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FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

Name: Cliff Schwan

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Tape: 88

Project Number 20012

Tape FLHP0203

11:01:35

Q:

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

11:01:38

A:

My name is Clifford Schwan, my first name is C-L-I-F-F-O-R-D, last name S-C-H-W-A-N.

11:01:47

Q:

Terrific. Now, if you could give us a little background, I know you came down from sort of upstate Ohio. High school years and your family.

11:01:53

A:

Okay, I was raised and lived most of my life in Cleveland Heights and went and graduated from Cleveland Heights High School and started working for a local accounting firm in Cleveland and I was drafted in the Army in '41. Served four years there and then I went back into public accounting with a different firm after the war.

11:02:24

A:

And then '51 I was offered a job by Walt Errickson to come down here and start out as office manager of this project, which was then going to be run by National Lead Company under a contract with the Atomic Energy Commission. So we came here in October of '51 and, uh, a couple of years later I was made assistant controller.

11:02:48

A:

And then when Walty moved to New York as controller which was in '67, I became controller until I retired in 1980.

11:03:02

Q:

Tell us a little bit about your military service first of all.

11:03:05

A:

I was drafted and went to Fort Bragg near Fayetteville, NC in the field artillery and then was shipped early in '42 to Fort Dixon, NJ where they filled up an infantry division, I think it was the 42nd Division

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

before they moved us out overseas. We were going to go, we heard later on we were going to go on to Hilde France in February of '42, but that burned in Brooklyn.

11:03:40

A:

So we didn't leave until April on a smaller ship in convoy and we landed in Belfast, Ireland in April, middle of April of '42 and I spent there until July and then I was transferred from field artillery to finance division and the finance office of this division I think it was the 42nd. And then in, shortly there after they needed someone in England at the third port of embarkation.

11:04:20

A:

So I went by myself over to Newport, England, stayed there until we left for North Africa in November of '42 before the invasion of North Africa. Came in and landed on the third day of that invasion. Stayed there for my overseas duties and several communities in Oakridge and came back to the States after so many months they'd let you go back.

11:04:51

A:

In June of '44, one thing about that was we left Norland, North Africa, which is Algeria on the evening of June 5 and when we woke up the next morning and we'd gone through the states of Gibraltar, we'd heard over the ship radio that the forces had landed in France on June 6. And there we were on our way back to U.S. on an Army transport.

11:05:22

A:

It's the most amazing thing that I've ever had happen to me in the military service. And we went through Newport News and got off there and eventually wind up through a series of transfers in Camp Uptown near Brookhaven. I don't know if you're familiar with Long Island, you take the Long Island River to Patch Augean and then take a bus through Brookhaven to our camp which later became the Brookhaven National Laboratory under Atomic Energy Commission.

11:05:50

A:

And my wife and I and family visited there several years later, so that's my background.

11:06:00

Q:

Great. And, uh, your early years at Fernald, what was the site like, they've pretty much in '51 and in October of '51 they were just building the site. What was the site like when you first got there?

11:06:11

A:

Well, we worked in the temporary Admin Building on the north end project on the second floor and the site was kind of just foundations all over the place except for the Pilot Plant. It was up in the middle of October of '51. We were invited to the Pilot Plant where they broke out the first derby. But normally I did not go on the site during construction, it was so muddy or dusty or whatever.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

11:06:42

A:

So we didn't get over to our building, the Admin building until '52 and then I stayed in the building on the first floor my whole career with National Lead.

11:06:58

Q:

Now when they broke out the first derby, did they have like a ceremony of some sort.

11:07:01

A:

No, no, not really we just stood around with our plant manager, George Wondering, and some of the other managers of the other plants and it was explained to us how they produced the derby and what they did to break it out.

11:07:20

A:

Now, did you have to get a Q clearance?

11:07:24

A:

Yes, I had to get a Q clearance and investigated by the FBI and it was renewed every so many years I don't know if it was five years but they renewed it. Then later on, well I guess they, well later on you had to have old clearance or something else. But I did have to get that.

11:07:45

Q:

So tell us a little bit about getting a Q clearance as you understood it, what was the process?

11:07:48

A:

Uh, as I understand it we had to give, uh, where we'd worked previous, all of our previous employment, and we had to give the names of three people who knew us well. And I understand that the FBI did talk to those three people, also talked to the people in the neighborhood where we lived to find out what kind of a person we were and what they knew about us.

11:08:16

A:

Trying to figure out some information I guess.

11:08:19

Q:

So, were any of your friends or anybody, like sort of intimidated by that.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

11:08:23

A:

No, but they told me later on, “hey, the FBI came around and talked to me, what was that all about?” And then I had to explain to them that I was trying to get this clearance so I could work at Fernald.

11:08:37

Q:

So when you first got to Fernald how much did you know about the process and what was going on there?

11:08:40

A:

I really didn't know anything, I just knew that a plant was being built by the Atomic Energy Commission but I didn't really know what was going on. I had gone through Cincinnati from a job in Eaton early that summer of '51 and I picked up the Cincinnati Enquirer and I read in there that they were building this plant. I know this was before I even knew about the job.

11:09:13

A:

I read they were building this plant in northern part of Hamilton County and that was June and later like in August, I was called by my boss who was with National Lead in Niagara Falls and I'd audited his branch up there and I was asked, are you interested in taking a job going to Cincinnati and we're going to get this contract with the Atomic Energy Commission and I'd like you come along with me as office manager.

11:09:41

A:

Then I was interviewed in the New York office by my boss and Tom Owens who was a corporate head, he wasn't an officer of the company. And then they interviewed me and offered me the job and then I came down here to report for work October 1. Drove to Hamilton on 30th of September, stayed in the Anthony Wayne Hotel in Hamilton right along the Miami River. Drove out the project in the morning. There were four of us in accounting to start out with.

11:10:15

Q:

So what was your impression of the surrounding community when you were driving in the morning on the way to work?

11:10:19

A:

I saw farmland and the route from Hamilton to Fernald was a narrow road and it had quite a few bends in it, they've straightened it out since then and widened it. But I've thought of it as a farming community and, uh, and then I stayed in the Anthony Wayne several days and then I moved to a farmhouse along Route 128, the Elliotts, I think that was the name of the people that lived there.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

11:10:47

A:

And I stayed there until my wife and I moved into Cincinnati the end of October of '52.

11:10:60

Q:

So the surrounding community members, they had a room for you?

11:11:02

A:

Yeah, this was in a farmhouse on the first floor they had a vacant room and they rented it to me and my wife stayed with me one weekend there before we knew where we were going to move. Did house hunting during that first month of October and then we finally found a house just being built. Not too far from here, less than a mile, just across the other side of Dailey, that's where we moved.

11:11:32

Q:

That's interesting, because I talk to community members who said, yeah, we had people who stayed with us while we were actually here and I had not talked to anybody who had actually did that, so that's interesting.

11:11:38

Q:

Well, tell us a little bit about your in your first job, what your responsibilities were?

11:11:48

A:

Well, as office manager I was responsible for payroll, accounts payable where we paid the bills and budget and preparation, we had to prepare the budgets for Atomic Energy Commission once a year. And we had to, reproduction, the mailroom and so forth that was under us. Oh, let's see, well we had cost accounting, we had that, too. That's basically what I started out with.

11:12:26

A:

Responsibilities for those. And as I told you later on when we got a new computer I was taken out of my office because they needed that space for a computer that had all those vacuum tubes and it was a big unit. So, I got dispossessed as they say.

11:12:48

Q:

And now think of everything what the computer could do is probably in a wrist? Right?

11:12:51

A:

Yeah, well we have computer here and it's very small compared to what that was. It created a lot of heat, had to have air conditioning to maintain it. But that was in early 60's we replaced it with

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

IBM 1401 which was much smaller, much faster and much better and today, now just look at how small they are. It's fantastic what those chips have done to the computer business and everything else!

11:13:24

A:

Communication-wise. I'm amazed at Internet, that really is amazing.

11:13:30

Q:

Great. And um, you mentioned budgets, uh, what was like the annual budget for Fernald back then?

11:13:43

A:

The annual budget? That I would hesitate to guess at, it was a few million, maybe 10 million because we used to get our in the early days they would advance our money; put it in our bank account in Mt. Healthy. Later on we had to submit a report each month to the bank so they could get their money. So they changed their system of financing as the years went along. Like, made it pay as you go plan.

11:14:16

A:

Adverses an advance like they started out with. That's when we started banking in Mt. Healthy which is now the First Star Bank and then it was First National Bank of Cincinnati.

11:14:34

Q:

I was still thinking budgets. What is it like now to look and see how much the cleanup is costing as opposed to how much it cost to run production?

11:14:46

A:

Well I don't know how much the cleanup cost but uh back then of course the labor rates were lower, all rates were lower. And also we were not maybe as careful with things of health and safety where now they have all the protective equipment as they dismantle a project. In those days we had very little. We had, they had masks but, and we always had to wear smocks and we wore, in the plant they wore their regular overalls and everything.

11:15:31

A:

And special shoes, we had to put rubbers on when we went into the plant. I would say there's more protection and uh, and also takes a lot more time to dismantle. Then maybe when it was involved in production. And I can understand why it costs more money now to do that.

11:15:54

Q:

So what was a typical day like?

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

A:

Typical day. Well I carpooled all my, so therefore once or twice I'd have to drive. Usually four in our car and uh left the house around 7:00 when I drove. Because we tried to get to the plant by quarter till 8:00, ten till eight. And it was always very nice except when we had those snow days and you had to allow yourself a little extra time and you didn't necessarily get there at 8:00 because of the snow.

11:16:33

A:

We generally took the same route, out Blue Rock from here. Uh, well I'd say then we'd work, work the morning, take a, our lunch was usually around 12:00 – 12:30 in the Service Building in back of the Ad Building. Worked until 4:30 and then drove back home. But I always carpooled. It was very, very convenient that way. You didn't have to fight the traffic everyday.

11:17:06

Q:

Um, so you had mentioned earlier about budget meetings and what that was like every year, can you tell us about that?

A:

Okay, once a year in preparation of the spring budget, the capital budget part of the spring budget, we our budget man would go into the conference room and on the blackboard he would write down all the items that were going to be considered. That had been submitted by the divisions, or were carryovers from a previous budget.

11:17:38

A:

He'd list all those on the blackboard. And then at 10:00 the uh, the group, management group would come in the room and a few other production people and I would run the meeting. And we'd go over each item on the board and decide which, which were really needed and which we could delay or which we could eliminate completely.

11:18:05

A:

And that meeting could last two hours or longer because there was quite a bit of discussion between the people that knew what was needed in production or what would be important. But that was, then after that meeting we would proceed and get write-ups on each of the items that were agreed upon that should be submitted in the budget.

11:18:30

A:

And those budgets ran again six, eight, ten million dollars maybe more. They weren't, they weren't much in today's money, measuring.

11:18:44

Q:

Now did all your budgets have to be approved by Congress or how was that decided upon in the Federal government?

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

A:

Well we, we submitted our budgets at that time to the Atomic Energy Commission and they decided again what part of our budget should be included in their budget that they submitted to Congress. They did that with all their sites that were run by the contractors.

11:19:07

A:

So they made the final decision. And we wouldn't recognize, if we looked at their budget that was submitted to Congress we wouldn't recognize our part usually. Unless we were going to build a new building or buy a expensive machine like the one that they used, the automatic machine that they used to produce the slugs in the later days in Plant 6.

11:19:36

Q:

Now you had mentioned also payroll, um, what was like the typical chemical operator or somebody out in the plants what was their salary?

A:

Chemical operator in the plant. Boy, that's a toughy too as far as remembering wage rights. I really, I wouldn't want to guess at that any more.

11:19:58

Q:

Out of the people that came to the, came to Fernald from other places all said that they were getting paid very well. (Comment – Okay) Really, they were doing you know a lot better than working in other plants, they always said so.

11:20:08

A:

Well of course it was set by the union contract. Then at the time the first union contract was agreed upon, it was agreed upon and then, and approved about two or three months after the contract date started. So we had to go back and refigure the people's pay for those two or three months and give them back pay at the rate that was agreed upon in the union contract.

11:20:37

A:

So that was, there was a little work to do there, even overtime on Saturdays and no Sundays but overtime on Saturday. And in the evening to get that done and give them back pay.

11:20:51

Q:

So um, did you ever have anything sort of funny or unusual happen while you worked at Fernald?

A:

Well one thing I remember was on Valentine's Day we, we it was the only time we had to evacuate the Ad Building because they had a UF6 release in the Pilot Plant. And our evacuation plan when we practiced was to leave the front of the Ad Building and assemble around the flagpole.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

11:21:24

A:

Now this release was going, coming from the Pilot Plant which was northwest of us and the air was moving it right towards the Administration Building and right towards the flagpole. So we were told to evacuate the building out of the back of the building over to the Service Building on the second floor where the cafeteria was.

11:21:51

A:

And one of my people said why are we going through that, why are we going through that uh, it was white cloud like, why are we going through that. I said we were told to go that way because the wind is carrying it right out to the flagpole. So we, we practically ran over to the Service Building and none of us had any ill effects from it.

11:22:15

A:

But that was the only time we had to evacuate the Administration Building in all the years. But we practices, but it was usually out to the flagpole. But the one time we had a real one we went the other way.

11:22:31

Q:

Did you ever worry about your safety while you were at Fernald?

A:

No, I didn't really worry about it. I think probably because I was in an office situation and not in the plant. And therefore I had no concern, I had no concern with that. No concern with terrorism or anything. It didn't bother me. It was like a normal job.

11:22:59

Q:

That sort of brings up a point though because a lot of people in the community had told me that they were very aware that Fernald would have been a major target for the Russians had there been some kind of attack. Did you ever hear anything about that or were you ever worried about that?

11:23:11

A:

Well, I, well for one thing they built, they built that separate plant in Weldon Springs Missouri so that they would have two production sites to supply the feed materials to the reactors in Savannah River and Hanford. So from that standpoint we knew that there was always that possibility. But I really, for some reason or another I just wasn't concerned about it. I guess I trusted in our overall strategies.

11:23:47

Q:

And uh, that was pretty much during the height of the Cold War. (Comment - yes) '51 and beyond and um what was the typical, what was your mindset and what was the typical American's mindset about the Russia threat and what was going on with the Cold War then.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

11:24:04

A:

Well we knew they, we knew they had the bomb and I guess later on we knew where their sites were and uh we were, we thought we should be prepared in whatever way we had to be prepared. Uh, it, it was, I didn't worry about it as such but there was always that possibility that something might happen. But as far as day by day I didn't really think about it that much.

11:24:42

A:

Except that, I accepted it as a thing that was going on in the world. We didn't like it. The Russians I'm sure didn't like it either. But that was part of life during those days.

Q:

Now at Fernald in like say um '62, '63 when the, the whole Cuban Missile Crisis happened, did you discussions about that at that point, did you talk to people about that?

11:25:13

A:

No, I don't remember talking about that. I remember, was that the same time about the _____ incident too? No, well we talked about it in general terms but nothing, we didn't think it was anything to get excited about at that point because the Russians, we knew they were going to try whatever way they could to get within the United States.

11:25:45

A:

And to go to Cuba, that was very convenient for them. But again our intelligence found out what they were doing and we were able to act to prevent any further enhancement of that down there in Cuba. In a way we have to depend on our leaders and our military whether we like it or not. And that's what we did.

11:26:15

Q:

Now you actually served in the military and how did that, how did your military training sort of um get you ready for Fernald or how did your training sort of lead into Fernald?

A:

Well as an accountant, my military training, I knew generally how the government operated from the finance standpoint but when I got to Fernald it wasn't the same. Because we were a contractor with the government and their requirements were different from the finance division requirements in the, in the Army.

11:26:55

A:

So, but my training as an accountant, accounting work is accounting work whether it's for the military or the government as a contractor or public accounting. We're trained as accountants primarily.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

11:27:12

Q:

What kind of special rules did you have to follow to be like a government accountant, were there things that you had to know?

A:

Uh, we had, we had to learn the budgeting process of the government which was new to me because the industry doesn't get involved with that. So we had to learn those rules and how to proceed that way. And also their reporting requirements of our monthly costs and our budgets were different than industry too. So we had to learn about that and get used to that and meet their requirements.

11:27:53

Q:

How about bureaucracy and red tape?

A:

(Laughter) Very interesting. Well we, we had our friends in the Atomic Energy Commission that we dealt with and uh they recognized at different times that this requirement, it was a little different but you've got to do it. But once in a while they relaxed and said no we won't do that, let's forget that.

11:28:20

A:

We'll make up some other reason for not doing it. And let us off the hook. But there was a certain amount of red tape. And also duplication, once in a while a different, a different person would tell us to do it this way and then another one would come along and say we need it this way. So they had, they came from different routes sometimes with their requests. But they were generally were pretty reasonable. We had a good relationship with the people that we met from Oak Ridge at that time.

11:28:55

Q:

And speaking of Oak Ridge, earlier you had told me that there were very frequently people from Oak Ridge on site. Can you tell us a little bit about what those people were doing on site and what they?

A:

Well the accounting people came in and, and asked us if we had any problems or if they had any problems with us. And then we generally walked out into certain areas of the plant because they were, they wanted to get familiar with what the processes were.

11:29:21

A:

I generally walked through Plant 5 to see derbies and ingots and walked over to Plant 6 to see the rolling mill and the automatic production machine that produced the slugs. Because those, in those areas you could see the material. If you went into the Recovery, the Scrap Plant or the Refinery or Green Salt Plant you couldn't, you could see the end product but everything else was in tanks and equipment and pipelines.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

11:29:53

A:

So you really didn't get a feeling for it. And when we had the Thorium Plant, Plant 9 we took them in there to see again the metal, the thorium metal. But that was where I usually went and took visitors either from Oak Ridge or elsewhere.

11:30:12

Q:

Great. We're going to take a little break and change tapes. You're doing great.

A:

Really? (Comment - _____) Yeah.

TAPE FLHP0204

12:01:01 – 12:07:18 NO SOUND - AUDIO PROBLEM

12:07:19

A:

(Tape begins while interviewee is talking) control and we picked up production division clerks for a while. They seem, one time we had 100 people in the accounting division because we had inherited some of these groups. And partly was because at one point in the oh in the early '70s late '60s we had to reduce our force all over the plant. And in reducing the force, some function they felt would fit better in the accounting division and they, they transferred 'em to us.

12:07:54

A:

Now production clerks were with us for a while but then they transferred back to the production division. But we always kept nuclear materials control under _____.

Q:

So you said there was a reduction in force in like when was that '63, '64?

12:08:13

A:

Yeah, or it may have gone later in '60s yeah we had to reduce our force. We probably left, had to leave go of about a third of our people and in doing that I made sure that I talked to each person and told them why we had to let them go. And took them one at a time into one of the conference rooms with _____, my assistant and we would sit there and explain to the person why we were letting them go.

12:08:47

A:

So they could ask any questions they might have. 'Cause it's, I know what that is like to be laid off. It's not a pleasant situation but usually it was, we were, our production load was being decreased and therefore we didn't need as many support people.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:09:08

Q:

So the people that got; yeah, you want to pause for a second?

(Cameraman – yeah)

12:09:14

Q:

Okay, we're going to pick up that first question. Audio problem. Um, tell us again about um your education as far as the process went.

A:

Okay, I usually went into a plant and went to the plant superintendent's office and had him or one of his foreman take me around the plant and explain the process.

12:09:41

A:

And when I took a visitor in a plant I did the same thing. Mainly because they knew the process, also if something happened while we were in the plant they would know what to do. So that's the way I really learned about each of the plants. I particularly liked to go into the rolling mill to see them take the warm ingots out of the bath and put it on the mill and roll it back and forth and eventually roll 'em into those rods.

12:10:12

A:

Which they sent over to the cooling, cooling area so that's how I learned about each plant's process. By going in there and seeking out someone that knew what it was all about.

12:10:27

Q:

I think the second question I asked was um your very first time out for a tour, when you first went out into the plant what was your impression?

A:

I was amazed at the size of some of the equipment and the size and weight of some of the product being produced. Particularly the ingots which looked large to me anyways and that eventually they could reduce that all down to a slug of about 12 inches long and small diameter, a couple inches diameter. I was always amazed that they could do all that.

12:11:04

Q:

Now something I didn't ask you, how pure was the uranium they were making at Fernald?

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

A:

How pure? Well, uh the metal as far as I know was okay, was fairly pure. Now the ores we got in, we got low-grade ores in from parts of the United States. We got the high-grade ores in from the Belgian Congo in the early days.

12:11:33

A:

And in using the Congo which was highly radioactive those, the by-product or waste I should say, liquid waste was pumped out into one of those silos. Which according to my nuclear materials control man, we, in the world there was more radium in that silo than you would find in the world in use. In that one silo, I don't know which one it was, and that's one of the silos they've been watching very closely.

12:12:09

A:

But he said that all came from the Belgian Congo ore that we got during the early days of the project, in the early '50s. Very high-grade ore as far as the percentage of uranium in it.

12:12:25

Q:

Now since you were over nuclear materials um, how did they track that material to make sure that none of it got lost or misplaced or whatever?

A:

Well they, they followed, from the production records they followed the material through the plant. Now they always, they always had a problem with the assay of the material starting in the process as ore and converting that into the metal form.

12:12:56

A:

They always had a problem with differences, let's put it that way. Because it was difficult to assay the material coming in to get an accurate amount of how much uranium you're starting out with and therefore when you got down to the end you may, you may have been over or under because of that original assay of the ores starting out the plant.

12:13:23

Q:

And why was it so important to track that material?

A:

Well it was a, it was a requirement of the Atomic Energy Commission that we know how much material we're dealing with. Because it had to be accounted for as best we could and it also cost money buying the ore and then producing the product. It cost, cost a lot of money for that processing so they wanted to make sure they were getting all the uranium they could get from the ores coming into the plant, that we didn't lose any.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:14:08

A:

Now we've measured as best we could when the materials were sent to the pits or the silos. We measured those off-streams for uranium content by sampling process. Again, they were still estimates. In other words there was nothing, was like one and one equals two.

12:14:32

Q:

What exactly went into the pits?

A:

What exactly went into the pits. Well as I mentioned the, the liquid product coming out of the refinery went in there and a lot of the liquid waste from like the rolling mill, the salt baths. Those would go into the pits but this was all relatively low in uranium content. And it was, it could pumped out there in solution form. I guess, yeah we did have a dry pit where they put some oh material, not uranium but contaminated production material they couldn't pulverize or melt or anything else.

12:15:25

A:

They had a dry pit that they, they put some of that in because they couldn't put it into a form that they could pump into a pit or a silo. Take a little drink here.

Q:

I gotta think about my next question anyway.

12:15:47

Q:

So you retired in 1980 (Comment – yes) and um probably about '84, '85 there was a lot of media attention about Fernald and how there had been dust collector releases and those types of things. And you seem like you kind of followed that news, um, how did you react when all that happened?

12:16:05

A:

Well in a way I was surprised that we got into the newspaper by that route. The more I thought about it the more I felt well we were always in a learning process in the plant and as years went by we knew more than we did in '51 when we started. And so I read just to keep myself informed in case somebody asked me why didn't you know what was going on out there in the plant.

12:16:43

A:

And sometimes I just had to say no I didn't know. It was news to me just like it was to you when you read it in the newspaper. And well we've learned so much more about contamination from these materials as we mentioned before on thorium which is a very inflammable material and therefore we learned to more careful.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:17:13

Q:

And why in the plant was it always a learning process, hadn't this been done before or?

A:

Well, in our case the, the some of these processes were going on in Mallinckrodt in St. Louis or Ashtabula or out someplace near Albany New York and therefore our, our people were in charge of the plants made visits to those sites to find out just what, what they were doing, how they did it.

12:17:47

A:

Brought that information back to Fernald and incorporated it into the building of our plant and the equipment that we were buying. And as we went along we were able to upgrade some of the processes particularly in the machining area so they could speed up the machining of the slugs, the rods and the slugs. But we learned from other plants, there's no doubt about that.

12:18:17

Q:

So when this whole sort of community furor started happening, um being a former worker and a long time worker there, how, how did you react to that?

A:

I uh, well, one thing I've always said is I worked in the Administration building and therefore I wasn't in the plant, I wasn't in the production area, therefore I didn't really know the day by day things that happened out there. And you might say I hid behind that or whatever term you want to use. I just wasn't familiar with it and therefore what I read in the paper was news to me, too.

12:19:01

Q:

Did you have a lot of friends and family saying, hey, you worked there, what happened?

A:

Well, they did it, I assume they did it in jest knowing if they knew me and therefore it was just a way of getting a little needle out because I did work for a government contractor. And some people have a certain feeling about people who work for the government or a contractor. So I took it that way and it didn't really bother me 'cause I knew where my job was, what I did and wasn't involved in the production area.

12:19:45

Q:

So in those ensuing years really there was a couple of lawsuits that were filed against NLO and one of them was for the community members and the other one was for the workers. How did you react to that when that happened?

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:20:00

A:

Well, I again kind of surprised. Also surprised that on the settlement people like me got money from that one lawsuit that Stan Chesley filed. It surprised me. But again not knowing everything that was going on in the plant and again learning after reading about it, I was surprised.

12:20:34

Q:

Now one of the things that was allowed for within the settlement for the retirement, not retirement, the workers settlement was medical monitoring. Are you in the medical monitoring program?

A:

I just had my fourth physical the beginning of July.

Q:

Can you tell us a little bit about what you have to do, to you know, do you have to go to the hospital or what do you have to do?

12:20:53

A:

No, uh they call you from Drake where they do the work. They call you on the phone, set an appointment with you which is a month or so away and a time. Then in the meantime they send you a questionnaire which you have to fill out which involves latest operations, how you feel on different things. Even your moods. Do you get sad or depressed and how often does it happen.

12:21:27

A:

And you have to, it's a sliding scale like never or very often. You have to fill this questionnaire out and then take it down to Drake on the day of your physical. And the doctor, the physician he looks at that as he's examines you. Goes over that questionnaire and asks you again certain, I guess he wants to verify your answers to certain things as he's doing his physical.

12:21:58

A:

So I really, I'm really satisfied with the medical situation. 'Cause otherwise I wouldn't be getting a physical. So from that standpoint it's been good for me.

12:22:11

Q:

Great. Yeah, a lot of people like the medical monitoring.

A:

I surprised the doctor, I did have a family doctor for a while and the doctor I go to now he says ah, he has a number of the residents around Fernald plant as his patients and they go to that program too. I didn't know that.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:22:30

Q:

Yeah, it was also part of the community settlement.

A:

Oh, okay, So I learned again.

Q:

Okay, um, how do you think in those years that you worked at Fernald, 30 something years you worked at Fernald, how do feel like Fernald contributed to America's goals?

12:22:52

A:

Well from the standpoint of our protection, of our country physically I feel that we did supply materials that were used as a deterrent rather than get into actual warfare, combat or actual, thankfully we never got into atomic war. So I feel from that standpoint we did something. We had a part in it, let's put it that way.

12:23:27

Q:

Now a term that they're sort of using at work a couple of times they've used is Cold War Warriors.

A:

Cold, well that's term sounds all right, Cold War Warriors because it was in the, at the height of the Cold War no doubt about that. From Jack Kennedy to Dwight Eisenhower and on yeah, it was.

Q:

So how do you personally feel about being called a Cold War Warrior?

12:23:53

A:

Well, I, warrior is a different connotation, let's put it that way. Therefore I don't think of myself as a warrior from that standpoint. I was in the, like in the Army I didn't have combat so therefore I couldn't call myself a warrior there either. Again, I had an office job. So that word for me, it wouldn't fit with me, warrior.

12:24:20

Q:

But your work was important.

A:

Well, yeah I think it was. I mean you have, everybody has certain talents and those talents have to fit into a certain slot and you have to get along with each other. This person's talent and that person's talent have to work together, so I fell that it's important. Now others that aren't accountants, I've been called a bean counter, a pencil pusher, and whatever because I'm an accountant.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:24:55

A:

My son calls me a bean counter because he says I have to get those accountants that handle my, my end of the business, I have to get those guys in line (laughing). That's from my own son.

12:25:13

Q:

Now um, do you keep up much on the cleanup? What do you think about the cleanup going on right now?

A:

Now, yeah, Bob Walston who worked in the water treatment plant for years and retired after I did, he lives in Ross now. He was living in North College Hill, and he says hey Cliff have you been out the plant lately?

12:25:33

A:

I said, no. Why don't you come out? He says they got new pits all over the place and they're tearing stuff down. He says, you ought to go out and see it. And I say well why should I, it's different than when I was there? It really has nothing to do with me and I'll depend on you to keep me up-to-date. But he says the whole landscape has just changed completely than when we were there.

12:26:02

A:

So that's my tie with Fernald right now. I think the last time I was there was in '87, or in the '80's when you had open house. I went to, my wife and I went to the open house. I haven't been back since. Well, see we used to get a physical out there but that, that stopped, I think that stopped when Westinghouse became the contractor. So I had been back each year for my physical up to that point. And then I didn't go back except for that open house.

12:26:38

Q:

Now the plant closed down in 1989, how did you feel when you got the news that they were going to plant, close the plant down?

A:

Well I figured there was no more need for that material. I guess they also, I guess they didn't need it at the reactors any more. So I just accepted that as, if they're shutting a plant down there's no need for the material. And that's kind of what happened as we had those forced reductions.

12:27:07

A:

They needed less material for whatever reason and therefore we had to have less employees. Especially in the support groups, in the overhead groups let's call 'em.

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

12:27:21

Q:

Now you mentioned that you're aware they're tearing a lot of buildings down and everything, what would you like seen done with that, or what would you like to see done with that land?

A:

Well, I uh, I don't know whether they can clean that up completely. I would like to see it become some sort of park. Not a, not a, like not like Winton Woods but just some sort of park that, that's known for that effort that happened during the Cold War.

12:27:55

A:

They can put any kind of monument, not monuments but any kind of remembrances in there in that park if they want to. But uh, I'd like to see 'em keep that land separate. But I don't think they could ever use it again for farmland or, I'd be surprised let's say that, if they could use that as farmland or whatever. Or for people to live there you know subdivision so I'd like to see it made into some sort of park.

12:28:28

Q:

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

A:

Well, that's a good thing. Uh, there was one thing I wanted to tell ya and right now it's not coming to mind so I guess we'll. No I think we pretty well covered everything that I was, I told you about the computers, and payroll. It was good that we automated our payroll system that was very good.

12:29:09

A:

By the way, my signature was on a dye and that went on everybody's paycheck for years. They, when they heard my name they'd so oh that's, that's the signature on my paycheck. So I was known for that in circles especially when I was in the bowling, bowling league we bowled with the different people in the plant. Mechanical part of the production they knew, oh that's the signature on our check.

12:29:40

Q:

So you were a popular guy?

A:

Oh yeah, we had to get those paychecks done on time for the, especially for the hourly workers 'cause that was in their contract. They had to be paid by a certain time. And if you had equipment problems you were really scrambling around try to make sure you met that deadline.

12:29:59

Q:

Did you ever have problems with that?

FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

A:

Not, not that we didn't meet the deadline, no. I don't know how, I don't know how we solved it each time but I think one time we went off-site to do part of the operation. To get the final checks. See we had that with some of these companies like IBM and so forth, you have those options. And we did know where there was a separate compatible computer that we could use if we had to.

12:30:32

A:

And payroll was not a sensitive thing as far as Atomic Energy Commission went. So we did have plans that way, compatible equipment. I don't know what they do today on that, they got computers on their desks and we got one at home now which amazes me. To get my son's wife, her sister went to China and to get three e-mails from China, it's amazing.

12:31:06

A:

She's a hundred miles from the Mongolian border (tape stops).

TAPE FLHP0205

13:01:10

Pictures shown.