

July 9, 1979

Occupation: Clerk, Cumberland County Court House (Government)

INT: Try to remember the way things were happening then, do you remember when you first heard that there might be a problem at Three Mile Island?

NAR: Yes, it was in here at work, I guess, was the first I had heard about it.

INT: Do you remember who you were talking to, or who might have informed you?

NAR: I had my niece works in the office and she and I were talking about it at first.

INT: Are you willing to tell us what you were talking about?

NAR: Gee, I don't remember. I really don't remember because like I said I had just started to work here and of course I was just learning some of the things in the office and I was hired to work on the board of election with the absentee ballots, and of course this brought back over to the Commissioners office because of the emergency.

INT: So you hadn't even gotten settled into one job when you?

NAR: No, I really hadn't.

INT: Right away it affected your job?

NAR: Right.

INT: When you first heard about it did you feel it was serious or?

NAR: No, I really didn't, I really wasn't that concerned at first.

INT: Did that change?

NAR: Yes, I got quite concerned, I have a grand daughter which at that time was only about 8 months old I guess, and I was concerned for her.

INT: Where is she living?

NAR: They live in Carlisle.

INT: What do you think; you say your relationship with the grandchild that was concerned particularly about the child, what made you concerned, what do you think made it more serious than it had seemed at the beginning?

NAR: Well, I think it was the things that you heard, mostly was what, that it did effect the children really a person of my age it wasn't, it too serious but for the children.

INT: Where were your (mumbled) did you look for more information?

NAR: Just from what I had heard in the paper and on the TV and

INT: You were watching television then?

NAR: Uh huh

INT: Were you listening to the radio?

NAR: Yes

INT: So you were following it fairly closely?

NAR: Uh huh

INT: Would you say that you were paying more attention to these than you usually do?

NAR: Yes definitely.

INT: Definitely how do you think they handled it?

NAR: Well I didn't think they were telling us everything that was going on, I didn't think we were hearing everything, of course that happens with a lot of things, you don't really know, everything that's behind it.

INT: Why did you think they would not be telling us everything?

NAR: Because of the Panic.

INT: Do you think there were worries about the panic?

NAR: Right, yes.

INT: Do you think they should have told us the truth?

NAR: Uh, I don't know, because as it happens so many people did panic, and

INT: What do you mean?

NAR: Well with the leaving, I think a lot of people left the area much before they would've really needed to

INT: Did you think about leaving the area?

NAR: Uh, I didn't at first but then as I said my son was in college, and then he called and he thought that I should go with my daughter because they were considering leaving because of the baby. But,

INT: So you thought about leaving?

NAR: Yes,

INT: Did you make any plans to do that?

NAR: No.

INT: Do you know where you would've gone?

NAR: No, we didn't make any definite plans however we had the papers here at work telling us the areas that we should go to. And I guess if it would've come to that we would've had to go we would've gone where the plans, were set because we had no definite plans. We had relatives in Ohio who called of course.

INT: They did call?

NAR: Yes, I think the people from the out lying areas were more concerned really sometimes from the people right here. They were getting more stories and I think they're stories were more exaggerated in the different areas.

INT: So you think the national media was something different from the n local?

NAR: Right.

INT: Do you feel they were more inaccurate?

NAR: I think they were more inaccurate, yes,

INT: How did you feel about people who did leave the area?

NAR: I really didn't think it was that necessary. I thought they left before they should have. Other than the people that were right there that they told to leave. I think people really panicked before they should have.

INT: You did have a sense that you would get the family together before you left?

NAR: Right.

INT: What do you think about, we talked about the media's handling of the situation, for instance distinctions between national and local sources, how do you think about government, how do you think they handled things and there you might want to make different levels, you're working at one level, of course you're brand new at it, and then there's the national government to worry about and so forth, do you have any feeling about their?

NAR: I thought it was handled pretty well.

INT: Did you?

NAR: Yes, I did,

INT: Was there anybody you felt was more trustworthy in terms of information, than other people?

NAR: Gee, I don't know. I don't know. We thought that so many people were saying it was worse than what they thought it was. But then I thought with the president coming here. I thought that it wasn't quite as serious or they certainly would not have brought the president here.

INT: So that sort of reassured you, his presence here?

NAR: Yes, it really did. Because I don't think he would have come here if there would have been an immediate danger. I thought it was pretty nice that he came.

INT: What about metropolitan Edison? How do you think they handled it?

NAR: Well. I don know. I don't think we were told all that we should have been told at times.

INT: Why would they not tell us?

NAR; I don't know why they didn't. I've wondered about it different times. I really don't know.

INT; Do you think that the people in charge over there were in control of the situation?

NAR: I think they were.

INT: Basically?

NAR: Yes.

INT: Are they in control now?

NAR: Well, you don't hear too much about it anymore. I hope they are.

INT: Did you change any of your ordinary routines?

NAR: No.

INT: What sort of work were you doing here during all of it?

NAR: Mostly just answering phones.

INT: Did you have anything to observe there? What sort of calls were you getting?

NAR: Gee, I haven't really thought too much about this. It seems like it's been quite a long time.

INT: Well, it has been a long time.

NAR: Yeah. We were giving news releases and things, too. That's mainly what I was doing. When they would come up with news releases from downstairs we were calling the different radio stations.

INT: And giving them the news?

NAR: Yes.

INT: Did you have at any time any pictures in your mind of what was happening at tmi?

NAR: No. I had no idea.

INT: Anything about what might happen?

NAR: I don't know. I figured if it really, if this gas and everything escaped I figured it would just wipe us out. Really I didn't think we'd have much chance to get away.

INT: So you felt if it did happen it was a real threat? Is that the worst that could have happened over there? How do you think that would have affected the community and so forth?

NAR: I don't know what you mean.

INT: Well, if the worst had happened over there, what do you think would have happened here?

NAR: We just wouldn't be here anymore. It would have wiped everything out, I would imagine. I really have no idea how large an area.

INT: Did you have any sense of effects of radiation on life, and so forth?

NAR: No, really don't. I don't know that much about radiation.

INT: Do you think that anything that actually happened over there affected your health?

NAR: I don't think so.

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

NAR: No.

INT: Did you think about god during the incident at all?

NAR: Yeah. I think you always do in emergencies.

INT: Did you pray?

NAR: Yes.

INT: Are you willing to tell me what you prayed for?

NAR: Well, I think you just would more or less pray for guidance for the people who are working with the problem. And of course God's will. That's, that's about all there is. Whatever he has in mind for us.

INT: Did you go to a religious service during the event?

NAR: Not other than just regular church service.

INT: Was there anything there mentioned there?

NAR: Oh, yes.

INT: Are you willing to share that with us?

NAR: The minister prayed quite a bit about it. Of course there, the congregation was a lot less because people had gone.

INT: It was smaller?

NAR: Right. People had left the area.

INT: Would this be over in Enola?

NAR: Enola, yes.

INT: Of course you are closer in Enola than here, right?

NAR: Yeah.

INT: Or is it about the same?

NAR: No, I think it is what, about twelve or thirteen miles?

INT: We were talking about the fact, I think the fact that you had been at church and attendance was down and so forth. Did you consider that god was in any way instructing man in this situation?

NAR: Oh, I think you often think this way when anything happens but I don't know. I really don't think he was.

INT: You said you attended the religious service, that it was smaller. Did you feel better after you had done so?

NAR: Yes.

INT: Can you say why? Do you think it placed it in perspective, and how?

NAR: Well, I think once you go to church it always kind of makes you feel better afterwards. I don't know, it was in the minister's prayers and everything. It just, just made you feel better.

INT: Did you, does your faith have any notion about the rightness or wrongness of, oh our relation to technology about whether or not we would be doing something with atomic power?

NAR: No.

INT: Do you think religious persons or institutions should take public stands on such issues?

NAR: Oh, I guess they should because they are concerned about the people in the world and I think they should, yes.

INT: Do you feel there is any position they should take at this point?

NAR: I don't know what they could really do.

INT: I was i guess i was really sort of addressing a question that comes up some what later in the questionnaire. Do you have an opinion about nuclear power now? Has this incident done anything in that respect? Has it affected you in any great way?

NAR: Not really. I don't know that much about it, so I just really don't think that much about it.

INT: Did you know that there was a reactor at Three Mile Island before this?

NAR: Yes, I did. My brother worked down there. He's an electrician. And I really did but I just never thought too much about it.

INT: Do you know how far away it is from us?

NAR: No.

INT: Did you have any day dreams of any kind that you remember?

NAR: No.

INT: Did you have any sleeping dreams?

NAR: No.

INT: Was your sleep disturbed in any way?

NAR: I don't think so.

INT: Did you observe changes in people around you?

NAR: Some people were very upset over it. I think it was mostly people concerned about children, those that have younger children around. It was all you heard, no matter where you went. Everyone was talking about it.

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

NAR: Oh, it may have some. People have a way of getting upset in an emergency and then forgetting it soon afterwards it seems. I can say a lot of people have lasting thoughts about it.

INT: Did it change you in any lasting way?

NAR: I don't think so.

INT: Did you hear any jokes or such things about Three Mile Island or about radiation?

NAR: I don't think jokes, no. They had a lot of things on T shirts it seemed I think the T shirt business boomed there for while. But I don't think I really heard any jokes. I think it was more of a serious thing really.

INT: So people were not joking about it much?

NAR: No.

INT: Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about all of this? What have I missed?

NAR: Gee, I don't know. I think a lot of people really; I think a lot of people say they got tired of hearing about it. It seemed, and you still do, as soon as you mention it. "Oh, I am just tired of hearing it." And yet I guess it's something you really should be more concerned about than. Yet you shouldn't be tired of it and you should be concerned.

INT: Why is that?

NAR: Well, it could happen again. It could be a lot more serious the next time.

INT: Should we make it safer? I mean is there?

NAR: I think it should be made safer, yes But I don't know because I really know nothing about it.

INT: Sure. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

NAR: I don't think so.