

## **NOTICE**

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

Name: Ida Rosenberger

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**Tape FLHP0143**

04:01:04

Q:

Okay, first of all if you could give us your name and spell it?

A:

My name is Ida Rosenberger. I-D-A R-O-S-E-N-B-E-R-G-E-R.

04:01:14

Q:

Great, and we're going to start with a little bit of um background. If you could tell us how long you've been in the area, and a little bit about your family, where you went to school, who you married?

A:

Oh all right. Well I uh was born in Morgan Township not too far from where I'm living now. I was born on Bell Road and at that time it was pretty much of a backcountry. The roads were mud; dirt and I rode in a buggy when I was little.

04:01:44

A:

And uh then my parents, they moved to 126 in the corner of Chapel Road. My father, he was a tenant farmer for Mr. Bidearman and we lived there approximately two years. And uh my grandmother, she lived down the road, the next house down the road from me. My mom said when I got to walking that's the only way I knew to go was down the road and visit my grandmother.

04:02:11

A:

So then my parents bought a farm down in Hamilton County and they were to be the caretakers of Fort Scott Camp. And uh they lived down there 20 years and took care of the camp and we truck farmed. And uh went to market and took care of all the maintenance at Fort Scott Camp. At the time it was just one camp and then later on they bought some ground from my parents to build the boy's camp which was uh-super one of both of them.

04:02:50

A:

They had a nice big swimming pool and a nice lodge and a lot of cabins for more cabins. And better cabins than what the girls had in their camp at that time. So uh we lived there uh and then uh from there my father, he sold the farm back to Fort Scott Camp and uh he bought a big farm in Indiana. Over 200 acres and we went from maintenance, taking, caretakers and truck farmers to big farmers.

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04:03:26

A:

We had hogs and milked a lot of cows, raised some beef cattle. And uh that was a lot of work for me. I was around 18 or 19 years old so I decided it was time for me to look for a man and get married and get out of here. And so I did. I met a nice young man by the name of Jerome Rosenberger and we went together for four years. He asked me if I would marry him and I said yes. He was a farmer, so I'll marry ya.

04:04:01

A:

So we got married and moved to LaSourdsville. And he was a dairy herdsman there for about two years. And we had a milk route that we ran into the city every day and there was 7 days a week, 24 hours a day of work there. That was a little much for him so we came to Shandon and of course that was my old stomping ground around Shandon.

04:04:34

A:

I knew a lot of people and a lot of people knew me. And so he said there's a man here by the name of Henry Robinson, he needs a dairy hand. So uh I told my husband, I had visited my grandmother and she told me and I said when I went home I told my husband and he said well I'm gonna go down and check it out. So he came down and he checked out the work and the salary and it was a little more money and he thought he'd like what they were doing because they showed cattle at the fairs.

04:05:07

A:

And they had a big sale every year up at Xenia Ohio where they took their excess cattle and bulls and one thing or another. So we moved back to Shandon and lived on 748 right out of the big town here. And he was a dairy herdsman there for four years, almost five. And while we were in the little house there, two daughters were born to us.

04:05:37

A:

We had Kathleen and Carolyn and uh he, I didn't work. I stayed home and took care of the family. I had a big garden and did some washings for people around the community that were older that didn't wash anymore, a schoolteacher. I done Lyda Robinson's and in fact she just passed away here about a month ago. Uh she was 103, I believe when she passed away.

04:06:05

A:

She was a lovely teacher. And when, she taught down in Hamilton County in Crosby Township School, her and Homer Star. When you come out of there you almost had a college education. That's how much that they taught and what you learned there. It was really great and two super people. We don't have teachers like that today that are as conscientious as what they were.

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04:06:33

A:

So we stayed there with Henry Robinson for app-, almost five years. And uh then my husband decided he needed to make more money for the family. So he went back to Champion, put his name in. He had worked at Champion before we got married. But he went back to farming during the war to try to stay out of the Army, which he did.

04:07:00

A:

And uh took care of their cattle and farmed. So it wasn't too long they called him and he got a job at Champion and he worked at Champion for 41 years, then stayed there. Of course he had other opportunities that were offered to him. The REA wanted him and a lot of men that he worked with, I'll say probably five of them, they went and worked at the National Lead at Fernald Ohio when it opened up.

04:07:30

A:

So they says, Oh, come down you get better wages down here and benefits and everything, you know. But of course he'd build his time up there and he was doing real good there so he stayed there. And then we started an electric business on our own out here in the country. We had, he had a pretty good size business out here with the farmers and their milkers and their corn and grain unloaders, grain elevators, and wired a lot of houses in the community.

04:08:00

A:

Done a lot of repair work. We were busy. Then we had another daughter who is Gerry. And uh that was a little change too. We lived in a house where we didn't have enough bedrooms. So we had to hunt a house that had more bedrooms and more room. So um the lady that I done the washing for, she brought her washing to me one Sunday evening and she said Ida, we're gonna, I'm gonna move.

04:08:33

A:

Her husband had left her and she didn't drive, this was the undertaker's wife. And of course he was interested in racehorses so he went to Kentucky and worked down at the horse farms in Kentucky. And uh she said I have to have a way to get to town and no one out here, no bus or anything so I'm going to sell my house and I'm going to move to Hamilton.

04:08:56

A:

I said, oh Miss Hazel; which we called her; I would love to have your house. And she said well there's another party ahead of ya and she said if uh they don't take it you'll be next. So I told my husband when he come home from work and he wasn't too happy with me but he said well we'll look at it anyway, you know. So we did, we looked at it and she knew him and she knew me.

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04:09:27

A:

And we said, oh we like it but I don't know if we can afford it or not. And she says well don't worry, she says we can take care of that. So between her and the real estate man they said well you's got the house. So uh that's the house that I live in today. 'Course I'm here by myself. My husband's passed away and uh the girls are all married and gone.

04:09:53

A:

But it's really been an exciting life. My husband and I we were always involved in the community affairs. He saw that worked with the different men in the community. We put the streetlights in and we worked for Governor Bebb to get Governor Bebb's Park started. And uh I had 4-H and then the water system came in and they said we need people to canvas the community to get the water lines in here to ya.

04:10:27

A:

So my husband says okay we'll do that. So we got the water lines come in to Shandon. Uh they go down below now just a little farther. So then they come along with a big bond issue for uh Ross School, the Morgan School but they wanted to consolidate the two school systems, you know. So okay we work on that but the agreement was they was going to change the name of Ross Schools to some name that they would; nominate three or four names then people would pick out the name that they would want best.

04:11:07

A:

And uh I said no way are they going to change Ross School 'cause my two daughters have graduated from there and all my friends and people in the community. So I said we're gonna get a petition and we're going to work on that so we keep the name of Ross School in the community. Well, between the girls and I and my husband, they worked on it, we told Henry Robinson at that time; the one that my husband had dairy herdsman for, we're gonna present a, oh can't think of that one now.

04:11:44

A:

Where you go down and get all the names, we're going to present those at the meeting Tuesday night, we have over 3,000. He says that's all right. And it won that they would never ever change the name of Ross School. So I told, we told Henry; my husband and I, now you put those uh, what did I say they were? (Response - petitions?)

04:12:07

A:

Petitions. You put those petitions in the box, where you keep all the valuable papers so that that school name is never ever changed. So Ross School will never be changed because of the petitions are in there and those people that had signed it. And graduates, oh yeah, we don't want our school name changed we got class rings and all them memoirs from school as Ross and that's what we want to keep them, you know.

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04:12:33

A:

So uh yes it's been very interesting. We've been very active in church. We belong to St. Aloysius Church. Two girls were married there. When we bought the house here my husband said well we'll have it pretty nice when we get old, all we'll have to do is walk across the street and go to church. I said yeah, we'll take our canes and hobble over there and go to church, you know.

04:13:00

A:

Guess what they done? They moved the church up on the hill. So now I have to drive a mile to go to church. So but that's all in progress, you know. Just like they took the high school and moved it to Ross, they have the elementary and everything up on the hill. Of course St. Al's children they go into St. Joe's but then that can't be helped, you know.

04:13:27

A:

So uh yes, it's been an interesting life living here in the community. I seen a lot of changes. We used to have three grocery stores in town and now we don't have any. And the street was, uh I remember back it was just one gravel road to my grandmother's house up on the hill where we went all the time and uh that has changed. The street was lined with trees on either side.

04:13:55

A:

You just like drove through a tunnel when you went through, you know. And uh yes, it's been, it's been interesting to see all the progress. To think that you grew in a way and then in another way you sit and think back of how it was. It was a quieter life than it is today. When we first moved over here you can move, go out, you wouldn't have to look either way, there weren't no cars coming. That was back in 1953. But now, you may set there 10 minutes before you get out the drive and on your way. So.

04:14:32

Q:

Well, since you're sort of talking about the community and the way it was uh, you know, back in the '40's and '50's what was it like um before Fernald was built and then what was it like after Fernald was built?

A:

Well, before Fernald was built it was a blooming little town. We had a mill, and the fellow up on the end he handled the coal and the water and the threshing machine. He would go out and thresh for the farmers in the country, you know.

04:15:05

A:

And um there was a block man over on the back street that made cement blocks. In fact my garage is made out of what they call the boulder blocks, that's what he made. And uh the town hall over there. They had meetings in there and then occasionally they would have movies over there in the summer time. And uh with the two churches we had which we still have.

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04:15:33

A:

But uh now the mill at the end of town which was run by Mr. Sharing, it's closed and now that is a garage, Joe Schulte's garage. Uh, very, very nice operation down there and no grocery stores or, across the street from where I lived they used to sell homemade ice cream and gasoline. And that's gone, that's an antique shop now.

04:16:02

A:

And uh a couple other shops have opened up in town. Down the street, I don't know the people's name that run them because they've changed hands recently. But the grocery stores uh the two of them are still there. One's an antique shop, the one lady she still lives in the one that was a grocery shop, grocery store. But uh other than that, that's about all it's changed. No industry around.

04:16:34

A:

Of course we have the industrial park on the outside of Shandon now. If you go up that way you'll see the latest addition; a great big building up there where they make the trailers. And until that time it was just, the first one that came up there if I remember rightly was Gus Buckler with the fertilize plant. And then there was a little restaurant down from him but that closed.

04:17:00

A:

That's the veterinary now. And then the other feed, dog food, horse food. Oh, they sell a lot of birdseed and things there at the other store down this way. You have Merchant's up there. They're a big operator up there. I don't know what all's in the long building up there. There's a welder up there and it has grew, grew out of town one way but of course there's this certain family, Francis family that own the grounds east of town.

04:17:35

A:

So they don't sell that, they have a sod business there and they'll keep it farmland as long as they can I'm sure. But uh.

04:17:48

Q:

Do you remember when they were building Fernald?

A:

Yes I do.

Q:

Tell us about that, what was that like?

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04:17:54

A:

Well, that created, that's when a lot of the traffic created in through town 'cause people came here from Rushville, Brookville, St. Leon area. All and Connersville, Oxford, all those people that come from the west would have to come, go through town, you know. And uh, then there's was a lot of people hired in this area that worked there at that time. And uh it, it made things boom for quite a while, you know, until they kind of tapered off down there. And, but uh.

04:18:38

Q:

And you had mentioned that um you were going to try to, you and a group of neighbors went to Columbus to try to block the site?

A:

Uh yes, when my parents and the neighbors down in Crosby Township, when they heard there was an atomic plant coming in they didn't want that because it was going to take three of the farmer's ground that they owned there.

04:19:02

A:

And one was a big dairy farm by the name of Gray. And then there was the Lewis' and the Wilsons' and uh Irvin's and Fuchs' and then my parents lived, the Jerkovich's they lived down the road a little farther. We were a little farther away. So anyway they all went to Columbus and had a meeting up there with uh the people that were in charge of what was, the governor's down here at the atomic plant.

04:19:34

A:

And uh they said well if you're gonna think about a lawsuit I don't think you can beat it. But he says we'll here you out. So they all talked and protested against it, you know, and said no they didn't want it in the community and what it might turn out to do and use all the good farm ground. And they said well it's pretty well along that that's what's going to happen.

04:20:00

A:

And they've contacted the farmers and we know that the farmers don't want it but they have to take the price that we offer and if you go to court you won't get the price you've been offered. So uh they was up there the whole day and toward, I guess going back and forth arguing about it and so the fellow says well I'll just show you what it's planned like.

04:20:22

A:

So he pulled a curtain back on the wall and there was a big picture of the atomic plant what it was going to look like and he says that's what's coming in there. And how long it will be in there we have no idea, but it will be an atomic plant. So they said well you can't fight the government and they came back home and they was sad.



**FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT**  
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04:20:44

A:

Those, whoever was buying the ground, they came and purchased the ground and started excavating and surveying and, you know, started to build the plant there then and everything. And it wasn't long they started hiring people for different jobs down there, secretaries and draftsmen and workers of all kinds. (Comment – wow) But uh.

04:21:09

Q:

And your brother worked on some of the drawings for the site?

A:

Yes. My brother was a drawer for, a draftsmen for 10 years down there. And my sister she was secretary to one of the head men down there for 7 years. I didn't work there. I stayed on the farm with my parents and helped there 'cause they had enough to do out in Indiana. But yeah I had a lot of friends that I graduated with that had worked down there. And a lot of friends from Harrison work there so.

04:21:44

Q:

Yeah um the people that you knew that worked at Fernald um did you ever discuss their jobs with them?

A:

They would say very little about it, you know. They would never say what they did or what department they worked in or nothing, you know. It was pretty, I think they were told, you know, they was pretty secret what was going on down there at that time. And of course the railroad system it got much busier at that time too than what it normally had been.

04:22:13

A:

They usually run a train at 7:00 in the morning and 5:00 of the night but then you would hear them occasionally during the daytime too. I guess they was bringing in atomic rocks or something. Hauling them out, whatever.

04:22:30

Q:

That's about right, it was ore.

A:

Yeah. (Talking to dog – are you leaving now? Come on. You're not going to stay with me? All right. He's going to visit somebody else now.)

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04:22:45

Q:

That's great. Um, let's see what was I going to ask you, something more about the site workers, let me get my list here. When uh, when you went to Columbus, I'm real curious about that, who exactly did you talk to? Um, did you know who to talk to when you were on your way out there or?

A:

Well these, the other, I didn't go myself and my parents went. But uh gosh that's been a long time ago. I don't remember who they said they talked to.

04:23:19

A:

But uh it was the representatives at that time like Fox who is now I think uh the representatives for the Southwest Ohio is who they talked to. And uh, in the Capitol Building, I do know they went to the Capitol Building. But now the names of people they talked with I don't remember.

04:23:43

Q:

So it was like the state representative? (Comment - Yeah.) and the people who were in charge of, wow. Do you have any idea why they picked that area to put the plant?

A:

Well the only, I know that it was far inland in case of an attack they would have to come inland to attack it. Now that's all that I have ever heard that that's why they built it there. And of course it was close to Tennessee, Oak Ridge at that time too. I think the two kind of maybe worked back and forth.

04:24:21

Q:

And did you know any of the folks that lost their land, any of the people, I mean did you personally know folks?

A:

Oh yes. My brother, he was good friend with the Fuchs' and I think Marion Fuchs is living yet. They lived there and I knew the Knollman's. I went to school with their children and the Wilson girls, I knew those. Then there was another family lived back there was the Wilpert's. Wilpert's I knew Bill and his brother and sister Betty.

04:25:00

A:

Bill and James and Betty; I knew them that lived back there. Their father was a tenant for the dairy farm that was back there. And then course the Irvins on the other side, they were my age. They had a boy and a girl, Glen and Ethel. We all went to school together at Crosby, knew those. And then the Irvins house uh was moved from one side down road to the other side. It still sits there to this day.

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04:25:33

A:

I think maybe that might be the only house that's uh, well the Wilson's down on 126, they're still there yet. Whoever lives in the big house I don't know who lives in the big house now. But those two house. And the Knollman's there on the corner. That one is still left there. The Bader house, they demolished that.

04:26:00

A:

And then up further where the pallet plant is there was a barn across the road there and a house on the left side so they took and moved the barn across the road there to get it off the atomic plant's ground.

04:26:20

Q:

'Cause I know they tore a lot of the buildings down and uh, you know, they were there for a while. Did you know the Cone family?

A:

The Co-? Yes, I knew of them, I didn't know them personally. Yeah, they were a daughter, a daughter to the Gray's I believe, if that was right. Yeah.

04:26:38

Q:

So how did these people react to losing their farms to eminent domain?

A:

Well they kind of hated it I think because most of them probably started there when they got married and then uh well they went up around Columbus to Chillicothe and up in that area and settled on other places that they could farm, you know. It was good ground up in that area too.

04:27:04

A:

And then some of them they just um fell into some kind of other occupation, you know, they had a sale and sold everything and went to do something else. Kind of picked up and left the country.

04:27:24

Q:

So how would you say the building of the plant changed the community?

A:

Well it, it changed it, it brought more people into the community to work. Uh other than as far as a danger or a hazard or anything like that, I never thought of it as, in that way you know. It was just, it was just a place where a lot of business was transacted and uh you have to expect that when you have something big going on like that.

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04:28:00

A:

Heavy trucks, a lot of people going and coming from work in different shifts. And train going different times. And one thing or another sort of, yeah it made a change to more activity.

04:28:19

Q:

How about traffic?

A:

Traffic, yeah, traffic was heavy down around Ross. If you got down there when the 4:00, 3:30 shift went off or whatever time, you know, and in the morning when they were coming, you know. But as far as, you know, having robberies and things like that, that didn't increase or anything around, you know.

04:28:42

A:

Like some places where that happens you get maybe a disarrangement of your community. But uh that, nothing like that ever happened around in the area. Just all a bunch of people that wanted to make a little more money and get ahead in life I guess.

04:29:05

Q:

They employed a lot of people around? Did they hire a lot of folks who were farming at the time?

A:

Yes they did. I would say, you know, they, almost all small farmers that didn't have a big farm, they got either the husband or the wife got a job there. The wife could work in the cafeteria or maybe some kind of cleaning maintenance, housekeeping, you know, or something like that. But yeah, a lot of people with a little farm, they took jobs there.

04:29:42

Q:

Great. We're going to take a little break, switch tapes.

**FLHP0144**

05:01:06

Q:

Okay. Um when the plant was built, what did you and your friends think that it was there for?

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A:

Well, we knew that it was probably something to do with the war. That they were going to make nuclear things but we could just never know what it was going to be. But they said well when they, one time they said they were making bricks that you could put in a furnace and they would burn for years.

05:01:40

A:

That was one of the things that rumors that was out. But whether it happened or not I don't know maybe that was just to kind of satisfy the people, you know. But uh nobody seemed to know, I don't know if they had job at, I'm sure they knew what they were doing but then they couldn't bring it out to the public. And maybe as far as if they made any machinery there or not I don't know.

05:02:07

A:

I just think they maybe made some kind of a product that could be used in the atomic bomb or whatever. I don't really know 'cause I never really heard them say what they were doing with it. But they were always busy down there moving in and out stuff. So it went somewhere. Now they're finding a place to hide it again. Takin' it out to Utah puttin' it in the mountain I guess.

05:02:40

A:

But uh, I just never felt that there was any great possibility of being afraid of that place blowing up or being an over spill, you know, that would affect locally. But uh they used to send a truck up every once in a while and set it over there in the churchyard with some kind of like a fan type thing on top of it. I don't know if they were checking air pollution or what but it was from National Lead down there.

05:03:15

A:

But uh, oh we had cistern water that we used never got any kind of a rash or anything from using it, you know. But they said they monitored every so often, so.

05:03:32

Q:

How about myths or legends or anything like that. Did you ever hear any rumors or stories about the plant?

A:

No not really. I supposed there was plenty out but then I didn't have any close family that really, my husband he worked in Hamilton all the time. And of course like I said, my brother and sister were there in the beginning and then later on they left. Maybe they developed them. The mysteries or whatever. But uh no. I can't think of anything that I've ever heard them say about the plant.

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05:04:14

Q:

Now your brother and sister – was it sister or sister-in-law? (Comment – sister) Sister, bother worked there, um did they have to have Q clearances while they were there? (Comment – yes) Did they come and talk to you, did the FBI come and talk to you about uh their jobs at all?

05:04:29

A:

I think they came to my parents. I think they talked to them. Yeah, they had to have a real good clearance. Then they always wore a special thing on them with their picture and their number and everything. You had to have that on in order to get in. If you didn't have that, you a badge of some kind you couldn't get in. I do know that.

05:04:51

Q:

Do you remember any types of questions that the FBI may have asked your parents about, about the job?

A:

Well probably is if they were ever um in jail, or if they, you know, maybe passed bad checks or health problems. Uh, you know, character, how they got along in school. I would imagine that would, 'cause they were just out of high school and when you got out of high school you could get good jobs then. You were needed, wartime. But, yeah I remember him coming and doing a check on them in that respect.

05:05:39

Q:

This whole episode pretty much with Fernald was happening right at the top of the Cold War, the very peak of the Cold War, and uh the typical American, what was the typical American's mindset about the threat of Russia in this area?

05:06:00

A:

Well, there was talk about um, you know, that Russia did have missiles and they could possibly land them in the United States, you know, if they could. I guess they could hit Washington D.C., New York City, Chicago if they really wanted to and probably maybe even the atomic plant if they had powerful enough one's to do that.

05:06:30

A:

Yeah, there was close of a night you didn't keep too many lights on. That was one of things was you had your blackouts during the wars. So they wouldn't be identified or could be spotted. But uh.

05:06:54

Q:

Do you remember any civil defense efforts that happened during that time, like late '50's early '60's in this area?

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A:

Uh, no my husband belonged to the Civil Defense for quite a few years. And they would go down there on practice runs. Now their practice runs was simply uh for uh shooting and to get, get people out if there was a disaster. And that's about all they would train there for was to rescue people if something happened and get them to the hospital and things like that.

05:07:39

Q:

So it was like a joint response kind of thing for Fernald specifically or for the whole area?

A:

Well, it would be the area that was hit the hardest regardless whether it was Fernald or Ross or wherever, you know. Wherever they were needed they would go and then they would go like on, well they would be like hid to kind of watch for if there was someone trying to invade the plant or something like that, they would do that kind of things too.

05:08:13

A:

And then uh they'd have their rescue work, some way with the fire departments in our system that we got now. They practice down there a good bit too on rescue and fire and things like that. If something ever happened, they had an over spill or what might happen you never know. That they would be, to come and see how quick they could get there and get the people out.

05:08:40

A:

They did do that for a few years. Of course our fire departments then weren't like they are today. They really have updated them considerable to back in the early '50's as to what they were. But uh, and then the atomic plant, I think if there was a major fire in the locality they would send there equipment too. So they work back and forth as much as they could I think.

05:09:18

Q:

Great. Um, had you heard that you lived in a dangerous place here?

A:

Yes. Uh, in fact well they said you should always keep water and food in a, if you had like a fruit cellar which we did. And uh, you know, be prepared in case something did happen with the atomic uh plant that you could survive for four or five days anyway and by that time you would, keep a radio in with you so, you know, what was going on.

05:09:55

A:

You had to have a battery radio and be a little prepared to stay in for at least five or so days. However long it would be till they cleared out of the area, you know. But uh, yes, sometimes you thought about it and then again I don't know you just busy and you just didn't think about it 'cause you could go any place and be in some kind of trouble.

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

05:10:24

Q:

Good. And uh, let's see. Let's go back real briefly and talk a little bit about Fort Scott Camp. Um, your father was a caretaker there from what years?

A:

Uh, from 1924 to '41.

Q:

Great. And you lived on the camp right there at the camp?

A:

Right. On the farm there at the camp, yes.

05:10:57

Q:

Tell us what the camp was like and a little bit about the area that you lived there.

A:

Uh well they just had the one camp when we first moved there and it was in a lot of need of repair. It had been kind of like run down. My father in the winter time he done quite a bit of work over there repairing buildings on the outside and roofs and cleaning up rubbish that had been laying around for maybe a year or so.

05:11:28

A:

And got it so that we could mow practically the whole place. We just had horses and a mower at that time, we didn't have no tractor. Very few farmers had tractors in fact. So a lot of cleaning up had to be done. Then there was a lady by the name of Mrs. Hinkel, her boy was killed in the war so she donated a lot of money to Fort Scott Camp to rebuild.

05:11:55

A:

And she built a chapel. Oh, it was a beautiful chapel. All out of stone and uh she named it after her son Victor. It was called St. Victor. And uh that gave them a place to have mass where they did have it in the lodge on the hill. And at that time the lodge was the kitchen and the church and the dining hall and there was a director's building and the priest building.

05:12:23

A:

And then about eight or ten cabins in the back with a swimming pool. That was all it was to start with. But they had about oh I'd say 30 acres that you, my parents had cleared off and got ready so that they could mow and make a nice appearance for it. And so then it wasn't very long they said well they needed a boys camp. I suppose that was about in the late '40's or somewhere along there.



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

05:12:55

A:

Uh, they come to my father and they asked if he would sell the back end, which was just woods, and a 20 acre cleared off field. And he said yeah, he says since you're going to give me more work I won't be able to take care of my farm. Yeah, we'll do that deal. So he sold the back part which was woods. Kept the front that we farmed and we still kept our cattle and our hogs.

05:13:22

A:

And done the maintenance work then for both the camps. And uh we had eight head of horses and they would mow with four in the morning and they'd take them four off and put four more on in the afternoon to mow. And sometimes it was pretty hot. I don't know whether it was as hot as it is today or not but it would get pretty hot for those animals.

05:13:46

A:

And uh, but we always washed them off good in the evening and fed them good so they were kind of perky for the next morning. And then in the new camp there came a new dining hall, a new lodge building, an infirmary and I believe 20 new cabins. And uh it was sort of like just a horseshoe. It was really a beautiful setting.

05:14:12

A:

It had the dining hall and the lodge and the cabins all around there. Then there was a directors building in the front, then the pool was down between the two hills that the building sat on. And they would have their shows in the lodge in the summertime and fireworks. And they always had their big to-do on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July with their fireworks and a water show.

05:14:37

A:

And oh, some of those girls and boys they could dive so gracefully, you know. And we always went over and saw them do their performance. 'Course they'd always give my parents and us kids recognition because we were the caretakers and had it so beautiful lookin', you know. Parents, they would come to us and they were glad that they had a such a beautiful place to leave their children.

05:15:01

A:

But not too many parents would come because they'd usually put their children there then they would go away on vacations, you know, then they wouldn't get to see all the activities. But they had a lot going on there. They had horseback riding and tennis and swimming and all kinds of crafts. Archery and hand crafts and even had mail delivery every day.

05:15:29

A:

It was a blooming place and interesting to be at. I did work in the kitchen over there when I was about 12 or 13 and I cleaned the chapel and I cleaned the priest house. And the kitchen were all colored

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

people but that one lady she was the sweetest old lady. She was the head of it and oh she could make a chocolate cake eight inches high.

05:15:54

A:

So I worked in the kitchen in the dish room and helped them. Then sometimes I would mow when my mother couldn't mow. When she had to be with the little ones. I usually babysat with them but then sometimes I'd get out there and get to mow too which is what I liked.

05:16:16

Q:

So how many kids would come in a typical summer?

A:

Oh I think their switch every two weeks was around oh say roughly 275. And that would be for the boys and the girls. Course they could stay four weeks or six weeks or they could stay the whole summer, whatever they wanted to do. And uh of course they would alternate, the boys would come one, two weeks and the girls came they would come the second week.

05:16:51

A:

So they weren't everybody coming at one time to change and to go, you know. The girls were one week behind the boys in coming. But it worked out okay. Then after the camp would close then they would have a couple of big parties. The office of Fort Scott that was downtown, they would come out and have a swim day and a meal.

05:17:17

A:

And then they would have the seminarians from the seminary come out and have a day and a swim and a meal, which was nice. That was always the first or second week in September when they'd do that.

05:17:34

Q:

Tell us a little bit about the people who were the administrators for the camp, they were from the archdiocese?

A:

They were from the archdiocese, at that time it was Father Wagner. And then Joe Link and Bill Bean, they were heads over it. And uh I think there was a DuPont and I'll say a Schroeder that were the ones we always had contact with.

05:18:00

Q:

Wow you're good with names; you remember all these names. That's terrific.

A:

Oh, sometimes I don't know my own name; maybe you just hit a good day today.

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

05:18:15

Q:

So um in the mid '80's uh here in this area there was a whole lot of media coverage because there was a dust collector leak out at plant Fernald, out at Plant 9 at Fernald, and uh there was a lot of media coverage; national media coverage, local media coverage, how did you react to that news?

05:18:34

A:

Well, I really didn't react to it in any way. I knew there was a leak down there but then I felt that they would take care of it in some way. If it was dangerous, you know, that I had to get out of town surely they would let us know and try to help get you settled some place else away from it. But no I just, oh some of them they talked about it, you know.

05:19:05

A:

They said oh, you know, it's really dangerous we shouldn't be getting that, you know, but then who knows. There's pollution comes in here every day from other parts of the world. When the one blew up over there in Russia what did that do, that circled the world three times before it was dissolved. And that's the biggest year we had the peach crop was when the atomic went through.

05:19:30

A:

So I don't know. Maybe it would hurt some people and maybe others they wouldn't be affected with it in any way, shape or form, you know.

05:19:40

Q:

A lot of people suggest that the reason that Fort Scott was closed was because of the threat of Fernald and uh what do you think of that?

A:

Uh, I really thought it was ridiculous because they had their own water system and everything. And as far, they weren't on the down flow of the wind. The wind was most generally taking to the north of the plant, or to the north of Fort Scott and all the trees and things down around there, they look beautiful.

05:20:14

A:

They don't show any damage like if you go down through the Smoky Mountains you can see all the trees down there that's dying from these cars and buses and things that go up through there, you know. And probably these same people that was afraid of getting hurt here are going down there and inhaling all of that pollution down there.

05:20:36

A:

But uh I always felt like, I watched the cedar trees down there grow from little on up and if atomic plant was spilling out anything it sure didn't hurt them 'cause man they're beautiful. And the deers, they think so too 'cause they hide in there in the winter. But uh, no I was never afraid, well of course

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we're on the upside of it but then I felt as if it was dangerous they would surely warn you, you better get to another locality.

05:21:11

Q:

Great. And uh, let's see. Uh we talked a little bit about uh, gosh my question just went out of my mind, I had a really good one too. What was it? Yes, stop tape for a second 'cause it's a really good one and I want to ask ya.

05:21:48

Q:

Um the water issue has been kind of a big issue within the area because of the aquifer. What have you heard about that and what uh did they run lines to your house or?

A:

Uh well we get from Southwest Regional Water which is up the river on 127 is it that goes, Hamilton-Cleves Road up above Venice by Ross. Uh we get our water from there. I just, I don't see how course I guess if it went under maybe directly by the aquifer is always pushing south that it wouldn't, you know, affect the water.

05:22:38

A:

And uh, I just uh I don't see how, how it would really affect, you know, unless it was open like maybe a swimming pool or something like that. And I doubt it would be very light in that. 'Cause no I know they had quite a bit of trouble with it. Uh, of course if those silos were as bad as they said they were which other people won't know, you know. It's just maybe it's as bad as what it is and maybe they make it worse than what it is who knows.

05:23:19

A:

Anyway uh there over a period of time it would probably leak into the aquifer. But then most of the Aquifer I think is up north, I don't think that it would get that far into it.

05:23:38

Q:

And how about FRESH? Um, did you attend a few of those meetings at the beginning?

A:

When they first started yes I went to some of those. But they weren't making too much headway and my husband got sick and we just discontinued them. And I know Mrs. Crawford; she went to all the different meetings and was at the head of it. And worked hard on it to, you know, get work done on what was being not legally down there. I know that. But uh I couldn't say what her status is of it now, I don't know. I never went to any meetings lately.

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

05:24:21

Q:

Why did you go to that first meeting that you went to, the FRESH meeting?

A:

It was more or less to find out what they intended to do and if it was going to help the community to be there and do what you could. As far as bodies was concerned because you have to have a pretty large representation to go against a big place like that. And that was the biggest reason that we took part in it.

05:24:53

Q:

And were you curious about the health affects maybe of Fernald around the area?

A:

Yes. It's what they were saying, you know, that it was spilling out overflowing this, however they would do that. In smoke or water runoff or whatever, you know. Yes, it was a concern but there again I felt that they would do and curtail as much of it as they could. It's just like trucks that go past my house; there's big diesel trucks, you know.

05:25:26

A:

They blow out smoke and you can smell it for half an hour after they go through, you know. But I can't stop every truck that goes through and say hey you're polluting my area, you know. That's just common thing I guess you have to live with.

05:25:41

Q:

And how do you think what Fernald was doing there, how do you think it contributed to uh America's missions especially during the Cold War?

A:

Well I'm sure they did some good. Uh, what, you know, whatever they done, whether they made war material or fuel or for the planes or whatever I have no idea.

05:26:16

Q:

Okay, let me see. Um, are you on the medical monitoring program?

A:

Yes I am.

Q:

Can you tell us a little bit about how you got involved in that, what it entails, what you have to do?

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

05:26:26

A:

Um, well let's see I think, you know, they first opened it up and I think that kind of come through FRESH that everybody in the area; they gave you a certain mile rings, you know, mile, two mile, three mile rings. Uh, you had your choice you could either go and be monitored or to see if, you know, you were being affected by the plant.

05:26:53

A:

So uh I did, I went and I think my husband, I don't think he went because I think he was gone when all of that came. No, he did go too because I remember now we all got a check for \$500 I think was the first check and he had passed away. So we had gone to the first time and been examined. We both had, you know, he had as good as health as he could have for his condition.

05:27:25

A:

And uh I had nothing wrong with me. And but then I do continue. I think they do it every two or three years now. I think next year I go for the whole thing. And nothing has ever showed up or I never had skin cancer or anything like that. So, I think the monitoring program was good. It probably proved out that, you know, if you were sick you could get help or whatever.

05:27:57

A:

You may leave it go. I know I had a friend over at Harrison he was a brother to my brother-in-law uh he died and they said he died from cancer from the atomic plant. Well that man he smoked cigarettes one right after the other and I don't really believe that the atomic plant had a whole lot to do with his cancer because he smoked like a fiend but yet they blamed it on to them.

05:28:22

A:

I think he got some kind of a settlement out of it, you know. I don't know how much or what. And then it was if you done any property damage to your property, you know, they gave you a settlement for that within a mile or two radius. Well we never had no property damage, our paint never peeled on our house or the shingles crumbled or anything like that from pollution.

05:28:50

A:

If it was that bad, but yet they did give a settlement for those people in the area regardless. And that amounted to a lot of money. And I know some people that just had moved out here, they come from way on the other side of Cincinnati and they got a big hunk. But uh.

05:29:16

Q:

Do you know the criteria they were using when they were deciding who got what money?

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**Transcript**

A:

Well you had to fill out a form. You got a letter in the mail and then you had to fill that out. I just can't recall what all was on that. It was to, some of it was to plant life and I think to uh like if your paint was scraping off of your house or if you noticed well like a mildew or something on your house.

05:29:44

A:

I think that was in the questionnaire. But we didn't have anything like that I mean our shrubbery it never died or anything. So but uh yeah, they did make, make a settlement on property 'cause they thought, you know, beings atomic plant was there your property devaluated because people wouldn't buy it on that account.

05:30:10

A:

But it never made that much difference. They built houses up on New London Road and up 748. People kept coming and building and then down around Ross there. Then the subdivision right at the foot of Brown's Hill, back up in there. They were building houses back up in there. It didn't seem like it affected people that the plant was there. But some of them in the area they didn't like it and thought it was doing damage to everything, get it out of here, you know.

05:30:47

Q:

Okay, go ahead and stop.

**TAPE FLHP0145**

06:01:03

Q:

Okay, we're rolling. Um, how do you feel about the cleanup that's going on at Fernald right now?

A:

Well I think they're doing a wonderful job and uh I know they have a lot of things in line what they want to do with their historical search around. And all the things they're going to get and the park they want to make out of it.

06:01:24

A:

I think that's really great for the community. Uh I don't know all their plans that they have but I know some of them. They're going to have like an Indian cemetery I believe and uh a building where they'll house of their information they gather from these interviews. That'll be nice for people that well just for the younger generation that's coming on, you know.

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

06:01:53

A:

The older ones they probably forgot a lot about what's going on down there too. And you can go and read and hear and see. I know when we go travelling we always like to go into the museums of the west and see how they performed before it got modern. They got a different lifestyle too now. But I think they're doing great, leveling it off. They've made some small lakes back there from what I can see.

06:02:25

A:

I have a friend he flies an airplane and one of these days I'm going to have him fly over that so I can see what all's going on down there.

06:02:35

Q:

And you can do that now. It used to be restricted airspace. (Comment – yeah) Now you can fly over it, it's not a big deal. Um, you had gone to the museum in Oak Ridge Tennessee, can you tell us a little bit about that?

06:02:47

A:

Well we got in there kind of late. They had some, we just got into the front end of it and most of it was reading as to, you know, what they were doing there. They were a nuclear plant too I believe. Oh, they showed, they didn't show much equipment because that was back right after the war and they hadn't brought too much of the equipment up in front.

06:03:12

A:

More or less we just went to see where it was located and what it looked like. And like I said, it was late in the day and we did get into the front end where they had a few pictures and the, you know, plant layout and one thing or another. But that was about all we got to see there. And of course the next day we was to move on and go farther. But I did visit the plant there to see where it was located and what it looked like.

06:03:40

Q:

What were your impressions of Oak Ridge?

A:

Oak Ridge?

Q:

I mean the plant there.

A:

Uh, the plant there, well, I don't really know. It was, I guess it was nice for the time, it's location, you know. I just kind of forget how it set back in the hills there. It was kind of hilly around it I



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**Transcript**

remember that. And uh they were low. I don't believe they had as many tall buildings as what Fernald had. It's really all I remember about that because that's been like I said back in '48 or '49 something like that.

06:04:30

Q:

And so did you know anything about what they were doing at Oak Ridge, the plant there?

A:

No, didn't know anything what was going on there either.

06:04:40

Q:

So now they're getting ready to tear down a lot of buildings, in fact they've been tearing down lots of buildings already on the Fernald site and soon that land will be all level and what would you like to see done with that land?

A:

Well, I would like to see it put into some community uh some community project like a museum and maybe a park area.

06:05:07

A:

Where people can, you know, go there for walking and maybe in the museum have some parts and tell more about what they did there. The history of what was there before because so much history is being lost now. Young people won't listen to the older people talk about how things were back even at my time when I'm going up, you know, I tell the girls oh you got it nice coming to see me now.

06:05:41

A:

When I went to see my grandma I had to go on a gravel road and the dust was flying and it wasn't too nice. Oh, mom you're always talking about the old times. But yet there's going to be a day when they're going to want to know what this area was like. And everyday it's changing, you know. It changed when the atomic plant come in and the other plants down around Ross came in.

06:06:07

A:

I don't remember all of those buildings being there, you know, and sometimes I go past I think oh gee I remember when they used to be out there shucking corn when we'd go past here. There'd be \_\_\_\_\_ in that field, you know, or a wheat field of shucks and here it is a big home or maybe it's a school now, you know. And when we went to Ross there wasn't Ross High School.

06:06:36

A:

There wasn't, there was just a Ross School there on Layhigh Road there. And it's the same way up in Morgan. They tore the old Morgan School down, all but the gymnasium. Lovely school down on

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

Chapel Road and that was all farm ground. And uh it, you know, I think they ought to preserve some history there if they can get some things in there that was before the atomic and bring it up to the time the atomic plant quit.

06:07:07

A:

That's what I would like to see because there's a lot that I don't remember, you know, that went on back in there. 'Course you're busy with your everyday life and your family and the community things and one thing and another and you lose track of what all has gone on down there.

06:07:25

A:

I think there for a while they made paint back there and what else they made I have no idea. I, Pittsburgh Paint Company was in some of those buildings for a while. And uh just be nice, oh yeah I don't remember when they were doing that back there, you know. And it's just kind of nice, they formed a historical society up at Okeana.

06:07:49

A:

'Course I knew a lot of things from growing up in this area that went on at Okeana, you know, back. Then there's still some older people that come along oh yeah it was this or that mill here or there, you know. Oh well I didn't remember that I just remember Floor and Mullers Mill as you went in town, you know. But uh, yeah, I think we've got to preserve our history as we go along because there's somebody in the population now that's going to want to know about it.

06:08:21

A:

It's interesting to me to see. And it's the same way with Colerain Ave. and Northgate down there, you know, how it has come out from Cincinnati. When we were going to market down there, there was nothing on Blue Rock or just the people that lived there scattered. And then when you got down into the city, you know, there was the city in the same way on Colerain Ave.

06:08:47

A:

It was out as far as uh well there was a big space between Groesbeck and the Mt. Airy Forest there. There was no businesses hardly whatsoever, you know, now it's all most business to my door. Yeah.

06:09:08

Q:

So how do you feel about the Living History Project, us coming to interview you?

A:

Uh, well I have enjoyed it. I hope somebody will get some good out of it if they ever pull the tape out to say oh yeah, I remember that old lady, you know. Gosh, yeah.

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

06:09:26

Q:

Well your remembrances will help people I think, you know, I think that'll be terrific.

A:

Well it's been an experience and I've enjoyed it. Talking to these nice people that come to my home and shared it for the afternoon.

06:09:43

Q:

Great. Is there anything else you wanted to add or any question I didn't get to that you wanted, anything we didn't cover that you want to cover?

A:

Well I can't really think of anything. We talked on the church and the community and that's about it.

06:10:00

Q:

Okay. We're going to do something called nat sound now and that just means we need to have quiet on the set for about 30 seconds just to get room tone. So this is nat sound.