$  years there, and kind of uh, it was our full intentions to keep the, build it up. Build it up to make it safe and make it look better, run better, less problems with it. And it's kind of a big letdown when ya see it being tore down.

13:29:26

A:

It uh, I guess a give a good example of it is when ya build a big sand castle on the beach and ya see a big wave come and knock it down, ya know (chuckles). Ya feel kind of floored. But I, we knew it was comin'. No, I can't, can't knock it, because my wife's workin' there, my two stepsons 're workin' there, uh, a lot of relatives have worked there. So ah, if it'd been somethin' different, I believe I

**FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT**  
**Transcript**

would've said somethin' to 'em, you know.

Q:  
What would you like to see done with the land there?

A:  
Please?

13:30:06

Q:  
What would you like to see done with the land?

A:  
Absolutely nothing. Because somewhere, there's still gonna be some people makin' complaints, and gripes, and law suits, and uh, eventually it's gonna, it's gonna become, brought up so much the attention on it, that it's gonna be sold off to businesses that's gonna buy it for nickels and dimes and then make their product and charge you 100 dollars to look at it.

13:30:40

A:  
So ah, realizing this, I say, "put a fence around it and keep it close. The animals love it." I had a pet deer there. Right out of the lab office, I could take my stuff from the cafeteria you know, and then hang it up on the fence. And then she'd come up there and get it and take it right out, you know. And I could whistle and she'd even come you know, over to the fence.

13:31:05

Q:  
That's great, are about out o' tape?

(Cameraman: We're about to roll)