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Transcript

Name: Lawrence Tepe

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Tape: #33

Project Number 20012

Tape FLHP0068

21:01:03

Q:

All right. First question's always the hardest.

A:

(Laughter) How old are you.

Q:

Actually we want to get your name and if you can spell it for us just so we know we have it right.

A:

My name is Lawrence Tepe, Larry if you will. It's L-A-W-R-E-N-C-E T-E-P-E. And we pronounce it like the Indian's teepee so uh, and.

21:01:36

Q:

Great, and uh first of all can you tell us um, when did you begin your job at Fernald.

A:

I started there in January of 1955. Having been in the process of being laid off from the railroad, I applied to Fernald and after a long investigation process I was accepted and started to work the middle or latter part of January '55.

21:02:07

Q:

Great. Now can you tell me a little bit about your interview?

A:

They went into, naturally the type of work I did, they went into all phases of it. They went into your, even whether you were a religious man, or whether you drank or, they did a pretty thorough going-over. And they also checked fellow employees and neighbors. I think the neighbors thought they had a criminal in the neighborhood because they, whoever did the investigations, Secret Service or whoever.

21:02:50

A:

I have no idea who did it. But they went to all the neighbors and checked me out. And they said I was a good boy so, I was hired. And uh.

21:03:05

Q:

And uh, what kind of clearance did you have then?

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A:

I had a Q clearance. And as I understand it, that was the highest you could get out there then. Yeah, that was, you could go into any of the buildings. Or, we had access to anything that was out there at Fernald.

21:03:24

Q:

So the plant was actually brand spanking new when you got there?

A:

It was fairly new, yes. Uh, I was able to put a few new dents in it like a new car but uh, yes it was. It was pretty new and they were still working on a lot of things. A lot of it uh, beginning stage.

21:03:50

Q:

Tell us a little bit about those early years.

A:

Well I started there in Plant 9, let's see I started on day shift Plant 9. And uh, it was kind of spooky at first. Didn't know what to expect really. I knew my job, I knew I could do my job but this was a different, different atmosphere than I was used to. A lot different than being around a bunch of locomotives.

21:04:33

A:

And well, I know one of the things what got me was right after I started there, I think it might have been the first night, they had an evacuation alert and being a dummy I didn't know what it meant. But I didn't have to really know because the crowd just carried me out the door. When the siren went off I, the building was evacuated.

21:04:57

A:

In Plant 9 shortly prior to my starting there, I think they had a very bad accident there, I think two men were, were incinerated from a magnesium explosion I think it was. And uh, but um it was kind of nice. I enjoyed, always enjoyed working at Fernald. Had a lot of goofy incidents. Do you want to go into that now?

21:05:30

Q:

Sure, yeah, tell us about that.

A:

One of the times we were down in the oh, what'd we call it, the pump form I think we called it or something like that. It was at night and I was working and I felt this sting on my face and didn't, bugs or something, and I told one of the guys, boy the bugs are biting tonight and he said yeah, he said brush your coat.

21:05:56

A:

I brushed my coat and it was just filled with holes. Acid, there was an acid leak. And it was quite frequent down there. There would be a mist of acid in the air. And there was different types of acid.

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That was new to me, I'd never been around anything like that. And we had to work on the pumps, had to be very careful, getting into the different types of acids and what have you.

21:06:30

A:

And we did, we sort of rotated for a while. You'd be in one building for a while and then they'd maybe move you to a different place. But as it settled down, I did most of my work in Plants 5 and 6. I enjoyed working there. I enjoyed the type of work. In 6 it was uh, mostly machine tool work. Repair on machine tools. It was, I enjoyed it.

21:07:05

Q:

What kind of training did you received to work in, at Fernald?

A:

Training, uh at Fernald? None really, no none. Um, there was no, no special training at all. We went in and we were journeymen, the minute we stepped in the door and that was it. I mean, they just sat you on a job like you'd been working there for 10 years or so. And uh, so there was no, nothing special.

21:07:38

Q:

How much did you know about the process when you got there?

A:

When I got there? Nothing. Nothing at all. I had no idea what was taking place. Everything was on the hush-hush when we started you know. I guess the less we knew the better we were and but. No, even the equipment, it was more or less passed on from person to person you know. You help me and I'll help you. Each one had a certain uh, certain specialty maybe.

21:08:26

Q:

Wow. So uh, tell us about your responsibilities.

A:

Well, we were responsible for an area. Now in Plant 6 you were sort of assigned an area. You might have had the _____ lathes or the Acme Griddlies or the rolling mill. Uh, it depends what your assignment was. We were responsible for keeping the plant going. Any breakdowns had to be fixed yesterday and not. We all tried to do it, part of the people out there were pretty, pretty sincere workers. And uh, and I think they all, did good a job.

21:09:20

Q:

And why was everything so urgent?

A:

Well, I don't know. I guess it would be that way any place. Uh, we felt that it, it had to be done, that's all. We were doing our duty and it had to be done. And uh, course they always made it sound urgent, no matter what it was, it was fix the commode, why it was urgent. But everything had to be done. And we tried to do it.

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21:09:54

Q:

Tell us about some of the interesting equipment that you worked on.

A:

Oh, probably the most interesting to me, very, very new to me would be the rolling mill in Plant 6. Started out with an ingot maybe, I don't know what they were, 4 feet if I remember right, maybe I'm wrong on that but. And you'd come out with a finished high polished product a little larger than a diameter of a broomstick and maybe 10-12 inches long.

21:10:36

A:

And after it went through the, it went through the rolling process and then cooling and was cut to length. Acme Griddlies cut the pieces off and they drilled them. And uh, and then they went to the _____ lathes, the finished product came off the _____ lathes. Then it went into a machine, Greenley or something similar to that, a Greenley machine I believe and that machine would stamp each.

21:11:15

A:

Each ingot had its own name in the form of a number. Each one was accounted for from that time on as a number. Then they were, packaged, boxed and they was ready for shipment. And after they left there, I had no idea. They were going, I think some of them were going to Washington State but we didn't know.

21:11:44

A:

They would ship them out of there, they had especially equipped baggage cars and they would put everything was out of baggage car. And they would put two huge I-beams down the center of the car and then they would stack these row of boxes down through that, through that wall formed by the I-beams. And that was to keep the load centered in the car and that uranium, I don't know whether you've ever felt it or not.

21:12:15

A:

It's very, very heavy. It's quite, it really fools you when you pick up a piece of it. Um, so if it had shifted I would think it would be able to turn over of a baggage car. But uh, where it went from there and what they did with it, why, we were not given any information. As they used to say, you have to read that in *Reader's Digest* or something and then you could find it out there probably. But we weren't allowed to get the information out there.

21:12:55

Q:

So how much could you discuss with your friends and family when you worked there?

A:

I never discussed the process, never. I would say that I worked on a pump or, or a lathe or something to that affect but they never asked me. They just figured, they knew that it wasn't, it wasn't general knowledge all of it so just never really discussed it. I couldn't have discussed it anyway, I didn't know.

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I mean I knew that the stuff went into that and they put the derbies in the furnace and they melted. I knew that different stuff, but it was never discussed at all. Never did.

21:13:39

Q:

When you first started there and they warned you about talking to your family or friends about the process, um, did they tell you what any of the consequences would be if you did that and how did they check up on it?

21:13:54

A:

I don't remember that part. I do know we had to sign a, sign a form and I think it was to the effect that we would not divulge anything that we learned out there. I'm not certain of that. I remember signing some sort of document, we signed one when we left also. And uh, that also covered us when we left.

21:14:20

A:

Supposedly uh, from what they told us when we left to this day if we would leave the country, well your supposed to report to your, report it but I imagine that has long since been rescinded. But uh, that was the idea then, we couldn't leave the country or anything else without telling them.

21:14:43

Q:

Wow, that's interesting. I hadn't heard that before.

A:

Yeah, but as I say that's probably all been changed.

21:14:55

Q:

Great. Um, let's see. Can you tell us a little bit about the, the way they handled safety and danger while you were working there?

A:

They tried to handle it I think. But they were very lax on conveying the real seriousness. Very lax. And to the point, every operation was assigned a time limit. In fact there was one operation, there was some, it was a type of stainless steel brush and I think it was only a matter of minutes that you were allowed to, these brushes would be used to clean the crucibles I think, then after that they would maybe have to be repaired.

21:16:01

A:

Well, we did the repair on those brushed. We'd put new tines or whatever you want to call them and I'm pretty sure the time limit on that was just minutes. And quite often some of the supervisors one of these go-go guys would try to get you to go far over, exceed your time limits on that. I know I had quite a discussion one time over that.

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21:16:32

A:

This was done in a room, a glass enclosed room and I had been over my time limit quite a bit and the supervisor stood on the outside of the glass and pointing to me that I should continue working. Well it got to the point where I simply refused to do it and after a long discussion my point was honored and I did go back in for a while.

21:17:01

A:

But there were little things like that where they would try to get you to exceed limits and there was times maybe you should have a gas mask with you, it was not enforced. There were gas masks there. I always carried mine with me. I had a little, a little black suitcase and it had a little, just a portable gas mask in there. I carried that with me whenever I went up in some of those buildings.

21:17:35

A:

'Cause it was quite frequent especially down in, I always get them mixed, 2 or 3 or 8 area down there, they always had nitric acid releases and after a release the building would turn a crimson red. It would be like a red fog. And it would penetrate every area, even foil out to the building and a lot of times the people would have to be shifted up wind or down wind depending, to get away from the fumes.

21:18:11

A:

But whenever I went up in the building like that I always carried a gas mask with me. Frequently people did not. I worked with a man one time when we were in a dust collector working and the siren went off, we looked out the door of the dust collector and it was red. I put my mask on and he was quite a bit more agile than I was and he must have made it out, I think it was 2 or 3 stories, on one breath.

21:18:43

A:

He must have, because he made it through that stuff and got down. But those things went on frequently. Releases and fires. Quite a few fires in Plant 5 and 6. Plant 5 would have, they would pick up the crucible from the furnace and it was transported overhead with a movable crane. And quite frequent, not, several times a week at least, there would be a blowout they called it.

21:19:31

A:

It would blow a hole right through the crucible and the stuff would spew out all over the place. And if it got on anything it would disintegrate it immediately. And uh, and then in the, let's see that was the Art melt furnace, then they had the vacuum furnaces. They were, they were a danger to work on, on the, these things were loaded with a ram, it was a 40 foot, I think it was a 40 foot hydraulic ram that went into the ground.

21:20:11

A:

And then they would set their crucible on that and this ram would come up and bring it into the furnace. And uh, and up above the furnace there was a metal cubicle and each cubicle housed two furnaces. The uh, one furnace would be active and one furnace would be down. They were never going two at a, both of them were never active.

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21:20:41

A:

And several times we were asked to go in and work in that cubicle on the one that was down and most of us refused. And this one supervisor, uh he found out why one night. I was supposed to go in there and work and I refused and that's, we had a big discussion, the union and everything we had a big discussion.

21:21:08

A:

And uh, while we were talking there was a loud boom, explosion that blew a clock off the wall downstairs in the office. And we went upstairs and he went up and he wouldn't believe it. The sheet metal enclosure was, about a 1/4 inch thick sheet metal, it just dent the side of it. As I understand it if moisture formed in the lid of this dome, hydrogen would be formed, it was like a hydrogen bomb is what it amounted to.

21:21:42

A:

And it would blow and it, if anybody had been there working on it, it would have been a serious injury. But there was just little, little things like that. Some of the, I don't think there was strict enforcement on, they were working on dust collectors. Dust collectors were always a nuisance to work on. We used to dread getting called to work on those things.

21:22:17

A:

And uh, you were in an enclosed area and most of the time you had to work with a airline respirator. Some of them you worked in a rubber suit with complete. But naturally it's just like helmets for motorcycles, you'd always have a few people that didn't want to wear the safety equipment and I don't think it was enforced strictly enough. A lot of it was the people but they should have been made to do it I guess.

21:22:59

A:

When it came to that, they never had to make me do it, maybe I was a card I guess. I wanted to take everything that I had to use it. But uh.

21:23:10

Q:

How do you feel now when you know that those same areas that you were working in, you have to have a full face respirator or 2 layers of anti-C's, how does that make you feel now?

A:

That's a kick in the pants really. I get the Fernald magazine and I see these people in outer space suits and picking up a teaspoon full of spilled what have you, uranium or whatever, and uh we used to handle it with our bare hands a lot of time. Most of the time you handled it with your bare hands. On the Acme Griddlies they had a conveyor, a chip conveyor that ran underneath it.

21:23:52

A:

Well, quite frequently one of the slugs would fall out of the machine and jam that conveyor and you had to get in there with your hands and pull that stuff out of there. There again, you had gloves and

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most of the time you used them and occasionally you'd go in there with bare hands. Uh, but yeah, it's, I get sort of amused and aggravated.

21:24:19

A:

Like maybe reading the newspaper, Fernald spilled a gallon of what have you, uranium on the ground today, 1999. And back in the good old days they would dump over one of those uh portable conveyor carts, they were sort of a tank on wheels, they'd dump maybe green salt or what have you on the ground. Guys would get out there with shovels and shovel it up and think nothing of it.

21:24:49

A:

So, that part is a kick in the pants. Maybe it's good. Maybe they've come to realize just the seriousness of it. And it's good that they are protecting them.

21:25:10

Q:

How much do you think the government knew about the material you were handling and how much did they not know?

A:

I think they've learned a whole lot since then but I think they knew more than they told us. I would say definitely they knew more than what the average worker was told. We were kind of kept in the dark I think.

21:25:33

Q:

Looking back, how do you feel about that now?

A:

I thought it was, we were betrayed in a way. Um, yes I think they betrayed us. They could have made us aware, more fully aware of it. But uh, we went there for a job I guess and we got a job, that's what they would tell us. And so but I do think we could have been told more.

21:26:12

Q:

Um, do you remember anything strange happening?

A:

Oh yes.

Q:

I'm really interested in this black panther idea. I've never heard this before.

A:

Well this, this uh, got to be sort of a yearly thing in western Hamilton County. People were always sighting, I think it was the black panther and people were always making sightings. And I can

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remember one night working on third shift in Plant 6 and I looked out and there in the, what we called the no man's land, was between the two fences, the off-limits area.

21:27:05

A:

There were about 3 guards and they were walking around out there with high powered rifles. I was like gee whiz what are they looking for, the Russians aren't here, I know. And then it came out that they, somebody had sighted the panthers out in the Fernald area and they were hunting. They never did find this panther and I guess he's still out there someplace.

21:27:27

A:

Hiding in the shadows some place at Fernald. But uh, yeah, that was one of the things and another thing was a got on third shift, it was a heavy foggy, it was very foggy. And we could hear a drone up above us and it sounded like a low flying plane, about like that one going over and uh, we knew something was up. It sounded like somebody in trouble.

21:28:02

A:

And we went about our work. A little bit later somebody came in and said oh hey a plane just landed out there between the fences. Oh, heck, so we went out and sure enough there was a plane, a small plane and we were told he was making a good approach. He had the lights on that fence, he probably thought it was like a runway.

21:28:27

A:

He brought it down between the two fences and the guard in the guardhouse swung the big spot light around and caught him in the eye at the wrong time and he lost momentary control of the plane and clipped the end of the wing off. As it turned out, the poor guy was interrogated for at least a day or so. Local newspapers carried it.

21:28:55

A:

He said of all the places he could have uh, landed he said he picked the worst, landing there at Fernald. I think it turned out he was a bartender in the Netherland Plaza or some place downtown and they had, his plane went bad and they had to lift him out with a crane part of the way. But it was, gave a little bit of excitement to the place. For a third shift night, dull night, but uh.

21:29:26

A:

But there were a lot of little things. Always little few tricks or what have you went on or what have you.

21:29:34

Q:

We're going to pause just for a second while we change tapes.

A:

OK.

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FLHP0069

22:01:06

Q:

Um, if you could tell us a little bit about the security that was on site while you were there.

A:

Well, when we uh, when we came to work we had a an ID card and we would go through the turnstile and the guard would be on duty. We would hand him, hand him our ID card. He would take it and file it and give us the film badge and which we wore all the while when we were in the process area. Uh, there were guards that floated throughout the area.

22:01:52

A:

And then there was security when I started there we had outpost guardhouses raised, raised buildings all around the area and they had the famous no man's land. They had the double fences around the area. And uh, I would say security was good. You had to have your, you had to have your badge on at all times.

22:02:25

A:

They had several incidents of people that would forget their badges. I remember one person forgot their badge and the guard told him to stay where he was and that he would call the sergeant and they would check, check him out. And this person said no, my badge is in my locker, I'll go in and get it. He was instructed not to do it.

22:02:55

A:

And I think he was instructed several times. We were told security man pulled his revolver and told the guy to stay there. I heard later on that the guard was relieved of his duty because as I understand they were instructed never to unholster their weapon unless they used it. And uh, but the man was cleared, he was OK, he had his badge, it was in his locker where he said it was.

22:03:34

A:

But I thought security was good. They checked you. They quite frequently had their surprise checkups. Lunch box inspections and occasionally, I know one time somebody played a nasty joke on one person. They slipped a roll of yellow tape, I believe it was yellow tape in his lunch box and it fell out when he, so that caused quite of a hullabaloo.

22:04:09

A:

By the way, the yellow tape out at Fernald was quite a thing. Most people figured that yellow tape held that whole place together. Every, they fixed steam leaks with it. We fixed uh, brakes and everything, a lot of different things they used the yellow tape for. It's probably a forerunner of our masking tape that we use today. But it was a bright yellow tape.

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22:04:32

A:

But uh, I think I, while I was there they dismantled most of the rays, guard's shanties and I think one of them, and I'm pretty sure one of them shanties ended up in Ross High School as a press box. Uh, I knew of, one of my good friends was in security there, fact, fact you might want to talk to him. His name's Bernie Mersman.

22:05:11

Q:

How do you spell that?

A:

Uh, M-E-R-S-M-A-N. Bernie, Bernard, Bird. And uh, he was in security there. He made a bad move. Bernie was in security for a good number of years and there was an opening in production and he decided he was going to go and take that production job and he took the job with the understanding that he was going to carry seniority, which he had quite a bit.

22:05:45

A:

And when he switched he found out he didn't have, he was the new man, he didn't have seniority and he was laid off there for a while. But he spent a lot of time in security. Oh, we had good days, bad days. I know I started out there with a, there were 28 of us, millwrights that started on the same day in January and as it was every, the alphabet covered almost all of them were below the T's if you believe that.

22:06:31

A:

And so they did our seniority according to our alphabetically. So I was, of the 28 I was number one. Well, some years later they decided they were going to change that and they drew straws. Well I went to the top man of 28 down to the bottom man of 28. And I was pretty disappointed for a while that they did that in later years but as it turned out it really didn't make any difference.

22:06:58

A:

That's when they had the layoff in 1962, there were 28 millwrights that went out and so all of us went out, came in and went out at the same time. A lot of us went to different places. I went to GE, stayed there for a couple of years. A lot of them went to General Motors and Ford plant. They were absorbing a lot, especially welders, they absorbed a lot of them. So.

22:07:27

Q:

You mentioned film badges. Tell me a little bit about the film badges you had to wear.

A:

Well when I started there the film badge, if I can recall they were, I understood they were checked every day. I could be way off on that. But then it went from, it kept the time, the check off time kept increasing and I think probably when I left there they maybe checked them every month or maybe even longer than that.

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22:08:01

A:

And there, they told us there was different ingredients in there. I thought they said there were gold and I don't know, anyway, whatever the materials were I guess reacted a different way to being exposed to radiation. And uh, it always got me, we were always checked at, you could always, no matter how clean you thought you were, all you had to do was put that, that Geiger counter on your feet, and the feet always showed up hot as your shoes.

22:08:35

A:

That was the one thing you wore every day that you were there, your shoes. The same shoes, I should say. They, the only time you changed shoes was when they wore out. You changed your coveralls as you need them, maybe 2, 3 times a day if you get into a lot of black oxide, you take a shower and um and change, change your clothes. You changed everything except shoes. So they would be kind of hot, as we called it. But uh.

22:09:22

Q:

Wow. And uh, generally how do you feel about having worked at Fernald?

A:

Well I, first of all I guess I could say I raised 6 kids while working there. And uh, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the work, I liked the work. And uh, it was a good place to work I thought then. You know I never, we never even, back then we never even thought about radiation, asbestosis, all this different stuff that you hear now. That never entered our mind.

22:10:17

A:

We knew that some places, in fact they played jokes on some guys about a new man would come, they'd always spoof him up. There was one man I worked with, he probably weighed about 120 pounds wringing wet and it was always a standard joke to tell a person oh poor Steve, he came in he weighed 250 pounds and poor Steve just died by the way.

22:10:50

A:

Steve Stevenson and he usually went along with our jokes. They had one welder that supposedly resigned, he got afraid when they told him that story and he was out of there right now. Fellow by the name of Lewey Fortino. Lewey headed back to Pittsburgh. I guess it was a cruel joke that we played. But uh, I did, at the time I enjoyed it. I used to love going to work. It was a nice ride.

22:11:27

A:

Of course, there was no expressway then. We went out Harrison Avenue, 128, and over there to I understand it's Willey Road now, it was Wiley when I worked there. Is that still the entrance to it, or has that been changed?

22:11:42

Q:

Well, it's the south entrance. There's a south entrance and a north entrance.

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A:

There was one of them that was taken out wasn't there one of the entrance wasn't there some entrance?

22:11:54

Q:

Um, (comment - south entrance) They're going to be changing the south entrance road. That's going to be sort of moving around.

A:

That's comes on what 126?

22:12:00

Q:

Or the north entrance I'm sorry. Yeah, they're going to be changing the north entrance. (Comment - oh OK) 'Cause they're going to be putting in a waste cell.

A:

OK. But uh, yeah, so I enjoyed it. I worked third shift I guess the biggest part of the time I was out there. Uh, I think I could have switched over but I liked third shift. My wife didn't like that too well. Especially the way I slept. I uh, I would come home in the morning and stay up all day. And at the time we were remodeling our house.

22:12:38

A:

I was building cabinets so I would stay up all, biggest part of the day and then go to bed about 3:00 in the afternoon, 4:00 in the afternoon and sleep 'till it's time to get up. So she tells me today I missed all the fun of homework and all that stuff with the kids. But, so uh, I guess maybe I wasn't fair in doing that but I liked it so I did it.

22:13:07

Q:

So you're a night person. Um, now later on uh, you probably heard some of the publicity around 1984 and late '80's about dust collector releases and those types of things, um, that's part of the story of Fernald, and how did you react to that when you heard those types of stories?

22:13:35

A:

Those releases, they went on all the time. Oh, whenever a bag broke in the dust collector, you had a release. And that was almost daily I would think with the number of dust collectors on the project. Of some were more volatile than others I believe. Uh, which one was it, there was one in Plant 7 I think, 4 or 7 was a bad one to work on. A very bad, you had to wear the rubber suits.

22:14:10

A:

Those were bad buildings, the had the hydrofluoric, I believe it was, acid and hexa-, hexa-, something gas. Uh, they were nasty. To be truthful I was scared stiff of that. I knew what that could do, if you got a drop of it on you it would make a white spot on your skin and then it would penetrate, it would keep penetrating until you got it stopped.

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22:14:47

A:

And the usual method of stopping it was to immerse yourself in a, in a huge stainless steel tub they had in medics in ice. They would put you in an ice bath. That was, that was bad stuff. Pipefitters used to get into that a whole lot. And we would get occasionally some of it would drip, that was the, let's see it was 7 the one that has the, the open area in the middle of the building and a lot of times stuff would drip down from there.

22:15:23

A:

But uh, but the leaks, they have those. We had them at Keebler, we were blowing sugar out, over uh, over uh, Mariemont then, it wasn't, at least it was sweet, you could eat it. But, down there it was black oxide or usually black oxide I would think. But uh.

22:15:56

Q:

And why did you leave Fernald?

A:

I was laid off. They had a huge reduction in, in July of, of '62. And it was, there were other reductions through the years but I was very fortunate. They would get down to my name and bounce up again. And I was never laid off until, until the '62 cutoff. Um, I was called back after I secured other employment but I chose to stay where I was then.

22:16:39

A:

In fact I, it was sort of a practice I had, after I left the railroad I was laid off, I was called back there and I chose to stay at Fernald and each place I figured that's where I, the new place that's where I stayed.

22:16:55

Q:

Let's uh, let's talk a little bit about the Cold War and how Fernald fit into that. How do you think, um, the mission at Fernald helped further America's mission?

A:

Well, I think that was a something we could hold over our Cold War enemy's head. Uh, they knew the potential was here and they knew, the probably knew more about what went on at Fernald than we did. And uh, and they knew what could potentially come out of there. I don't think we were really aware of the, of the weaponry.

22:17:50

A:

Most of us, I speak that kind of generally, most of us kind of thought it was fuel mostly. And occasionally we would get scrap in and they would say off of something it would, maybe flat, most everything we handled out there it was round. And sometime they'd get some flat stuff in there and they would tell it was off of something.

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22:18:16

A:

But I don't think we thought in terms of weaponry. Uh, but I would think if I were Russia or one of the Cold War participants why they would give serious thought, and I'm sure that would be number one on their elimination. One of their number one things on their elimination spot. But uh, I would say it played a big part in curtailing any nuclear disturbances.

22:18:56

Q:

Now in, during the Cold War then, well actually one of the things that they've been sort of referring to people like you who worked there during the Cold years that sort of refer to those folks now as the Cold War Warriors. (Comment - yeah, yeah) How do you feel about being called a Cold War Warrior?

22:19:11

A:

Well I don't know. I don't know, maybe it's all right. But as I said, we never even, we never really thought of it as weaponry. Let's put it, I didn't think of it as weaponry. I thought I was supplying fuel for reactors someplace. Maybe a submarine or maybe a, a power plant or something else. But I realize that it did put sort of a stint off from Oak Ridge, so that was weaponry there. So I guess I should have known maybe I was kind of naive.

22:19:58

Q:

Now do you attend public meeting now about Fernald?

A:

I have gone to some of them. I've gone to a few of them, not too many. And uh, I got in a discussion on one of those one time and I think they were ready to throw me out. It was about the cleanup of Fernald, whether I thought it would be clean and I do not think, in my mind, I do not think it will ever be cleaned up.

22:20:28

A:

Pristine clean. As I think I told you or somebody that Hillary would come in there and have her, have her luncheon right out there in the middle of the grounds. I don't think that. The people that are saying it's going to be clean are going to stay far away from it. And I don't think I want my grandchildren playing baseball on that same ground.

22:20:52

A:

It'd be nice if they planted a bunch of trees and let it grow up into a hidden forest or something like that. But I just, I'm just a stupid layman, but that's my idea. Engineers I guess have different ideas. They probably see that as a beautiful playground some day.

22:21:26

Q:

Let's see. See if I covered everything. Um, so how do you, how do you feel about the work that's going on at Fernald now?

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A:

I hope they succeed. And get rid of that stuff. Again, I'm in the dark as to what's taking place. We have Fernald contaminated and now we're going to ship it to Utah or wherever we're going with it and we're going to have two places contaminated instead of one. I understand they're burying it but how safe can that be?

22:22:13

A:

I've seen some of the places where they, they line these pits with special clay and special plastics and then cover it over. But I'm not fully aware of what really transpires there. I imagine the engineer on the train going out there feels he's got a pretty good responsibility. But uh, they haven't explained that to me yet. Tell the engineers to tell me what that's going to happen.

22:22:51

A:

Are we going to have two places contaminated instead of one? But I don't know. But I do wish them luck. I do hope that they, _____ their methods. Especially getting rid of the K-65 Silos. Uh, I know I always hated that when they, I think it was from around, I believe it was Plant 8 area, could have been 2 or 3, but anyway they had a piece of equipment there that blew all the residue, everything that went down there went through this piece of equipment.

22:23:25

A:

And this thing would load up with this, it was sort of a dust, and it would load up to build up a pressure and would give a loud bang and it would fire. And it would fire that stuff through a pipe and blow it down there to K-65. And we were always told that the Belgian Congo had reclaimed rights to any, any product, gems or what have you show up and the residue.

22:24:04

A:

But probably they don't want it either. They don't want it back. And I guess we're stuck with it. We got what we wanted out of it and there we have it. We got a hot potato on our hand, don't know what to do with it. But uh.

22:24:24

Q:

Is there uh, anything that you'd like to add that we didn't talk about?

A:

No, I was glad that you had the chance to come out and speak and um, I'm sure I didn't do anything to solve these problems that you have at Fernald. But it was nice speaking with you any way. And maybe someday my grandchildren can listen to this. So, no I have nothing else to say. Good luck in further interviews. And, I can't say anything else.

22:25:02

Q:

Great. Well, thank you very much.

A:

Good. Good, it's been a pleasure.

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22:25:07

Q:

Yeah, we need to get a little bit of what we call nat sound so if we could have quiet on the set for just a minute, this is nat sound.