

Date: June 5, 1979

Occupation: Senior Citizens center employee

INTERVIEWER: Try to put yourself back to the time of the incident, so it's pretty much retrospective unless I pull you forward again. When did you first hear about the Three Mile Island incident?

NARRATOR: I first heard about it when senior citizens in here were saying that one had called her daughter and the daughter had mentioned she thought there was a very big accident, in that vicinity, Middletown. I didn't pay too much attention, not really having any fact of what kind of accident and since people always talk a lot with one another, I just sort of ignored it and thought it is either a truck accident, it's something. I'll hear about it in good season. I wasn't overly curious.

INT: Do you remember what day that was, was it the middle of the week, end of the week?

NAR: No I don't unless you could tell me when it happened.

INT: The first release was on Wednesday. It wasn't generally considered to be serious until Friday, that's when they started the evacuation plans.

NAR: Ok, I would say that if it happened on Wednesday?

INT: That was when the first release was.

NAR: It was right away. It was very soon because her daughter lived there. So it might have been the same day.

INT: Did you ever feel it was a serious situation?

NAR: Only... When she said there was a big accident there, for a second I thought, hmm, we don't often say that so it could be serious, but I knew full well that I'd know quite soon. I guess work just impinged and I went on about it. I think the first time it seemed serious was when there was more publicity, right. It was in the paper and I actually read the headlines. Yeah I remember that when I came in Friday morning they were talking about evacuating.

INT: That's right. That's when I thought "my heavens, what was that," really.

INT: Did you know the reactor was there before the incident?

NAR: No I didn't. I really didn't.

INT: How far is TMI from us?

NAR: 20 miles? 18?

INT: What did you think about and talk about during the incident?

NAR: After we were aware?

INT: Yes.

NAR: I think I probably would seem like the average person just waiting day after day for the news. News casts were sort of mounting. Excitement maybe? And anxiety was probably the best word. Thinking, well is it that serious and each day, yes it is serious. I think it was the number of newspaper articles, the tremendous increase in publicity. The newscast. There there never was a Newscast... everytime you turned it on. It was us. It could be CBS or NBC from New York, but it was us, Middletown, outside Harrisburg. So, I think that began to sober us down considerably. Oh my heavens, this is terribly important.

INT: What did you think about the way the media handled it?

NAR: Well it seemed as though they were falling all over one another to constantly talk about it. I guess I neither blamed them overly much because it was a serious thing. But it seemed as though they were picking up every scrap that they could find.

INT: Didn't you say that one of the stations called you?

NAR: Yes, I think it was CBS...the phone rang and I picked it up and they said, "Is this..." I can't remember if they had my name or not, I guess maybe they did, "in Carlisle, PA?" And I said yes. They said, "It's this is CBS, New York calling." I was dumbfounded, nearly dropped the receiver. They said, "We would like to get your reactions to the TMI incident." And for a moment I didn't even know what the TMI. Oh my, yes, yes. They wanted to know the distance I lived from the accident, my state of mind, my neighbors' state of mind. I guess I said what I'm saying here. I didn't realize it was that serious. Of course I rent, I don't own property and I haven't lived here all my life so, and I do know people in other areas of the country, so I thought well is it really serious I could get in my car and get away with maybe not complete loss. But I'm not one who hangs on the evening news and I skip newspaper reading from day to day, sometimes two, so I don't think I'm quite as interested in local news, the latest flashes that some people would be. But I became concerned. So I told all this to CBS and then they said that these different pronouncements and all, statistics would be in a show in the morning, but I didn't get up early enough to listen to it. I had to go to work, I didn't hear it. But I imagine it was a random sampling from all over this area.

INT: How did you feel about being called?

NAR: Kind of thrilled, excited, that they should happen out of a thousand names, just to happen to call me.

INT: Did it make you any more aware?

NAR: Yes. It certainly did. I thought, “My heavens, New York is interested in this.” I think that very much more, to think that CBS is really very interested in finding out, because this had never happened to me before.

INT: Did you talk about it with your friends, your family or your coworkers?

NAR: Yes, we did. Everyone did, constantly.

INT: And what did you talk about?

NAR: Well I think the thing that drove it home was the idea that some people were going to pack up and evacuate. What was interesting was that that weekend, I was driving back to a school where my husband used to teach and it was near Pittsburgh and that’s maybe a 4 or 5 hour drive from here, and I was taking my son, that’s our whole family at this point. We could have stayed there, and so we discussed it up there that weekend. But it never seriously passed through my mind to really stay, not to come back to work on Monday. They even suggested it and I said well I don’t, I really don’t think that’s necessary. Yet when I got back and went to work on Monday, I found there were families who had packed up and gone to places just like that, Pittsburgh and they were staying, and they stayed, three or four days or a whole week. They just simply didn’t go to work. They thought their health was more important and they wouldn’t return.

INT: Do you think it would have put your job in jeopardy if you had stayed away?

NAR: No, I guess not. I would have made a call and said, “I’m one of the worried families so,” maybe for two or three days somebody there, who lives there, just answer my phone, I’m not coming back. I guess this was one time you could have declared you were worried enough and you were not going to put your family or your health in jeopardy.

INT: Do you think your health was affected?

NAR: I don’t think I can answer that. I think maybe in 10 or 20 years if I’m no longer here, that we’ll know that it was affected. Personally, I don’t have any fears.

INT: What about for your community?

NAR: I really don't have fears for Carlisle. And I think the winds blew at that point, in a certain way, didn't they blow east? Out towards the Atlantic or something of that sort. I never have had that much fear.

INT: How did you feel about the way the government officials handled the incident?

NAR: Well I think they handled it just about as you or I would. Disbelief, and then they converged on the scene, and then they tried to get the answers. The answers seemed to be the most common answers. It was always, "Some mechanic turned a gauge off that he should have left on." Now with the recent pronouncement, that really and truly, every worker in a place like that should have an education, I think makes a lot of sense. I don't think you can take a worker off the street and expect him to know the full picture without a full education in nuclear science; the more the better. My son could have worked in there; I mean an 18 year old could, what would they have known. Unless they have a full training in the gauges and that sort of thing, but that's still mechanical. If the gauge happens to stick, I would like a man with a mind say, it's maybe sticking because, because, because. And be able to look back on the principles for heaven's sake. I really don't have much patience with that. So I think that the plant and the whole organization of the plant or whatever the business, is totally responsible. I think behind that is our philosophy of nuclear reactors in this country; I mean we are totally responsible. I think we're idiots unless we have to start from the beginning and say, nobody must work in this is not completely trained to work in this to know the principle of the science behind it; it's far too important. It's the future of the country, and not just a few thousand it may be a quarter of a million people. Now I think it's a form of insanity to think that the average person off the street should be working in any place of that sort. To my mind, it should be the highest level scientist. What's his name, Denton? Denton should pick the people that sort, that quality and caliber of education should be a prerequisite for it.

INT: So you think the nation is going to follow up on nuclear power and continue with it?

NAR: I think it's... Well I certainly think we should learn to develop other power, solar power mainly. I think we are short sighted not to. But I believe that probably we will continue with nuclear power, when people calm down and maybe trust the companies to do it safely. I think it's like a huge ball rolling, I don't think you're going to stop it now. Since we feel we need power so badly, I do think we'll develop solar power and other forms as well.

INT: Will they usurp nuclear power or will nuclear power be on top?

NAR: I think, probably, all those powers will be used at the same time.

INT: So it's more of a conglomerate, than any one more than another?

NAR: I think so. I have just that feeling, I really don't know. I just think when any group of people think of another kind power, like solar power, I don't think you can stop that thought. And that thought, I think produces an effect. And I think some people are going to be developing that way, but others are still going to be, waving the flag for nuclear power. They're going to say, I can do it safely, I know that I can, we can. And I don't think you're going to stop that either.

INT: What do you think about all the people writhing against nuclear power, the demonstrations going on?

NAR: I think that's been good because it's made us say, "Hey wait a minute." It's shown us the terrible danger that we're really in, that we are truly in. It's been very sobering; this accident has been very sobering, So I think all these people, yelling and screaming and waving flags about it has been good because they've just had this result made on us that said, "Now wait a minute, we don't want it all," because then it's rousing other groups to say, "Well wait a minute, maybe we can develop it safely." So it's just brought to the fore, I think a lot more discussion, a lot more cause and effect about the problem.

INT: So people are thinking now, where before they were passive?

NAR: People are thinking now, exactly. Very passive before, really. And I think those who lived in those areas where those reactors were just trusted too much, but trusted that the people who built the buildings, running the agency knew what they were doing. And I think many times they didn't.

INT: What would you do if a nuclear power plant were built in your back yard?

NAR: I think I'd probably be way out front in a group that protested strongly. I know I would certainly try to have my say. If I were as old as I am or older and owned my own home and my property was there and my roots were there, I'd probably would shut up and say nothing, just stay and live the rest of my life there. If I were young and had a young family, or having babies, I might pack up and move away, if I felt that I couldn't change their mind about building it. I think I might move.

INT: At this point in your life, if you couldn't, if your protest didn't do anything, would you stay?

NAR: I'm not sure. I think that if I had a feeling, a gut feeling, that I didn't feel as well as I should be feeling. If I worried, if I felt that in the atmosphere it just didn't feel good to me, didn't feel right to me or I saw some stuff coming out a lot with steam, I think I'd probably think about moving away. No matter what age I was, I'd think about moving away. Why not?

INT: How do you think the radiation could affect you?

NAR: Why I think it could make mutations in children, I think it could kill us. I think it could cause all kinds of fatal diseases and kill us, in the worst possible ways. It would fizzle and fry us if it were too extreme.

INT: What types of diseases, any particular kinds?

NAR: Well, everyone talks about cancer but I'm sure it could affect us in undreamed of ways. I mean, glandular, metabolic, everything, and it could do a lot of damage.

INT: Do you think that's going to happen to people from TMI in Carlisle or closer?

NAR: I have absolutely no answer for that. I have no idea. I think in 10 or 20 years, if we find the workers in TMI are dropping off or dying we'll have the answer, but there's just no way of knowing. I have a funny feeling that some people will work in a highly dangerous situation, such as a physician might work among leprosy patients and never get the disease, and others would maybe work a very short time and contract the disease. I think that a lot of us are so individual we don't dream this, you know, that's my own feeling. That we either open ourselves up to these things or we shut ourselves off to these things. And that you can work in conditions and never have it affect you. I think there's a great variation there.

INT: So it all depends on your particular make-up?

NAR: I think so, I really do. And how much fear you bring to the... that's my personal feeling. I think if you bring a lot of fear you can contract the disease more easily.

INT: So you're more susceptible if you're afraid of it?

NAR: Very much more, I think.

INT: Do you think it's the stress factor in yourself or partly metaphysical?

NAR: I think it's partly that, I think it's metaphysical too. I think it's more metaphysical than it is physical, I don't think it's just stress. I think it's a lot of things that people know and feel about things that they just, we just haven't proved these things yet. I don't think we need to, I don't think we will.

INT: Now back to when it was going on. Was there anyone you particularly trusted or found reliable?

NAR: Yes. What's his name? Denton?

INT: Denton.

NAR: Our hero, Denton. Yes I think that that man standing in front of the mic, harassed, with an open shirt, perspiration or whatever. Constantly his sentences being clipped off by this mayor, what it was, in Middletown, who kept wanting to point out questioners in the audience. And this man, just really struggling, seemed like a single individual, to calm people and to mainly inform people just by the facts, truly was a hero. I don't think we trusted anyone as we trusted him. I mean the governor arrived, Carter arrived, everybody arrived, and I think they were the dummies that we were. I mean I really don't think any one knew what happened when that worker turned on that gauge, or something, until we got Denton here and I think he knew. I think he began to look back to the mystery from one step backward, and make some sense.

INT: Did you feel that when he arrived they were in control of the situation?

NAR: No I don't think they really were. I imagine that agency were pretty happy to see him come. I have no idea now, it comes out that there was nowhere near the danger that we thought or informed that there was. I think the danger was over blown really. I think there's a lot of hysteria because of the constant media, constant barrage of it. I think they could have shut up a little bit. Newsmen, journalists, photographers, converge like, you know, ants upon an ant hole, or something. Just low caliber, just for propaganda, news, news, news. It seems to me with that serious, they should have backed off a little bit almost, really shut up a little bit more. They aroused and hurt a lot of older people who are very fearful and I think that's really inexcusable from the media. I think they just should have shut up a little bit, and waited until someone like Denton came.

INT: Did you see people here at the center getting upset about it?

NAR: Yes, very. Older people.

INT: Do you know what they were primarily concerned about, were they worried for themselves or their families? I think they were worried for their families; many of them had families there. They were not worried that much about themselves, being older people. I think they were worried about their families. And they were worried about a lot of other people that they read about in the paper who lived in Middletown, Camp Hill and Harrisburg, not their families at all. They were worried about people.

INT: What sort of reactions did you see among the senior citizens, other than worry? Did many of them leave?

NAR: A few left. A few left who had relatives, children to whom it was easy for them to go. I mean if the children said, mother just come over here for now, they went. If they couldn't get away, if there was no one they knew, they made the best of it. They didn't care so much for themselves. They were really concerned about the babies, and pregnant women. They thought it was just awful, and they were worried about the workers who worked there.

INT: Was there anyone you particularly mistrusted during the incident?

NAR: Yes, I think we began to mistrust the, what is it, Metropolitan Ed. Yeah; slowly people began to get pretty horrified of them. Because the blame had to fall someplace and slowly the blame fell squarely on Metropolitan Ed.

INT: So you think their mistrust was justified?

NAR: The peoples mistrust?

INT: Yeah, you said people began to blame Met Ed.

NAR: Yes I think it was justified. It was too bad, they had an accident, but I don't think you can have accidents when you're dealing with nuclear work. They shouldn't have accidents anymore than I think the airliner should have gone down in Chicago killing 724 people two weeks ago. I mean, it's human error, but I still make the statement. There's not that much margin for error there, there just must not be anymore than, would you push the red button to start a nuclear explosion against Russia or will you not. You'll not,



there will be no slip of the finger that maybe you might try it once or that it could go off. You will not. I don't think there is any excuse. For one thing, they should have had as I said, better qualified workers in those areas, so that if there's a human thing with a switch, the man would have had a mind behind his job, and he could have noticed that something seemed wrong. So I don't excuse them, no.

INT: Do you think they're in control of it right now?

NAR: No, I do not.

INT: Why?

NAR: Well I think that you mean the TMI incident, the accident?

INT: TMI, nuclear power everything.

NAR: No I think they've controlled the accident. No I'm still... I'm not sure that they know for sure exactly what will happen. I don't know.

INT: What worried you most about the situation?

NAR: Well I think what worried me most was just the human factor. The fact that we don't know that the babies are born at this time now, if they were in a sensitive state of growth. I would think it would be horror of horrors to have now a baby with mutations, genetic deficiencies, so horrible it may not appear in this generation but in their generations... It's an affront to life and god. Worried me terribly. The tiny, the small children that might be affected, all of them, the workers that worked there, the fact that they may only live 5 years more, 10 years more. Yeah catastrophe of major proportions. Then the idea when told the facts that if the explosion came that it would dig a hole or blow up an area of such extent that I don't remember now, how many miles in diameter. It boggled the imagination. It's a horror of horrors. And I suppose it's like every earthquake and all, you simply don't believe that it will truly happen. If you did, I guess you'd get in your car and drive as far as you could, whether you had food or money or anything else. Man makes these constant adjustments to all circumstances apparently, and shaped the worst aspect... or most fearful.

INT: What worried you the most?

NAR: What worried most, I just said.

INT: So where did you hear about it, it would blow a big hole? Do you remember? Was that the media?

NAR: Yeah, media I think. Oh my gracious yes, there must have been millions of words written in every newspaper on every page every night about this. A lot of repetition too. So everyone in the media seemed to be converged upon the scene writing thousands of pronouncements and opinions, statistics, repeated statistics about it. I got very tired of all that really. I began not to read too many new things.

INT: When was that that you got so tired of it?

NAR: Well I would say maybe... I would say once they brought it under control. They had an awful lot about it in that; that's when we were most worried until they really had it under control. When, what was it a week, week and a half two weeks? When they finally had it under control I think we were a little bit tired of the thing. It had taken a toll of your emotions, and your own energy. We were a little bit tired then. It was still a little bit interesting to read Met Ed's opinions that they were just going to put the price of this terrible accident on their clients or the people who bought their electricity. I don't know that I should say I'm tired of it, but I'm sure a lot of people are following it. Maybe I'm wrong, maybe we should not get tired of it, maybe we don't want to forget it right away. So that maybe it's not too bad to keep us aware that people are still fighting it. We shouldn't let Met Ed off the hook really. Or nuclear agencies, we shouldn't let them off the hook. I could be wrong about it. Personally I felt after a while there was not much more I needed to read about it.

INT: Do you continue to follow up on it now?

NAR: Yes, I do. I do. When I see an article in the newspaper I usually read it.

INT: Do you think it changed you in any lasting way?

NAR: Well I think it was an incident that I will not forget in my lifetime. I think it shows how close we live to death; how brief our life could be and how, how fearful the world has really become. I think it's scared in me a sense that it's not the dear old world that my mother grew up in, the twenties, the thirties...the forties, WW2 was dreadful when it came but it was a long way off. You still saw the gold stars in the mother's windows when they lost their sons and husbands, but still was a long way off, Iwojima, Guadalcanal, we never could picture those places too much until they began to appear in

the media and so forth. It was remote, you weren't scared inside yourself. I think this was the first time in my life that I was a little scared inside myself, I thought, hmm, maybe this is it.

INT: So you thought about your own death?

NAR: Yeah, I thought it might be possible.

INT: Did you think that you would survive?

NAR: Oh Yes.

INT: You never really thought this is going to be it?

NAR: I never really thought that this would be it. No.

INT: Otherwise you would have packed up your bags like you said earlier?

NAR: Yeah, I think so.

INT: And trotted off?

NAR: Yeah.

INT: Did you make any plans different than you ordinarily would have made?

NAR: Well the only plans I made was not to visit Harrisburg for a while. I mean there was no reason for us to go in and I thought I'd just stay away, that's right. I'd stay in Carlisle. I just would not drive to a shopping center in Harrisburg or Camp Hill or Mechanicsburg. I just had no reason to so I would just stay away.

INT: Did you stay closer to home while you were within town?

NAR: Yes I did one day when we were reading something about their asking people to stay in doors in Middletown. It was kind of a hazy, gray day, and I thought, hmm, maybe I should stay in doors. But I didn't, I remember I didn't, I had to go out for errands so I

sort of forgot that too. In other words the thought passed through my mind but I didn't act on it too greatly, No.

INT: Did you limit your son's activities at all?

NAR: No, I didn't.

INT: Did you change any of your ordinary routines?

NAR: No I didn't.

INT: What, did you think about leaving the area?

NAR: That it was kind of foolish; that it was unnecessary. I thought that I would wait until the whatever, the mayor or councilman or governor ordered people in Carlisle to pack and leave. If I got the word that there was real danger and there would be radiation and that I would have to pack up and leave regardless, then I was going to do it. I did put, I had a duffle bag from a trip still partially unpacked and I remember leaving a toilet kit and a nightie in there, just so if the governor told us to do it, I would add my other things and I would get in the car and get some gas and leave.

INT: What sort of things did you want to take with you?

NAR: Just the usual over night, simple clothes. Some of my work, papers, books probably.

INT: Would you expect to come back then? If they had evacuated you?

NAR: Yes, definitely I would. I had, my refrigerator would still be on, the gold fish be there, we probably would have taken the dog, taken my son of course. But that's it. Your life goes on. I think it would almost take a bomb for you to say, "No I'm never coming back to this particular dwelling." You just have in your mind, your rent is due the next month." You just, I think it must be an enormous shock to leave and say I will not be back. I really can not imagine that. Because all your things are there, that you love.

INT: Is there someone in your life that you were watching in order to decide what you would do? Anyone in particular?

NAR: Someone in my life that I was watching?

INT: Yeah, for instance your son. Were you keeping an eye on him and that would help determine your actions?

NAR: No.

INT: Did you have any mental pictures of what was happening at TMI?

NAR: Oh yes, I followed the newspaper and had many mental pictures.

INT: What sort of things?

NAR: Oh, I watching that, thinking about that bubble in that tank, not understanding it; trying to understand the diagrams that they put in the newspaper. So I just thought the bubble was huge and they were watching it; I could see the pairs of eyes watching it and decreasing, lowering until it was out of a dangerous condition. That's about the total picture I had.

INT: Did the bubble have any particular color?

NAR: Yeah, I guess it was kind of white, or translucent.

INT: What, like a soap bubble?

NAR: Yeah. Somewhat like that. Maybe not iridescent, more translucent, more white, more like hydrogen; remembering over my chemistry.

INT: You remembered your chemistry? You brought that into play?

NAR: Not much, no. I was a poor chemistry student. I really didn't know what was going on. No I just, just was like everyone else. I just watched the diagrams, I read the words, I just prayed that the bubble would decrease, and decrease in dangerous potential you know, for everyone's standpoint. I was a bit concerned for the men working there. I thought about them quite a bit. How horrified their wives, you know, and their families must have been. Because if anything had happened and it hadn't gone down and I mean it

just wouldn't, that... I thought it was a measure of courage for them to continue in the face of anything you know, to stay right there. I thought all those engineers that were really working with it showed a good bit of courage.

INT: Did you have any pictures of what might happen? You said you. ...

NAR: Yes I did. I saw the bubble go and I saw that huge gaping crater that they had pronounced in the paper and I can not remember how, oh I don't remember. They said something like a third of the way across the state of PA. Some unbelievable thing like this. I did think of Nagasaki, I mean I thought what the atomic bomb had done there, and I thought well it might be five, tens time that much, it could be that.

INT: Did you picture the affects on the people at all?

NAR: Oh yes, I did. And it's probably needless to even talk about it.

INT: And what did you see there?

NAR: Oh just utter death. Mostly sizzled up, fried, gone, disintegrated. Disintegrated, is the word more than anything else.

INT: What other aspects of your life might have been affected, if it had blown up?

NAR: If it had blown up? Well if the danger had increased, instead of decreased, to the extent that I probably would have come in and talk to my boss here and said, you know, "Shall we close down the center because old people don't need to come in here? Shall we just have our business come to a halt because I guess we should get out of here?" He should get out, these older people should go to a relative or someplace where they would probably be evacuated. If I felt on the point, I mean I would have taken business like action, I can't see myself jumping in the car and leaving, just saving myself. I think I would have, more or less in a business like way tried to bring my job to a halt, that's it, and help others get out and get out myself. I was, I'm lucky because I have two children in Utah and I had one in Buffalo, New York. Three children I could have gone to, so no problem. And I probably would have gone to the nearest one, Buffalo.

INT: Did you have any concern about the food or milk from the area?

NAR: Yes I did when I read about the milk situation. I didn't like the idea that they didn't know the affect of what they'd fed on the cows, who lived in the shadow of TMI. And those cows were of course, giving milk. And I had a feeling that really the farmer couldn't have detected radiation sufficiently to have that milk truly safe. I was concerned a little bit about the milk especially.

INT: Did you continue to drink milk or do you normally drink milk?

NAR: I continued to serve the milk and I continued to drink it. Fools, all of us.

INT: Did you picture in your mind any affects of radiation on life around you, this includes plant life and animal life?

NAR: Yes I did, I had the same picture that I did for people, tremendously s scarred, ravaged, desolate area. All I can say is utterly destroyed and burned to a crisp. Like White Sands, New Mexico.

INT: Did you think about God during the incident?

NAR: I always think about God. I don't think that God interferes in Man's development and Man's fallacies, and Man's foolishness. I think this is all a part of the God-given, what is it, um... Man's human will. I think Man is in totally charge in his idiotic way and his enlightened way, with this planet. I mean, I think he can send himself to destruction or follow the reverse path. And I think God is ever available to individuals who look to him but I feel He allows Man to work his own foolishness.

INT: Do you feel it's an over-all plan of God's?

NAR: I feel, but of course this is my own philosophy, I feel that God and Man are in a sort of partnership. That God waits, God has created Man and Man has a long, long way to go. And that Man will return to God eventually, eventually, eventually... A very long route, a very long schooling. Infinite, an almost infinite journey. But, I feel that God is over all and in all and with all and that sort of thing, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal. So maybe well aware of what's going on in little Man's mind. But I still feel that it's a hands- off policy. Yes that Man is allowed to go on and on to his own destruction or upward or whatever direction he wishes to go and I think that each man is an individual many are much farther along spiritually than others. That each is individual; we're just as individual as the rays shining out from the sun. And the sun is there and our planet, but we are just as individual and multitudinous as those rays. So that, I feel that in many— people who would have been destroyed by the bomb, that they never would have been destroyed at all; all that would have been destroyed was a physical being. Yes these cells,

the molecular cells would have been instantly disintegrated all of which would affect not in one way that individual soul, not a bit. The body would be gone but that would matter not, nothing. In fact I think that is true of each and every person, I mean, the body would be gone in the form that we see it now, but I feel it would have no affect what so ever on the soul. No, they would just be manifested in another dimension or another sphere or they would return again, or whatever. However, probably God might have had a basic lesson, a basic deep underlying type of principle, which He would be manifesting in Mankind at this point in time, yes. So that it would be a juxtaposition that Man would have done this at this time because God ordained it as a lesson which is due to come at this point in time. If you can understand that.

INT: So did the idea of Satan, or the Last Judgment, or the end of the world enter into your thinking?

NAR: Only that it would be one step not in Satan, one step in a further enlightenment possibly, yes, of Mankind. I do believe, personally, that we will see changes geologic changes form now on in this planet, possibly the year 2000 will bring in a kind of millennium, a growth toward a newer dimension in Mankind. Yes, I think this could have been a purposeful step in the development of Mankind.

INT: Was it an instructive step?

NAR: Yes I think probably it was.

INT: Did you pray at all?

NAR: Only in a sense that, yes, I think probably many of us went in a sort of prayerful state from time to time, when we thought about this deeply. Yes, that we wanted the right thing to happen. Whether this was a time that was supposed to be a total destruction, I sort of left it, you know, to kind of a fate. Or if it was not to happen then I felt that would be the right step too. I guess I was fatalistic.

INT: So in your prayers, you left it to God's judgment. What did you pray for then?

NAR: I left it to God's judgment, right. I prayed that the right thing that was to happen would happen. Whether this was the time for the world to be radically changed, as Revelation said there will be storms etc. earthquakes, upheavals. I felt alright if it's beginning, then it's alright.

INT: Did you attend a religious service during the crisis?



NAR: No, no more than usual.

INT: But you attended a regular service?

NAR: Yes.

INT: What kind was it?

NAR: I think I went to the Science Church, just regular services.

INT: And where was it?

NAR: In Carlisle, on Moreland Ave, small church.

INT: Did anyone mention TMI?

NAR: Not in that church because there is a great trust in God in that religion. Very little fear. That's one of the basic tenants, there really isn't fear, that God is omniscient, so I'd say less fear probably there than in most churches.

INT: Was the attendance the same as usual?

NAR: I would think so, probably more so.

INT: More people attended?

NAR: I think maybe more people attended; actually I'm afraid I skipped. There's a Wednesday night service and a Sunday, I don't usually get to the Wednesday night service. It's hard for me to remember, I might have even skipped that Sunday but I did not notice any change in their attitude and I imagine if anything I would surmise that maybe a few more people went, who might... in the very sense of going so that the fear would be stilled in people.

INT: What does your faith say about the rightness or wrongness of man's desire to use and control atomic power, does it have any bearing?

NAR: No, not really. No, it's more, they're constant continual emphasis is on the spirituality of Man, so they deemphasize a lot of material activity. They really would discuss it, probably less than most.

INT: Do you think religious persons or institutions should take a public stand on human development in the use of atomic power?

NAR: On human development and the use of atomic power.

INT: Or would you break it up and say human development or the use of atomic power?

NAR: I think some religious groups could, yes, if they felt they wanted to impinge their will upon it, I think they could take stands they certainly have a right. I'm not so sure they would influence agencies, nuclear reactive development corporations, I think those scientists within it are going to continue to develop; they may have their own individual religious philosophies. And of course they probably are going to think they're going to develop it safely. So that human development won't be in jeopardy. That's about all I really have to say about that I think.

INT: Did you have ideas about how it would be best to behave in such a situation? Ethical, moral or religious?

NAR: Yes, I think I did. I think I tried to behave that way. I tried to read the newspaper as unhysterically as I could, as rationally. I tried to continue with my life, with no changes, no deviation. I especially tried to remain calm in working with senior citizens. And I felt that you had to remain calm all the time, as they worked on this bubble; regardless of the outcome still remain calm. Nothing would be accomplished by losing your grip or being fearful or anything. The reverse. If we were doomed, we were doomed. If we had time to get away, then we should think about it and we should take steps to do so or help others do so. I really felt quite calm.

INT: So it wasn't difficult for you to follow through on your beliefs?

NAR: Not at all.

INT: Was your job here at the Senior Action Center different because of that?

NAR: No, I would say not really, except that I tried to have life go on as usual.

INT: So you just tried to make yourself a, oh, what's the word? You were the calming force? Stabilizing factor?

NAR: Yeah. Well, I wouldn't want to be so proud and vain to think that I worked any difference in their lives but I certainly did not give in to hysteria, no, I did not. But that was easy for me because I wasn't hysterical. It was easy.

INT: You mentioned some historical events, like Nagasaki, that this brought to mind. Did it bring to mind any other events?

NAR: Well, of course, all I have in my lifetime experiences were World War II and the people I knew who were killed in World War II, and Vietnam, people who went to Vietnam. Korea I really had not much contact with. I did not know anyone who went to Korea. So Yes I think the, I think that Nagasaki was probably, Eugima, the Japanese, dropping the bomb, right, was probably the greatest peril that came to me.

INT: I remember when we were talking...

NAR: The thought parallel.

INT: Talking on Friday you mentioned about the Christian Scientist faith during the, during an epidemic?

NAR: Oh, the 1918 flu.

INT: Yes.

NAR: Epidemic in Boston.

INT: Right, so do you, did you see a correlation there about how you should act?

NAR: Yes I did, I really did. Because in Boston in 1918 my mother saw only what she thought were the doctors and the ambulances and the hearses and what she called the

crazy Christian Scientists, that's right, who would get up and go to their Wednesday night services and their Sunday morning services with apparently no fear at all. And that's why she was attracted, right, to go into the Mother Church in Boston and listen to what they had to say. That's what started her becoming interested in something like Science. I've never joined the Church but I do believe in the straight validity of their thinking. And because they have so little fear in their lives, because of the tremendous emphasis that man is spiritual and not a material being, you see, this helped them enormously in this kind of a thing. Maybe it's a fatalism that they are really teaching, too. But it's a very definite feeling that the destroying of a man is not the end of him. Perhaps very much, maybe more strongly than some groups.

INT: Did you find this incident more or less frightening than a war, like you have mentioned wars in conjunction with it, or epidemics, the epidemic back then, or a flood or a hurricane?

NAR: Well, I've known some brief things. I was in a sort of tornado once in Kansas. And I was in a hurricane in Massachusetts when I grew up. It might have been 1939. They were momentarily very frightening. World War II was very sad because the months went on and it was nothing in my lifetime sadder than to have someone get a letter or the telegram or the call. And the boy I went swimming with, summers with the blond hair and the blue eyes, Junni McQuinin, just wasn't alive any more. He wasn't in the world. He was lost and never found. This was something I won't ever forget or nor will I ever forget people who lost people. It was a, it was such an enormous long standing loss, you know, the months went on. So this was a much briefer kind of experience. It, but it was an experience a, when I imagined the explosion a real terror came over me. Almost a disbelief that we, mankind, could have done something like this that might have destroyed part of an entire state of Pennsylvania. There was almost no words for that.

INT: So it was potentially worse because it was closer to you, could you say that?

NAR: Yeah, um, hum.

INT: Did any TV shows or movies or books or stories come to mind?

NAR: I wished I had seen the China Syndrome. That movie, but I didn't, so really no, I won't say any.

INT: Would you like to see the China Syndrome?

NAR: Yes, I would now.

INT: Did you find yourself singing any songs, or lyrics? Did they reoccur in your mind?

NAR: Not really. I think that from time to time, maybe riding my bike around, something like that going back and forth to work. I often sing something, a hymn or something before I get to work. I kind of sing a few hymns, you know, from our church. I think probably yes after reading something like that as I start out to get to work. I probably would do what I call a little spiritual thinking, a little spiritual work which would have included singing. Maybe just briefly.

INT: Can you think of any particular one?

NAR: Well I don't know its title; it's something I've sung in Sunday school since I was very young. So I would have sung the most familiar one or two from Sunday school. That's right. Again a kind a kind of a psychological, I suppose, anchor line that I wouldn't have thought of until you asked me, Martha.

INT: At the time did you have any daydreams, or fantasizing?

NAR: Only the fantasizing that we mentioned. After reading the newspaper or hearing the news, I think we all fantasized of what might happen, was going to happen, and hoped wouldn't happen. But beyond that no, no daydreams or fantasizing anywhere out of the ordinary.

INT: Did you have any sleeping dreams?

NAR: No, I don't I did.

INT: Was your sleep disturbed in anyway?

NAR: No, it really was not.

INT: Since then, have you had any sleeping dreams or daydreams or your sleep disturbed?

NAR: No, I haven't.

INT: What jokes did you hear about radiation or Three Mile Island?

NAR: Oh, I liked the best ones from the college. I liked the T-Shirts (laughing). I liked the T-shirts because I thought “Boy that’s the way to live your life and end your life” and I don’t remember some of the slogans but I thought they were really, really very funny. If you reminded me of a couple I thought there were a couple that were really very good. There was...

INT: “Hell no, we don’t glow”

NAR: Yeah, I really liked that (laughing).

INT: I liked uh, Three point five children or something like that?

NAR: Uh, yeah, yeah, that didn’t strike me quite as funny as I liked “Hell no, I wont glow”. I liked it a lot because I thought “Wow, this is man” You know, over the cliff and down in the pit and he still can find a joke. I thought it was healthy, yeah, students designing the T- shirts and living with whatever.

INT: Why do you think they were joking?

NAR: Well, I think that you get to a point of stress and fear that you have .to break it in some way so leave it to the kids to do it. I think that it was great that they did it, start to do something fun like the T-shirts and the marking and making a joke of it, you might as well, and I thought it was good. I liked it.

INT: What joking do you remember from other crisis, like Pearl Harbor or Kennedy assassinations, invasion of Cambodia, would, do you remember hearing any?

NAR: Well I don’t remember any, any jokes from Cambodia. Vietnam and Cambodia to me are nothing but a pall of sober serious, sadness over them. I don’t recall anything funny about the Kennedy assassination. That was really, struck as pretty sad just because he was the hope of the youth in a way. I though that was very sad. What was the first one you mentioned?

INT: There was the, Pearl Harbor.

NAR: Well, Pearl Harbor, dreadful as it was in itself, there were some songs I think that came out of it. And sort of the fact that they, test pilots would mark up their airships, paint, you know, fat ladies all over it and have the fun of marking off their enemy ship. I mean it had the grim kind of humor but I still feel that they felt they had a chance. I mean I had a boyfriend who was a bomber over Germany and his letters were, they could be grim, they could be kind of, of anxiety ridden, but he always had a, or tried to have a pretty level keel, a healthy attitude. And he could always joke with the guys that he flew with. But I just don't recall any jokes from Vietnam or Cambodia or Korea. It just seemed like too much. World War II was the war that was supposed to be the last one. Cambodia, as I say, Vietnam, it just wasn't any fun anymore. I mean that just wasn't any fun. I don't recall anything funny said about that, any jokes, nothing. We just couldn't make light of it. We were too angry.

INT: Is there anything else that you would like to say about all of this?

NAR: Wow, no. I've done more thinking in this hour than I have since it happened. In fact, the facts and the statistics of that I remembered what I never would have thought of was how did I see the bubble, did I have dreams, did I sing songs, I think that's very interesting, Martha. Because that I wouldn't have really, I wouldn't have been aware of or paid much attention to. And I think we did act differently those few days. We certainly did.

INT: Is there anything that stands out in your mind about acting differently?

NAR: Well, of course, I think it was a tremendous sense of relief and a, really a prayer went up I think, almost a universal prayer of Thanksgiving to God when the fact came through that really the bubble wasn't going to burst. That the danger was over and that people really were going to live. I mean the explosion wasn't going to happen. It was, you know, like a halleluiah.