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Transcript

Name: Paul Davies

Date Interviewed: 5/27/99

Date Transcribed: 7/6/99

Tape: #23

Project Number 20012

Tape FLHP0045

20:01:07

Q:

First of all, um, if, we ask you really hard questions first. Um, if you could just spell your name, give us your name and spell it.

A:

My name is Paul Davies. You just want my last name? (Uh-huh) D-A-V-I-E-S.

20:01:23

Q:

Great. And uh, let's do first, a little bit of background. How long have you lived in the area?

A:

I was born and raised in this area. This farm here that I own, it joins the one where I was born and raised.

20:01:37

Q:

Oh, great. And uh, first of all tell us about your early years at Fernald. How did you get your job at Fernald?

A:

Well I just, at age 18 I went up and just applied and got hired.

20:01:49

Q:

Great. Can you tell us a little bit about the day that you went up there? Were there a lot applying?

A:

Yeah. There was quite a lot of people. I went up on April 18 and was hired and started to work on September the 9th of the same year. And at that time it took about, I guess it was about 5 months, they said they lost my clearance in New York so that's why it took so long otherwise I'd been there earlier.

20:02:21

Q:

So that was a Q clearance?

A:

Right.

Q:

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Tell us about your getting your Q clearance. How did that come about, I mean how did they do that?

A:

They sent a FBI man out and they just asked questions to the neighbors and I guess school, wherever you worked you know, different places. That's all I know.

20:02:43

Q:

And uh tell me about the early years. What were your early years like there?

A:

Pretty busy place. I was hired in as a laborer in transportation and I was a laborer for 9 months and then promoted to ITO. Industrial Truck Operator. But it was a lot of production going on up there. A lot of people working there.

20:03:06

Q:

And how much did you know about the plant when you first started working there?

A:

You mean like as far as the hazards or stuff?

Q:

Well, as far as what they were doing. How much did they tell you when you first got hired?

A:

Well, you knew you were making uranium. Uh, you know you was told that the very first day you went to work there but they'd give you such a, I don't know how to explain this. They, you went through a whole lot of orientation through security and the person ahead of security at the time was Clyde Bingham and he give such a talk about if you talk or do anything you know say anything it would be like a \$10,000 fine or ten years in prison or both. You was kind of afraid to talk about so you just didn't, you know you didn't discuss anything about what was taking place.

20:04:00

Q:

Wow. And that was your first day?

A:

Yes. And another fellow that I went to work with there that day, he was, his name was Kenny Inman, if I can mention this. And uh, we were both scared, we said we didn't know if we wanted to come back to work the next day or not because we were bound to do something wrong. Because you know all the, the way the orientation went, you was afraid you know you'd, you was bound to make a mistake somehow.

20:04:24

Q:

What about training? I mean did they have much training for you before you started your job?

A:

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No, I can't say there was any kind of training. You just worked with other people, you know. Got your training that a way.

20:04:38

Q:

Wow. And tell us about your various jobs there and did your responsibilities change during your tenure there?

A:

Yes it, well like I said I was hired in as a laborer, we just done labor work, we unloaded trucks and railroad cars. Lots of barrels at that time. They would get barrels in every day and then when I was promoted to an ITO then we worked the entire project then from one place to another. Worked in all the buildings. Also at that time we mowed grass. We had tractors with bush hogs. We mowed the fields, all the fields and everything. And then it was 2 shifts up there you could work just about any shift you know up there. I spent most of the time up there on the afternoon shift.

20:05:26

Q:

So what time did you come in?

A:

We, at that time we'd go to work at 4:00 and get off at 12:30.

20:05:32

Q:

4:00 o'clock in morning? Or 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

A:

4:00 o'clock in the afternoon. Yes.

Q:

Oh OK. I was like oh boy. Wow. Um, now you worked, uh, tell us little bit more about working in the transportation department. What was a typical day like when you were with the transportation department.

A:

Well, it was a pretty busy place. I mean they, as a industrial truck operator, if you was just past out of the office, you worked all over you know. You went from one building to another but a lot of times you would be permanently assigned to one plant you know. You'd go to work there and work till you know you was moved from one plant to another. You might spend maybe a year in Plant 5 or something like that or Plant 4.

20:06:23

A:

When I started, when I got promoted back in July as an ITO I was put on the afternoon shift in Building 4 and 7 and done the I worked there I guess probably 6 or 8 months you know in the afternoon shift working while they was in production there. Of course Plant 7 closed down I think it was in February in '56.

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20:06:43

Q:

And why did they close Plant 7 down?

A:

I guess there just wasn't no need for depleted uranium at that time. 'Cause that's all they produced there was depleted.

20:06:53

Q:

Wow. And now both those buildings are gone. 4 and 7 are gone. What did you do in Plant 4?

A:

I was an ITO operator. We uh, they made green salt, well you would take it away from the machines and put it in storage. Also, get it out of storage and put it in trucks and ship it to Plant 5.

20:07:17

Q:

Wow that's a lot. So you did that every day?

A:

Yes uh-huh.

20:07:23

Q:

Wow, that's a lot. I know you worked also as a forklift operator for 15 years then.

A:

Well that was all part of as a forklift operator working in Plant 4 and 7.

Q:

Oh, OK, OK.

A:

Yeah, see I was, at that time it was called ITO, Industrial Truck Operator.

20:07:38

Q:

So that included forklift operation too?

A:

Yeah, that's right.

Q:

So you worked actually inside the plant?

A:

Uh-huh. Yes.

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20:07:45

Q:

Wow. Um, tell us about some of the, some of the different buildings on site. What were the different buildings on site that you worked in and what were they like?

A:

Well, they were basically all, your work was practically the same was moving and hauling material you know. Where they produced it you'd move it away from the equipment and store it and bring the product you know in that they had purchased from the warehouses you know to produce the material. Whichever plant you were working in. If you were working like in Plant 1 that was usually the material from the rail docks that they would bring over and sample and then put it in storage and then it would get shipped to Plant 2 and run through the digestion end down there on the conveyors.

20:08:33

A:

Plant 4 is where they made the green salt that they would ship to Plant 5 and they would make the uranium derby. 'Course then they'd remelt that into an ingot send that to the Rolling Mill, roll it. And then from that finished product in Plant 6 and ship it out.

20:08:53

Q:

By the time, you'd been there for quite a while which is, your first stint at Fernald was about 15 years is that right?

A:

It was 16.

Q:

16 years? How much did you know about the process when you got to the end?

A:

Well we knew quite a bit. We knew what we were making what we were doing. But basically what everybody else would know.

20:09:16

Q:

And uh, how did you explain your job to your friends and family when you were under a Q clearance?

A:

Well, you didn't talk about that. You really wasn't supposed to discuss you know your work at Fernald at that time with the Q clearance. See, you just didn't, you didn't discuss it.

20:09:35

Q:

And how did they know whether you were talking about it or not?

A:

I have no idea. I don't know. I guess they put the fear in you so much the day your hired in you know

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you just didn't do it.

20:09:50

Q:

Wow. Uh, let's see, um, generally how do you feel about having worked at Fernald?

A:

Well, I kinda feel good about it. I feel like you know the Cold War years, working in it you know. But a little bit disappointed in how they held back you know the hazards of it to the people you know. Wouldn't really discuss with the people what kind of, what you were working in as far as a hazard.

20:10:26

Q:

And let's get into that just a little bit. Um, first of all if you can tell me uh, um, a little bit about your exposure and let's see, that was '50. ('85?) '85 yeah.

A:

Yes, um, I was working in the Pilot Plant at that time as a pipefitter. When I hired back the second time I was, I went as a pipefitter. I walked through the one wet area at that time, Building 13, not knowing that anything was going on at the end of the shift to wash up and when I got down at the other end of the building well there was a construction worker in there that used to be a millwright years ago at the plant there. He asked me if I knew what I just had walked through. I said no what? He said, 'cause the building had kind of an odor to it that you couldn't really tell when you walked in there you know what you was into.

20:11:27

A:

He said you just went through some hex, uranium hexafluoride gas. And I asked him I said well how did it get in this area? And he said well he said those 2 fellows over there he said they just put steam on a what is called a pigtail. It's a line that fastens UF6 cylinders to the equipment you know when they heat it up to turn the uranium hexafluoride to a gas. It had froze up so they brought over the wet side and they put a steam hose to it and they flashed it and that's how it got in there.

20:11:57

A:

So when I left I went through the outside around the building and come back and told my supervisor about walking into some hex gas in the wet area and I asked him how come that wasn't you know signs up what you're doing not to enter with them doing stuff like that. And so he told me he had no idea but he told me I better go to medical and also request I go through the body counter that they had up there on site. So I went to medical and they put me through the body counter and according to their records I showed up 46 percent.

20:12:31

A:

And 8 months prior to that I was 14 percent and the year before that I was 12 and at that time they said that was nothing that was just like walking in off the street. But the 46 percent, that was little high so I told our union representative about you know what had happened. He told me, he suggested that I should probably go to the Occupational Health Clinic which is at Providence Hospital and get a record

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established because in case something would happen down the road.

20:13:03

A:

So I went there on a Saturday which was the 19th and they took blood tests and had me to save my waste and everything at that time for a week and so on the following Monday, on January 21, when I went back to work there were two people from Oakridge I believe they said, and one of the NLO employees there and they met me at the turnstile there when they saw me coming in.

20:13:36

A:

They wanted me to go through the body counter. So I went back through it again and one of the gentlemen from Oakridge said look here, you're 0 now, said it's all left. And come to find out it must have not been true because according to the records that I got from Providence Hospital, they didn't give me a clean bill of health until March the 28, and I was going twice a week and they were drawing blood and taking urine samples and stuff. So I kind of felt like they were maybe kind of hiding something from me a little bit.

20:14:09

Q:

And your doctor?

A:

The doctor that time was Dr. Michael Kelly. He had me to sign papers to subpoena my medical records and it showed in my medical records that I had 10 times the standards back in 1966 that I wasn't aware of that they never ever told me while I was working there. So I kinda felt like they was maybe holding back, something from me.

20:14:35

Q:

And uh, in your first stint at Fernald, you were there for 16 years and then you left for a little while? (Uh-huh) How did you get rehired?

A:

Um, well I was working at Interstate Brand Corporation, ----- as a keg division in Cincinnati and they had transferred their production to Columbus Indiana and Columbus Georgia and I didn't want to leave with them. So one of the friends of mine that was working up there that I had always worked with he was a utility engineer and he was saying that they was needing a some pipefitters. And so, I applied and when I was taking my interview, one of the friends of mine that I'd worked with years ago, at that time years ago he was an area foreman Building 4, name's Eli Nutter.

20:15:30

A:

He saw me there and he told the, Elmer Thinnis, the pipe shop foreman, he said put this man to work. I kinda feel like that's how I got my job. Because when I went in for my interview he had told me, he said he had all the fitters he could hire at the present time. He didn't know when he would be able to hire more fitters. So I kind of feel like Mr. Nutter got me on which I was pretty happy about.

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20:15:58

Q:

So you went home, then they told you?

A:

Yes. I come home and I wasn't home probably 2 hours and the phone rang and they told me to come back in for physical that I was hired.

20:16:11

Q:

Wow that's great. And uh, can you tell us a little bit about working out at the silos?

A:

You mean the K-65 area? (Uh-huh) Yes, I worked out there off and on you know different, I can't say exactly how many days, probably several years overall in the 16 years I worked up there. Uh, we dumped about everything I guess that was on site in them pits you know. I've actually put uranium in there I know like mispours from Plant 5. Probably some ----- stuff like that. There's quite a lot of different things I put in there that there's probably no records of because when I was working for Mr. Carvetti uh, he used to get products shipped to him you know if he could dispose of so he would find ways to get rid of it out there.

20:17:13

Q:

And that's in the waste pit area?

A:

Right, yes.

20:17:16

Q:

Tell us about working for Joe Carvetti. What was he like?

A:

He was real nice, I thought. He was a good guy. He'd expect you to work but he'd treat you good though when you worked for him. I didn't have no problems with him.

20:17:31

Q:

Great. And uh, tell us, tell us a little bit about the Pilot Plant, what you know about the Pilot Plant.

A:

Uh, you mean like the work that they'd done in there?

Q:

Some of the work that they did in there and yeah.

A:

Well Building 13, that's what they considered the wet area in there, that's where they, over the years they'd worked in thorium and other products in there. Then they had the extraction area in the back

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end. I was always told the extraction area was um moved in there from the Manhattan Project. You know the first atomic bomb. I kind of hate to see that get tore down.

20:18:13

Q:

And what would you like to see happen with the Pilot Plant?

A:

Well I think it would be nice if it was made into a museum.

20:18:24

Q:

Great. Cool. OK, let's see, let me look at my notes here. Um, tell us about anything that unusual that may have happened while you worked at Fernald.

A:

Well, um, back, I can't recall if it was '55, '56 or '57 I don't know which but they had a special project going on at 30/45. It was, it must have been pretty high security because at that time these machines at these, well at that time they were experimental, lab machinist I guess they were in there. They were making this product and they had tarpaulins stretched around so you couldn't see what was taking place and they also had security guards around the clock while they were working you know.

20:19:20

A:

And nobody I guess really talked about it too much but one afternoon when I went in they said for me to go to the Pilot Plant and load out some material down there. So when I went down there, or not the Pilot Plant but 30/45, so when I went down there they pulled these tarps back and there were boxes of material there that they loaded out on some military pick-up trucks and they had military police there.

20:19:45

A:

And I believe there was like two boxes to a truck that I put on there and about, I guess about maybe 6 or 8 months later when the first nuclear power plant, or sub, the Nautilus went under the North Pole. They said that's where the material was made that powered the atomic sub. They said that's what they were doing down there.

20:20:07

Q:

Wow, that was a high security job I'd say. Oh man. Um, let's see, can you tell us a little bit about your brother that worked at Fernald for NLO?

A:

I had two brothers worked there. My oldest brother Clifford, he worked there I'm thinking 21 years. He was 61 when he passed away. He left up there on a, they were going to have a two week shut down I think it was in July of '75 and he was going to take an extended two weeks, so in other words he was going to take a four weeks vacation. They said he left, I was told, I wasn't working at the time but I was told that he had ran like from the heavy equipment building to the shower room and on a Saturday he had begun to feel pretty bad. So on Sunday he went to the Dearborn County Hospital, three weeks

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later he died. And he had liver cancer.

20:21:10

Q:

And what was his job?

A:

He was a truck driver. Um, an awful lot of his work over the years was driving a dumpster, hauling the products you know out to the pits or wherever, at that time wherever they used the dumpster for. I know they used to recall, that when they would take like the product from Plant 5, the graphite and the black oxide, and you know, whatever's mixed with it and top the burnouts, you know, they'd take it out there and dump it in the pits. Well, this dust would roll up you know, and come inside the cab you know, and you'd drive off, you'd smell all that product. Of course in the summer time you'd have your windows down you know, you couldn't keep from breathing it. And I often thought that probably had a whole lot to do with his death.

20:22:05

Q:

Wow. And uh, tell us about some of the other people that you know that have worked there?

A:

Well I worked with just everybody you know. A lot of the people I worked with was my age, is you know no longer here. Back in the, you know when I left up there I kinda felt like I was probably the only thing that saved me is because those guys that I worked with, an awful lot of them passed away you know with cancer.

20:22:36

Q:

And uh, what kind of health problems are you worried about from working there?

A:

I guess it would have to be lung cancer.

20:22:48

Q:

And uh, now in a lot of those areas of course we have to be wearing full face respirators (Right) and Anti-C's (Right) and those kinds of things when we go into those kinds of areas. Um, how does it make you feel to see an area that you used to just walk into wearing probably what smock and shoe covers?

20:23:08

A:

It was kind of hard to accept when we were on this cleanup, before I left up there working in them buildings dressed out to where we were when I knew that hadn't done no production over 10 years in those buildings. You kind of you know you wonder if it was that bad when it was not running what was it like when we was there working in it you know. 'Cause you would, you couldn't hardly go through like Building 5 on the second floor, Plant 8 you know, without smelling this black oxide and things. Which you know is uranium dust you know from the product. 'Cause they would take the

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uranium chips and burn it and you would get the smell from it over in Building 8. Of course you always had the smell in Plant 5 on the second floor around the remelt area.

20:24:02

Q:

And tell us about the years of change over between production and cleanup. That happened in, they shut down the plant in '89.

A:

'89, right.

Q:

Yeah, tell us about those days prior to that, what was that like?

A:

You mean before the shutdown?

20:24:15

Q:

Yeah, mainly I guess what I'm getting at is the media attention to the dust collector leak that happened.

A:

Oh, they was a lot of talk yeah. I've always said you know when they used to talk about the ---- that went out the stack, uranium's heavier than lead, it's not gonna go too far. I always felt like what uranium they couldn't find, when they go digging out the pits they'll probably find it. That was my guess. 'Cause somewhere along the line somebody probably have to account for all that uranium you know that was put out there.

20:24:49

Q:

And those days when it first hit the press, what was your impression?

A:

I didn't really have feelings either way on it you know. I didn't know what it was going to lead to. If I knew what was going to lead to I would have felt different but you know the more you heard from the press and everything you think now wait a minute I really don't believe it happened that way.

20:25:14

Q:

And uh, the days right before they shut down the plant, and the days that they did shut down the plant and then there was, well, what was that like first of all when they, when they first shut the plant down for the workers?

A:

I wouldn't know what.

20:25:32

Q:

Were you worried about your job or...?

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A:

Well yeah, I would think probably everybody up there was concerned about how long it would last. We didn't know about the cleanup you know starting up and going the way it went. I think we kind of figured that maybe, 'cause they said back in the '70's they already drilled holes out there in the street to put a fence in they were going to close it up. And they was able to get small contracts and keep going and finally grew into what it had.

20:26:00

A:

In getting back to the earlier there you know, they always talked about the, the uh, like when the stacks and stuff and when it released. Well you know years ago like at least probably once a year they would scoop up all the gravel around all the plants and run it through the Boiler Mill in Plant 8 and extract all the uranium out, so they never really lost any uranium that way that I know of. They was always able to recycle it back. So I don't think they could have had really too much loss you know. It could have went out through the stacks and settled on the gravel, I believe they would have received it back.

20:26:40

Q:

Wow. And uh, tell us, tell us about, tell us about the transition between process and cleanup years?

A:

You mean like all the training we had to go through. Yeah, we had to go through a lot of training is probably I think they said something like 200 hours a year training that we had to take. It was quite different.

20:27:06

Q:

To get ready for the cleanup?

A:

Right, yes.

20:27:10

Q:

Wow. So what did you do then in the cleanup years? What was your job in the cleanup years?

A:

I, it was mostly I think in the Safe Shutdown you know, unhooking the lines, the process lines, and all the power, water and air and gas like that. Well then the last 3 years I worked there I went over in instrumentation doing air conditioning work which was quite different.

20:27:41

Q:

So, in Safe Shutdown um, for those of us who don't really know too much about Safe Shutdown, um, first of all tell us about how they shut the plant down.

A:

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Well first of all they would isolate all the power coming into the building. They would unhook all the steam and water and shut it down that away. It would start there and then they'd start unhooking process lines inside the buildings.

20:28:07

Q:

And what was inside the process lines?

A:

All depends on what building you was in or what you were dealing with. A lot of times there was still product in the lines like in the digestion and extraction area.

20:28:23

Q:

What was the hardest Safe Shutdown job you had to do?

A:

They were all pretty hard really. Time you got dressed out to where you had to work with respirators and sometimes airline respirators and self contained air packs. Some of it was pretty difficult.

20:28:43

Q:

So what was a typical day like?

A:

You were ready to come home at the end of 8 hours.

Q:

You want to switch tapes?

FLHP0046

21:01:03

Q:

OK, um, actually if you could tell us a little bit about how they shut, what hot shutdown is and how it affected your job as a Safe Shutdown person.

A:

You mean like in '89 when they closed down? Well that was about the time we had a union dispute and we was out for a while and when we come back they just shut everything down. More or less just threw the switch and walked away from it. Come back and started the disassembling, well we found products in all the lines, they didn't really shut it down proper, I didn't think. But that's not for me to say I guess.

21:01:39

Q:

How would a better way of doing it, how would that have been?

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A:

I think it would have been better if they were, if they knew they were going to shut it down, is to spend a month on run the lines all out you know run the process and clean it and it would have made it a whole lot easier I believe. 'Cause we found a lot of lines were solid you know after a couple of years with the product being in the lines.

21:02:03

Q:

Wow. Tell us about working in full PPE like that in Safe Shutdown capacity, especially in the summer, what's that like?

A:

It's terrible, terrible. I was really happy to retire. Yeah, it was quite hot. It would get to ya. I had difficulty breathing under the equipment we had to wear.

21:02:28

Q:

Tell us about, about putting that stuff on. What exactly do you wear when you go into an area like that?

A:

Well, you got your regular clothes of course and then you would put on these Saranex clothes you know, they're chemical resistant. And then you would have the shoe covers over your shoes and then you would put boots over them. And then you would have on your hands, you would have these um, real light rubber gloves and then you would put like cotton gloves and then possibly or heavy you know rubber gloves. You were, then you were always taped up and it was quite miserable I would say.

21:03:17

Q:

And how about respirators?

A:

Yes, you would have your respirators. And some places you would have your self contained air apparatus or air lines at one time you know. They was really better than the respirators 'cause I always had a problem breathing under, with the respirators in the final years there after I had the problem getting in the UF6. It seemed like it always bothered me after that. I didn't have the strength in my lungs to pull the air in. Always difficult.

21:03:53

Q:

Wow. Um, let's see what else did I want to ask you? Um, how do you feel about the work that's going on at Fernald now?

A:

Well I guess if they got to clean it up, you know, and disassemble it I guess it's a must you know I don't know. Kind of glad it's being cleaned up done away with except I'd like to see that one part stay you know but whether that'll ever happen or not I don't know.

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21:04:26

Q:

And uh, how do the, how well you were there for both the process years and the cleanup years, how did the process years and the cleanup years differ?

A:

Well you didn't have, you didn't, back in the process years you didn't have all this protection, you didn't, it wasn't required. In later years you know your respirators was but they was unheard of back in the early '50's you know. I think about the only time I ever stuck a respirator on was like a little cloth like they put over a rubber ---- like, you kept the ----- and you replaced the cloth for like when we was unloading carloads of lime, keep from breathing the lime dust 'cause that was kind of irritating.

21:05:10

A:

That was about the only time we ever really wore respirators much. (Wow) I never wore nothing in any of the plants that I worked in. I think maybe they might have at one time, they might have had some respirators like in digestion areas you know in different areas as a must unless they just had the self contained air apparatus for emergency use and the acid suits. But normal operation, nobody, nobody ever wore anything like that.

21:05:38

Q:

How about the management, how did it change? You started working, when you first started working there you worked for NLO, and after that how did NLO differ from Westinghouse and then also Fluor Daniel Fernald? Well Fluor Daniel, the actual company that runs it now.

A:

Um, I would say when Westinghouse got in there the latter, you know after the cleanup, I guess with the training and stuff with the you know, it changed quite a bit. But when they first come in there wasn't much change between them and NLO as far as working conditions. You basically worked about the same way. I would say when they first came in there wasn't a whole lot of difference between them and NLO.

21:06:31

Q:

And how about Westinghouse and Fluor Daniel?

A:

Well that's what I mean. Westinghouse and, well I say they got a little stricter, more probably after Fluor Daniel come in there. In some ways, in some ways it did. 'Course I know one occasion back in, I think it was, was it '92. We had an incident that happened in, up at the decontamination where they found a cylinder in there that didn't have a valve on it, a small cylinder. And I guess when they were picking up that scrap they had disturbed it and probably broke the crust on it. It had UF₆ in it and it started smoking you know with the, the HF beams coming out of it.

21:07:27

A:

So they wanted to put a, a valve on it and I was one of the employees that got involved in that 'cause

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I'd been to Piketon and went to training up there on how to install valves in those cylinders. And they had scheduled a time to put a valve on there and I think if it hadn't have been for some of our input on how to dress in there, I think it might have turned into a pretty dangerous job because there's, as it turned out, turned out pretty bad anyway, I think there's a video at the plant on that. And they didn't feel at that time that a pressurized suit was necessary and we demanded a pressurized suit.

21:08:15

A:

'Cause I believe if we'd had on a regular suit and if you know, the way it turned out I think we could have got hurt. But the pressurized suit kept all the fumes away from us. I think if it hadn't been for input on that we'd been in trouble I believe. The way it turned out though it was still kind of bad because, if you'll listen to your video, you'll find out where you hear these exhaust fans running and while it was taking place it was so smoky in there you couldn't see each other. And those exhaust fans was taking that right outside and sending all, you know whichever way the wind was blowing, probably east.

21:08:56

Q:

Wow. Now during the, during the process years, what other types of hazards did you observe in the different plants?

A:

You mean back the early years? Well in '66 they lost that big UF₆ cylinder. When they had it hooked up, it had it up to temperature and when they went to open the valve, the valve unscrewed from the cylinder and released it all into a cloud that went across the project. That was probably the biggest incident, I would have to say.

21:09:37

Q:

Tell us about that day. How did you find out about it? Were you there or...?

A:

Yeah, I was. There wasn't much talk about it really at the time you know. Well you just didn't really think about the hazards at that time you know. But I think later they found out it was probably pretty big.

21:09:56

Q:

Did they alert the surrounding community at all about that?

A:

I don't know but I was told that the Knollman Dairy next to it, that they couldn't sell milk for like two weeks or something like that. So evidently they was notified. Whether anybody else was or not I don't know. I understood that they bought all their milk for two weeks, I believe something like that from their cattle. That was just talk that I was told I don't know for sure or anything like that.

21:10:29

Q:

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You mentioned to me early about uh, going out to the parking lot.

A:

Oh, you mean like coming in on third shift? Yeah, if it was a you know, a lot of moisture in the air and if they were running like the NAR tower, the nitric acid mist would you know, you would feel a sting in your arm and stuff when you'd walk in there and you'd always know when they, when they had that going because it felt just like bee stings on ya. The mist would come it, you know if the air was real heavy where it would settle down, you could feel that sting sensation.

21:11:07

Q:

Wow. Now this is a, this is a brand new thing to me, can you tell us a little bit about the NLO and the titanium stones?

A:

Yeah, back in '54 when I first hired in there they were, they had these titanium stones, I've got one, that they were selling you know I think, I don't know if it was a by-product from something they were making or what but they were, they were beautiful. Would you like to see it?

21:11:33

Q:

Yeah, we'll show that in a minute. We'll shoot it separately, but what does it look like and what did you have done with it?

A:

It looks like, looks like a diamond except it's got a little bit of a yellowish cast to it. I kept it for well 43 years I guess or 44 something like that and I had it made into a necklace for my wife.

21:11:56

Q:

And what year was that, that you bought it?

A:

'54.

Q:

'54.

A:

Yeah, I believe I gave seven and a half dollars for a carat and a half. It's quite beautiful. The jeweler that made it into a necklace, he thought it was pretty nice. He really went on about it.

21:12:14

Q:

Wow, that's great, and we'll show a picture of that in a little bit. Gosh, that's great. Um, let's see, I'm trying to think if we've got everything. Got that point. Um, is there anything you'd like to add?

A:

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I don't know.

Q:

Let me ask you this question. I'm sorry go ahead.

A:

I enjoyed working there. I felt like that I learned a lot while I was there. A lot of great people to work for you know and work around. I enjoyed most of the people there, I'd have to say.

21:13:08

Q:

And how do you feel about uh, in relation to Fernald, America's mission?

A:

Well, I believe they accomplished what they went after you know through the Cold War years by producing all the uranium I think it made the difference.

21:13:29

Q:

And that's something that uh, sort of a term that has been bandied around on site lately is Cold War Warriors. (Right) And the folks that have worked at Fernald during the Cold year, how do you feel about that term? How do you feel about being called the Cold War Warrior?

A:

I guess you would have to kind of consider that. I mean, it, like I said it made the difference with all the production. I feel like with the rules set up today it would have been difficult to make all that uranium probably you know if they would have had to make them under the conditions with the place present exists up there, probably couldn't have been done. But I understand that was, the law put into affect in 1953 when they knew of the hazards but they wasn't allowed to talk about it to the people, I seen a document to that effect from an atomic war veteran that he had purchased through the different courts that they had been involved with. That they was document made out that if a nuclear physicist told the hazards that they would be sent to prison.

21:14:45

Q:

Wow. And uh, in those years of the Cold War, what was in the mind of the typical American?

A:

I don't know. I don't know if, you know if really how they did feel about it. I know we just, like I said, at work we didn't really, really talk about stuff like that. And as far as the, what we were actually doing, I don't think we really knew as much as we thought we knew other than the process of making uranium you know. We knew that it was going for weapons, material, we knew that. I think in 1964 I heard them say we had enough uranium made at that time to blow the world up 200 times. I thought we had quite a lot in the stockpile.

21:15:33

Q:

And what about the threat from Russia? What was in your mind at that point, during the Cold War?

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A:

I didn't really give it a thought much. I just, I just never really thought that at that time it was much of a threat really myself.

21:15:52

Q:

And uh, you're in the medical monitoring program?

A:

Right.

Q:

Can you tell us how you got involved in that and what exactly you have to do for that?

A:

I go in once a year and get a physical and they, they just check you out to see how you're doing from one year to the next. I have a problem now with coughing quite a bit. They can't seem to find out what the reason is but I don't know if it's involved with this Fernald project or not. I kind of have a feeling that it is, but I don't know.

21:16:31

Q:

And uh, how did you get enrolled in the medical monitoring program? Is that a recent thing or is that something that happened years ago?

A:

It was through this um, I think through this class action suit you know was put on by the employees. And that was the decision that was handed down, to monitor everybody that was on site.

21:17:00

Q:

And how do you feel about the medical monitoring program?

A:

I think it's a very good idea, very good.

21:17:10

Q:

Great, great. Is there anything you can think of now that you wanted to add?

A:

No, I, I think it pretty much covers everything.

Q:

Great.

A:

I can't think of anything.

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Q:

If we could have quiet on the set for a moment, this is nat sound.