

August 1, 1979

Occupation: Secretary

INTERVIEWER: When did you first hear about the Three Mile Island?

NARRATOR: I guess it was on my way to work Friday morning, March the 30<sup>th</sup>.

INT: Friday Morning?

NAR: When it first came over the news I think it was Friday morning.

INT: Did you know that there was a reactor there before this incident occurred?

NAR: Not being familiar with it, no, not really.

INT: Did you know it was called Three Mile Island?

NAR: Oh yes I had a nephew that had helped to build it, or was working as an electrician down there several years ago.

INT: So you knew it was there?

NAR: Oh yes.

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

NAR: probably 25 miles.

INT: Do you mean 25 driving miles or as the crow flies?

NAR: I think driving miles.

INT: Do you have any idea how far it is as the crow flies?

NAR: I think it's only 22 then It's a couple miles shorter.

INT: You said you heard it from the radio? Do you remember what station it was on when you first heard about it?

NAR: Probably Harrisburg. WHP.

INT: That's the station you listen to when you drive from and to work?

NAR: Either that or the Carlisle WHYL. It was on both of them.

INT: What did you think about it when you first heard about it?

NAR: It really didn't bother me too much.

INT: Did you think it was serious – at that time, right at the beginning, did you think it was serious?

NAR: I don't think I really understood what was happening. I mean how severe it could have been at the first time I heard it.

INT: Did you try to find out any more information right then?

NAR: When we got to work we all discussed it then.

INT: What was the reaction here at work, what did the people think about it ?

NAR: Most of us rather calm. And thinking, if we do have to go, what do we take—your mind wonders—what what's in the attic, what's in the basement, what's in this room or that room that is you would have to leave your home.

INT: So by that Friday you were aware that there might be a possibility that we'd all have to go?

NAR: That's what the news kept saying, be thinking about being prepared.

INT: When did you first think it was, or did you ever think it was a particularly serious situation at any time?

NAR: Not so that I got frantic about it, no.

INT: So throughout the entire thing you weren't frantic at all?

NAR: Maybe just for a moment or two, but relaxed... No, I was never really scared.

INT: Did you listen to the radio more often during that time than you usually do?

NAR: We turned it up a little higher, we always have the radio on here at work, but we did turn it up to make sure we would get all of the news.

INT: Did you listen to particular station, is there that you wanted to listen to more than others?

NAR: No, I think that was the WHP station in Harrisburg.

INT: Why did you listen to that one more than any other station?

NAR: Well we pick it up real good, inside we just have a small radio and it seems to come through. And they were giving all the reports that they had.

INT: How do you feel that the media, since we're talking about it, and the radio and things like that, how do you feel they handled the whole situation?

NAR: I think rather well. [Interruption] I don't really know how to answer that. I think they gave the information they had and I think the majority of the news people –now we did watch it on TV at home and so forth. I think the majority of them tried to keep the people calm rather than excite them and get them into a frenzy that nobody knew what they were doing.

INT: Can you compare the difference between the television people and the radio people, did you have any thoughts about the way that they handled it?

NAR: Not really. No, I think that they gave the news as they received it.

INT: Was there any one particular source of news that you paid more attention to, felt most comfortable with –the newspaper, the Television or the radio?

NAR: I think after Mr. Denton arrived at the scene we tried to always listen in and I imagine he was on most of the TV stations. There again, I think the Harrisburg stations being that close carried a good...

INT: How about the government, how do you think the government handled the entire situation at Three Mile Island?

NAR: I think that they did the best they could. The new governor was in. He had just been in a couple of months. I think he had a burden on his shoulders, a responsibility for the entire area. And I think that he did what he felt was best and tried not to frighten the people. They called together the commissioners and the people in Civil Defense and tried to train them in what would happen or how an evacuation would be handled. I might say here I was much more relieved after I talked to a...the wife of one of the civil defense leaders.

INT: Here in Carlisle?

NAR: Here in Carlisle, and she said she wasn't leaving her home and she wasn't that frightened because her husband, I guess, had assured her –he was at a meeting every night and every night almost –and had assured her that they were using Carlisle as an evacuation point to bring the people here so why should we rush around trying to think we're going to leave when all of the leaders around were planning to use Carlisle to bring in extra people here if they had to evacuate. So I was much more relieved and felt comfortable knowing this. Although the general public, this was not let out to the general public at that time.

INT: Do you think it should have been?

NAR: I think it may have calmed some of the people that got real excited and left immediately.

INT: Do you know people who got excited and left?

NAR: Yes, I do.

INT: Do you live right in Carlisle?

NAR: No. I live north of Carlisle about 2 miles.

INT: Up in Carlisle Springs?

NAR: Near Carlisle Springs, on this side of Carlisle Springs.

INT: Could you make any sort of a generalization about those people who did get frightened and left? Were there mostly people with young children or were they all sorts of people?

NAR: All sorts.

INT: Do you have any idea how many of them or how many families got up and left?

NAR: There was only about 3 families I was familiar with that I know definitely left for that reason.

INT: Do you know where they went?

NAR: Farther north to relatives and so forth.

INT: Were they all families with children?

NAR: No.

INT: Were they older or younger people?

NAR: Middle-aged and the one family had younger children but they took a neighbor boy that was staying alone. His mother was camping with some of the children at a scout group. And they couldn't see them...well he was 14-15, being there alone. And he happened to be our paper boy. And they took him without any provision—who was going to deliver papers, the whole area was without a paper. We were rather upset about that because his mother, when she came back, would not have run like that. But the neighbors I guess felt responsible and didn't know what to do, so they took him and left.

INT: What do you think about those people who left? Do you think that they acted prematurely or that?

NAR: They probably didn't think so, but when I mentioned to my husband about—I mean we have a camper that, you know someone had mentioned to me, why don't you just load that up, if that was me I'd load that up and head north. And when I told him, he said, "If we're going to die, we're going to do it right here." I'm not afraid to die and I'm not worried about it if it were next door okay.

INT: So your husband was in favor of staying?

NAR: Umhum, oh yes.

INT: These ideas you had about staying, they were all formulated after you had talked to your...?

NAR: No, no, not really. We had a son living in Middletown, I was concerned from him. I have another son working in Harrisburg and his family lives in the Carlisle area. And a third son was away at college. They did send them home, because they were 15 miles from there. And my son in Middletown, he and his wife did leave. But they're like 2 mile from it. And I was concerned; very concerned for them. But not really for myself. Because they came and stayed with us.

INT: Here in Carlisle?

NAR: Umhum, yes.

INT: So they evacuated to Carlisle?

NAR: Yes.

INT: But had you evacuated , you would have taken them with you?

NAR: Probably, yes.

INT: Okay well as long as we are talking about leaving the area, did you make any preparations for leaving, sort of precautionary preparations for leaving?

NAR: The only thing, I was to get gas that evening and I did go at noon time and filled it.

INT: On Friday?

NAR: Umhum(yes). On my way home I would have normally have gotten the car filled with gas, so I did go at noon when I went to do the banking or something, but I took the car to the service station and filled it up with gas. But that was the only thing I did.

INT: You didn't pack up anything in the house or anything?

NAR: No, nothing.

INT: So at no time you never made any further preparations?

NAR: No.

INT: If you had decided to leave, what would you have taken with you?

NAR: Probably important papers that we keep together. Some clothing, some food and water—I mean enough—a picnic basket or something like that.

INT: You would have gone in your camper or would you have gone in your car?

NAR: Probably in the car or the truck, one or the other.

INT: You wouldn't have gone in your camper?

NAR: No.

INT: What kind of camper is it? A motor home or what?

NAR: The one we have now is but the one we had then was a pull one.

INT: Pardon?

NAR: It was just a travel trailer.

INT: So you would leave that behind?

NAR: I think so.

INT: Why?

NAR: Well if we would have to leave fast we could have gone faster just in a... the roads would have been so crowded that it would have been more simple to take one of the vehicles—the truck or the car.

INT: And you had left, had you evacuated, where would you have gone?

NAR: Well we have relatives farther north, we have relatives in Florida. In fact, she was hysterical and called and wanted her parents, which is my in-law—and her son, who lives in Carlisle and his family; she said “All of you, just get on a plane and get down here, I've got room for all of you.” But I think the news media played it up much worse farther

away in the other states. We have relatives in Michigan and they too, thought that it was just a disaster area. I think the news stressed it so much more in other states.

INT: Why do you think there was that difference? It's kind of fascinating, you know the...?

NAR: I don't know but everyone called. I mean, from the other areas, and they...but I think too, when there's a hurricane down south, we hear a lot more about it then their neighboring towns, perhaps. I mean, each news keeps adding on to it or something...I don't know why, but it seems that way.

INT: Do you think that they're suppressing it here in the area or do you think they blew it up out of the area?

NAR: I think they blew it up a little more. I don't think they mean to suppress it here. I don't know. That's the way I understand it.

INT: Is this a criticism then that you would have of the news media, that they shouldn't be quite as...?

NAR: I think so, yes.

INT: What do you think they could do in order to alleviate that kind of problem, to fix it up in some way?

NAR: I have no idea.

INT: Are you glad that you didn't leave, or do you think back on it sometimes and think that maybe you should have gone?

NAR: No reason to have gone, until it would have gotten worse.

INT: We talked a minute ago about how the media handles it and a little bit about the government and how they handled the situation at the Three Mile Island? What about the industry—Metropolitan Edison, how do you think they handled the whole situation?

NAR: Well the way you read and hear and so forth, they suppressed it for a couple of days and it should have been at least given to the NRC immediately.

INT: Do you have any feelings about MET ED or any feelings about the NRC or opinions? Any kind of constructive criticism or...?

NAR: Even in just this week the water that was again, was allowed to flow into the Susquehanna without being tested. I mean, why they keep doing things without letting the news or informing the proper authorities. I don't know. So it seems someone is at fault.

INT: Is there anybody that you trusted or found more reliable than anyone else? Is there anyone that you particularly listened to?

NAR: You mean the news...?

INT: Well in any capacity. Was there any individual or any organization or anything like that you found, that you trusted in more than anyone else? Someone that you were listening to?

NAR: Not really. Like I said, Harold Denton. I mean, I think he had a way of presenting. Even watching the people around him when he had his conferences, that he seemed to have just an air about him that could calm the people. And here reporters would ask him questions. I mean he never failed to try to answer them. And he didn't stall a long time and he seemed like he really could answer almost immediately. And he seemed very reliable, that you could depend on him.

INT: Was there anybody, sort of on the flip side of this, or anything that you found particularly unreliable or someone that you mistrusted that you didn't believe?

NAR: Not really, no.

INT: Made you nervous?

NAR: No, no.

INT: So almost everyone involved in the situation then you found was...?

NAR: Well if there was somebody then I just didn't listen to them. Is that what you mean?

INT: Was there anyone that you decided not to listen to?

NAR: No not really, no. I didn't listen to that many, it was the one or 2 stations that we listened to and the people you talk with, the young lady that I spoke with was really reassuring.

INT: The wife of the civil defense...?

NAR: Right.

INT: Was he part of the county commissioners or was he part of...was he a volunteer civil defense person?

NAR: I think he's volunteer. But she was expecting her first child in like 2 months—a month and a half—and that's one reason, I had forgotten that earlier. And one reason I



had asked her if she was leaving and she said, no she wasn't leaving. And then she told me why. But in...I won't say in secret, but in their various meetings with the civil defense and all on the commissioners and so forth like that. Would you want to go back to the other...?

INT: She was expecting then, in 2 months? So she decided on the basis on what her husband had told her in the meetings that everything was all right?

NAR: Umhum (yes).

INT: Well do you feel, in your own mind, that those people who were in charge over there at Three Mile Island, do you think that they were in control of the situation right there at the beginning?

NAR: No. They must not have been.

INT: What was it that made you uneasy about it—the whole situation?

NAR: Well nuclear explosion—I mean that would wipe out everyone. I know we're only human and that would frighten you to some extent. You didn't know if the end was here today or tomorrow or until they had that completely under control and the bubble dissolved and so forth.

INT: Do you think that they are in control now?

NAR: I don't know, but it really doesn't worry me that much.

INT: What do you mean, it doesn't bother you particularly?

NAR: Well there's nothing really I can do about it, so I'm not afraid of it.

INT: You're not afraid of the nuclear plant there?

NAR: No.

INT: Do you feel at all helpless?

NAR: Well helpless I guess in the fact that I can't do anything about it.

INT: Would you prefer that it not be there or do you think it's a good thing that it is there?

NAR: I think operated properly we need it for energy.

INT: Do you feel that it is being operated properly?

NAR: On my own, I do not know, but it appears it isn't or these things would not be happening.

INT: If a nuclear power plant were to be built here in Carlisle, would you stay or would leave or would you protest it's opening or would you welcome it's coming here? How would you feel about it?

NAR: I think with one that close as Middletown, I don't believe that they would think of building another so close to it.

INT: Of course they do have Peach Bottom which is also very close to Three Mile Island, but just hypothetically, how would you personally react to building another one?

NAR: I don't really know what I... I mean if that really happened I imagine that we would protest. Them even starting to build it, I'll put it that way, and not wait until they had built it and then try to...

INT: So you would be personally against them building one right here in town?

NAR: I would imagine so.

INT: Would you be for or against their opening up Three Mile Island again?

NAR: Is it completely closed, that's what...or is there one that's still working?

INT: No they're both shut down.

NAR: They are completely shut down?

INT: Yeah. They're about to open up reactor number one, or within a year they will have it open. Plan to have it open.

NAR: I think that before they do open it, that the Nuclear Regulatory Commissioner—whoever—should be in charge of inspecting, making certain that everything passes a good inspection before it is open. That would be my thought. But it's there—all that money has been spent on it. If they don't open that they'll build another one somewhere else, so they've already got that money in that one.

INT: Of all the things that happened, what worried you the most? In that situation during TMI?

NAR: I think I was more concerned for my family that were close to it. I think that really upset me more—not upset me, but I'd say concerned. I was unable to get through on the telephone because of all the circuits being tied up and we hadn't heard anything from them. Until late Friday evening. They called us and my son wasn't the least bit upset. Well why should I leave and so forth. But his wife was quite upset so they did.

INT: So they left basically on her account?

NAR: I think he would have too but I don't think he was that anxious. Because there were other people that were still staying there. But they did go back on Saturday to get more clothing.

INT: And how long did they eventually stay in Carlisle?

NAR: Carlisle and Mechanicsburg—they went with some other relatives then too—a week.

INT: So they didn't go back to Middletown until the following Friday?

NAR: That's right.

INT: Do you have any kind of mental pictures about what was happening at Three Mile Island or what might happen? Might have happened?

NAR: The only thing that I pictured was maybe like seeing the large cloud like with the bombing of Hiroshima and so forth. That was the only thing that I could visualize. That large mushroom type thing. As an explosion, it is that what you mean?

INT: Was there anything else that you thought about, you know, like what was going on at the time?

NAR: Not really, I couldn't even picture what the control room or anything like that would be like until I had seen it on TV then on different times. And since that they've had, they'll go into much more detail and show you what's it's really like. But I had no idea. Why someone couldn't just go push a switch; but it wasn't that easy, I mean I had never seen anything like that. Toured any plant or anything like that.

INT: Have you ever been there to Three Mile Island or Peach Bottom?

NAR: No, no.

INT: Do you think that anything that happened at TMI might have affected your health in anyway?

NAR: I don't think so, I hadn't thought that much about it, but I don't believe. You mean me personally?

INT: UUHM (yes)

NAR: In breathing or...no, I don't think so.

INT: Do you think it might have any kinds of long range effects on your health, say in 20 or 30 years?

NAR: I can't see that it would. They say it may, but I can't see that it would.

INT: What do you mean, that they think that it might and you think that it wouldn't?

NAR: Well, the...organization...but I know medically and so forth, they say that this may show up in 20 years, with cancer and so forth. But I'm not sure how they could say for sure that it came from that. I mean even with all the interviews with the people now living in Middletown and tests and so forth. I don't know that they can pinpoint and say that it definitely came from the TMI.

INT: So, you don't feel at all worried about your own health or the health of your family?

NAR: No

INT: Do you have any concern at all about the food or the milk produced in the area?

NAR: No because that must pass; milk must pass government inspections. My husband was a milkman for many years and I know that they must go through, I mean that the milk must be tested and approved and everything like that before it's put on the market.

INT: So you never stopped drinking milk or anything else?

NAR: No.

INT: Do you think they're any aspects of the community that might have been affected by TMI? Can you see anything that happened?

NAR: Well only heresy. They say the tourists are not coming to Pennsylvania like they had other years. The Harrisburg area—the motels, the hotels, have lost. I mean this is from kind of a little survey that we made here through the office at...and through the tourists council that we made here through the office they are not getting the people from that area. Maybe not at this point now, for that reason, but earlier.

INT: At this point why do you think...?

NAR: I think it's the gas now.

INT: It's more the gas now than it was with TMI?

NAR: I think so.

INT: Do you have any copies of the little survey that you did and might I have one?

NAR: Not really, I think it was just by telephone calls and we didn't publish anything about it.

INT: So it was an informal sort of thing?

NAR: Right.

INT: Do you have any kind of information that I might be able to have about how people felt about this or do you have a sense of what was going on—was it an impact here in Carlisle as much it was it...?

NAR: Mostly the Harrisburg area.

INT: So here Carlisle did not particularly suffer?

NAR: Well a lot of people, when they're touring the Harrisburg area, will use the motels in the Carlisle area, between Carlisle and Harrisburg...

INT: So those people reported that they're...?

NAR: I think , because of the 81 and also the turnpike here. People will exit here and stay and travel to the other areas.

INT: So they did report a drop off at that point?

NAR: I think there was one large convention cancelled, but I just heard them talk about it.

INT: It was a hardware convention or something...

NAR: I remember at the time; them talking and saying that that cancelled because of TMI.

INT: Did you picture in your mind at all any affects of radiation for instance, on life around you?

NAR: Not really, the only thing that I thought about, too—when they were saying about people evacuating. Even, thinking, even in that general area there a lot of farmers. How could they take all for their animals and so forth? And I'm sure had it been us, we wouldn't have felt like leaving and leaving our livelihood just there to die. And as far as what could you do with a whole broke of cattle? And even some people talked about their dogs and their cats, and I mean, what... You can't just load up all your animals and take them, so they would refuse to leave, and then stay with them. But what would have... the only thing, we what if people do run and here's 50 cattle running over the hills—they'll starve to death or what do you do in a case like that? I thought of things like the thinking and wondering what was going through their mind, I think.

INT: A little bit earlier we were talking about life and death and survival for this thing. Did you ever think about your own death through this incident?

NAR: I imagine. Yes, I think. If we were to...if there would be an explosion or something like that, I think that it would be just like that. That's what we study and practice and read about that the second coming is going, and when life is over here and it couldn't be any different. If you're a professed Christian and believe, and you're life's taken, it's only one step into the next one so why be so concerned?

INT: Well as long as we're talking about this, did you think about God during the incident?

NAR: Why certainly. But then I always try to think about Him.

INT: Did you think about him more now?

NAR: I imagine, yes, I would think.

INT: Did you pray?

NAR: Yes.

INT: What did you pray for?

NAR: Just for everyone's safety. That they could have it under control there and that they could be guided to do the right things—the ones who were in control. Because, I also

thought about the people that were right there and the danger they were in. If we, 25 miles away, were in danger then what about the people that were right in that plant?

INT: Well how did God figure in to all of this or does he?

NAR: Yes, He's our maker and He controls everything and if we have faith and believe He can control that and I think he did.

INT: Do you think that he intervened and helped in the TMI incident or do you think that perhaps he may have sent this as a sign or anything or... ?

NAR: I don't know that. We're not to know those things but I feel that He did control it, yes. And it may, if it brought people to realize that life isn't theirs and that it can be wiped out just like that, maybe was as a sign, a lesson to us. I don't know.

INT: Did you think about any of that during this time?

NAR: Oh yes.

INT: One of the professors on our project is the professor of religion and he's very interested to see how people thought about god at this time. He's kind of interested in finding out if, for instance, you thought of any bible stories or events or sayings.. .did they cross your mind during this time?

NAR: No, except He controls all things, He created the earth and He gave everyone the abilities—the scientists and the... to discover and produce these things.

INT: One of the things that you mentioned before was the idea of the second coming. Did that, was that something in your mind at the time of TMI?

NAR: Well if... I think during the time of the bombing of Japan and so forth and I can remember parts of it, the people said, you know, if it...if we are bombed, I mean, we don't know how it's to happen. Maybe it's going to be something like that. That a human accident that, I don't mean it is to say that it's going to be an accident, but we just don't know when it's going to be. And it could come that suddenly, too. And we know it won't be by water, but it could be by fire. An explosion would be fire. So I don't know how to explain it, but that's the way I feel.

INT: Did the idea of Satan and the last judgment come in? You were talking about the end of the world.

NAR: Well that's to be a part of it but I don't know that I actually thought of that.

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

NAR: Just our regular services that we would.

INT: Did anybody there talk about TMI?

NAR: Yes. It was mentioned and I think in the Sunday school service the young man who prayed was thankful that we were able to be there and that those in charge would be guided and also our minister mentioned it and you know.. .and I'm sure afterwards we all talked of it just in our general conversations to each other.

INT: What church was it that you attended?

NAR: Wagoner's United Methodist.

INT: That's in Wagner's Gap, up towards..?

NAR: It's on the Long Scout Road, but it's...

INT: I'm still learning where these are.

NAR: Yeah, it's the Long Scout Road but it's the Wagner's Church.

INT: Were there any more people there than usual that Sunday?

NAR: There may have been a few, but not...

INT: There weren't any fewer people?

NAR: No.

INT: Did the attendance at that service change your thoughts or your feelings at all about this whole problem?

NAR: No, not that I remember anything specific.

INT: It didn't recast your ideas in any way? (no verbal response) Does your own faith, for instance, say anything about the rightness or the wrongness of man's desire to use or to control atomic power? I really don't know how to answer. As I said before, I think has given some people the ability to discover these things and to use the mind we're human and we make mistakes and I guess that's really what it boiled down to.

INT: Do you think we should use them or do you think that we shouldn't use them?

NAR: I think we should. I think that's why He has allowed us to find these things and to produce them.

INT: Do you think that religious persons or religious institutions should make any kind of a public stand either for or against the human development and use of atomic power; should they take any kind of a position publicly?

NAR: You mean as a Religious rather than as individuals and so forth?

INT: No, as a church or as representatives of religious institutions. Do you think that religion has organized religious institutions that in some way take a stand on it and saying, "no we should not do this," or "yes we should."?

NAR: I don't know that that's necessary. No, I don't. As a group like that, I don't see that; we have, not on that particular but other things that the church maybe they've had a questionnaire or something that sent to the government on different things, but I don't think in this particular one anything was done and I don't see that's it's necessary to say "stop it, I don't think you need to go ahead with it" and so forth.

INT: I guess it was really whether a religious institution has a particular place in this. Do you think that then religious institutions shouldn't take a stand on this necessarily, that's it's up to individuals but not on any sort of religious ground to take a stand on this?

NAR: Not as the institution, no I don't think that that needs to be.

INT: Did you feel any kind of certain responsibilities during this incident? Any kind of special responsibilities towards your family, towards your job, towards other people in the community?

NAR: Thinking that if people were to be evacuated to our area, how many could we be responsible for; you know, would I be willing to open my home to additional, if we had the room and so forth. I think I thought of those kind of things, yes.

INT: How about towards your job or anything like that, did you feel like you had any special responsibilities during this time?

NAR: Okay, the congressman's office is in here too, as you're aware—Congressman Goodling. And they had called and asked if people would be willing to stand by the phones—have a phone answering service to answer questions and so forth. And we called different groups we could think of—clubs, organizations—would they be willing, if this were necessary that evening or Saturday to man a phone. I think they were going to set it up at the empty Carlisle Barracks. And if we could think of any groups that would be willing that give us their names that we could call them. That they too would take their turns at answering the phones and so forth.

INT: Is Congressman Goodling's office here always or this is a headquarters or this is this area's office?

NAR: This is one of the offices. He also has one in York and Mechanicsburg and Camp Hill and so forth.

INT: What was done, by the way with phone answering service?

NAR: It was found it wasn't necessary then, but this was just incase they were going to set one up and they didn't.

INT: Was your job or your work in any way affected by TMI?

NAR: Not really. We were—there's only 3 of us—and we were thinking if we closed down or whatever, you know, then we'd all just leave. But we didn't have to.

INT: Did you have any ideas, just in general, about how it would be best to behave in a situation like this?

NAR: Well it's best to try to keep calm and keep your senses and not let one person that's quite upset annoy you. Try to remain calm and calm other people, if you can.

INT: Were there people who were not remaining calm?

NAR: Oh yes.

INT: Here in Carlisle?

NAR: Yes, in stores, and everywhere you went I think you could see some of them were very excited. And one family with 2 small children, she actually packed suit cases with all their clothes, had them in the car, and I think she had a thermos of water or juice or something for the children, and their snacks—had everything packed. And she kept it that way for a week.

INT: But they never did take off?

NAR: No, but they have sons in New York State and they even had mapped out back roads where they could—instead of traveling the major highways where it would have been just bumper to bumper, they had coursed a smaller roads so that they could bypass some of the larger ones. But she was really frightened.



INT: What do you think would have happened had they called an evacuation, how do you think it all would have worked?

NAR: I really don't know. I think that with all the civil defense people they were going to try to have enough stationed everywhere to get in an orderly way to do it. They had buses lined up, they had....

NAR: It's just like in school when you were practicing the fire drills, you hope it never happens, but it's best to have a plan ready. And I think this is what it brought to mind, that they, in case of any other kind of disaster and people had to leave the area, at least they've got plans and things made now.

INT: Did you think it would be a successful evacuation or did you feel uneasy about it?

NAR: No, I think that with all the meetings they were having, the plans that were made and the large territory that it covered, the thousands of people that a lot of planning went into it; and I think it could have been successful had it been necessary.

INT: You mentioned the idea though of being bumper to bumper: Did that frighten you: Is it something that you thought about?

NAR: Not really, because we would have been one family, everyone else would have been the same way.

INT: But being bumper to bumper in a situation where you're...?

NAR: Yeah, it would be nerve racking, I'm certain. You would have really have had to try your patience and calmness then. But I think if we had been told that's what we had to do, then we would have done it. But on our own we were not going to.

INT: At what point would you have evacuated?

NAR: Only if we had been ordered to do so.

INT: Had the evacuation order come for the 5 mile radius would you have gone?

NAR: No.

INT: If it had come to the 10 mile would you have gone?

NAR: I don't think so.

INT: Fifteen miles?

NAR: I doubt it.

INT: And if it had come for the 20 mile radius?

NAR: Probably, because I think, as you said, as the crow flies, we'd had been 22 mile or something like that.

INT: And so if it had gone out to the 20 mile radius and we had been 2 miles outside that, you would have gone even so?

NAR: If everyone else would be going, we probably would too, but...

INT: Okay, I was just kind of curious to see what point...

NAR: I know.

INT: Because some people thought that if it were called to the 5 mile radius that people out to 50 miles would have gone.

NAR: I'm sure there are some that would because some did go even though all that were evacuated was the pregnant women and school children.

INT: Do you have any idea how many people from Carlisle left?

NAR: No, I don't.

INT: What's your impression? About how many people left?

NAR: I imagine a couple of hundred did. I have no idea, that's just a wild guess.

INT: But in terms of the total population do you think that very few, or...?

NAR: Yes, I do.

INT: Or do you think it was a substantial number?

NAR: I'm not counting the college kids because most of them...they could go home or sent home.

INT: But apart from the college kids?

NAR: No, I don't think there was...well that would be maybe one or two percent.

INT: Very small number?

NAR: Umhum (yes)

INT: At the time that this happened, we're almost finished here, at the time that this happened, did this particular incident bring to your mind any past experiences or past events to make you think, "wow this is just like" something?

NAR: Well I was just in school when Pearl Harbor happened and then we didn't have a radio. We heard about it the next day when I went to school. And maybe thinking of and seeing movies since that—how that happened—maybe thinking of disaster in terms like that, of a very frightening thing that...happened. But that would be the only, you know, thinking—something that happened far from here. But nothing close by that I can ever remember.

INT: How old were you when Pearl Harbor happened, do you remember?

NAR: About thirteen or something like that; twelve or thirteen, around there.

INT: You also mentioned the bombing of Hiroshima, was this another thing that...?

NAR: Yes, seeing pictures of that since, how that had.. I mean it was hard to imagine that that many people were killed so quickly. It's beyond your imagination, almost. But I mean I can still picture seeing either the movie or something like that of the mushroom cloud. And when I thought of Three Mile Island, The only thing, if it was an explosion was all I could visualize was maybe that.

INT: Do you think that this incident was any more or less frightening that something like a flood or a hurricane or even a war?

NAR: We a lot of times.. .in a flood, a warning and you car get out. Where when this happened the way it did when we first got the news, I mean. . . It could have gone the other way any minute, the way that it was described to us. I'll put it that way. I mean, the bubble is going down or it isn't going down and so forth like that. So I think a lot of times with the instruments they have now they can predict the hurricane ahead of time that people can try to get out of the area. And we know that that's not something that stops immediately I mean, that's...if you're in the path of that it keeps coming. The same way with the flood,

INT: So do you think that...?

NAR: I mean in comparison, that's not making it very clear, but...

INT: Which did you find more frightening? Would you rather go through this again than say hurricane Agnus? Or vice versa?

NAR: I don't want to go through either one of them. (LAUGHING)

INT: But if you had to go through one of them, which would you choose?

NAR: Well we were very fortunate (unintelligible phrase) in the flood area, we were not affected. Very, very fortunate. We were close to it, but...it was predicted ahead that this was coming you know, and people did move out and we had no...there were people in our general area that had to get out. But they knew and they did. Now that doesn't make sense because they told us that we might have to evacuate too, with TMI. But we didn't know if that was going to explode or not, where a flood coming you know that it's not going to stop. It's coming in your path and better get out.

INT: Do you find that more reassuring in a way?

NAR: I think so, umhum (yes)

INT: That you know it's coming and you can deal with it or...?

NAR: Umhum (yes).

INT: Did you feel more comfortable, well we don't know if it's going to happen so lets just sit tight', or did you feel like "we don't know if it's going to happen or not and that makes me more nervous"?

NAR: No, just that I think sit tight and wait and they're going to keep us informed.

INT: Did it make you think of any TV shows or any movies?

NAR: No, I hadn't seen the China Syndrome. (laughing)

INT: Have you seen it since?

NAR: No.

INT: Have you any desire to see it?

NAR: Not really no.

INT: How come?

NAR: We didn't really go to movies that much. But I really...different ones had said it was frightening and all this and that, so I don't need to see it.

INT: Did you think of any particular stories or books?

NAR: Not really, no.

INT: How about any songs, did you find yourself sort of humming any songs or singing any songs throughout this thing?

NAR: I can't think of anything in particular.

Did you have daydreams, any imaginings or mental pictures running through your mind during this?

NAR: No.

INT: Or any sleeping dreams?

NAR: No, I didn't have any dreams on that either.

INT: Do you usually dream?

NAR: very rarely.

INT: Did you find your sleep patterns upset?

NAR: No.

INT: So you slept well through the whole thing?

NAR: Umhum (yes)

INT: Did you leave your radio on at home all the time?

NAR: Yes.

INT: Even at night?

NAR: Mostly TV in the evening

INT: But when you went to sleep did you have the radio on all night long or anything?

NAR: No.

INT: Do you think that any changes happened to people around you, anything that changed then in any lasting way or even temporarily?

NAR: You mean to get their house in order so to speak, or...?

INT: Just that it changed them, did it affect then?

NAR: I can't think of anything in particular.

INT: Did you hear any jokes?

NAR: Oh yes, everyone had jokes about everything. (Laughing) In fact, the evening. . .or that night later when my son and his wife came, we had gone somewhere, I don't know, shopping or something. We had something we had to do and we came back and we saw their car there and we got into the door on the porch and here was a big sign "Radioactive" (laughing)

INT: Had they painted the sign on the door?

NAR: He had gotten it somewhere but here was this banner, like, “Radioactive” and he had it stripped across the door.

INT: Of your house?

NAR: Of our house and then the next week one evening we had relatives that came in from Michigan. They were not that much alarmed, they were planning to—they had a few days and they came in and we had a get together and when my son arrived here he came with this big banner across him and it was a joke to everyone.

INT: So they came to visit you right after the TMI incident, from Michigan?

NAR: Yes.

INT: Like a week after or...?

NAR: This happened on Friday and they arrived the next Wednesday, I think.

INT: Were they nervous in coming in?

NAR: Not really. I think they called that weekend before they left because they had heard about it and they said, well they had the time and the coming—had planned his vacation—and it would be difficult to change it again and both sides of the family live here so they and their 2 small children came in. Drove in. No, they really weren't frightened of it either, but I guess that they...maybe they felt that if anything was going to happen to their families, they wanted to be here with them too. You know...didn't ask them, but I'm just saying that; but maybe that's the way they felt. Being that far away from both sets of parents.

INT: Was there a lot of joking going here in the office at that time?

NAR: Not too much I don't believe.

INT: Did you get any written jokes or things like that, because I know that from time to time people in the offices get things?

NAR: There's only one thing I saw, and that's.. I'm not sure, I don't I think it came in here, I don't know where it came. Was about the tourist taking the trip to Three Mile Island and all this goes on and you've probably seen it.

INT: Was it from a tourist agency or an ad to go to Three Mile Island or...?

NAR: Someone had just made it up as if it was coming from a tourist agency but it was just a matter of.. it was a typed thing, it wasn't mimeographed of anything like that. But what all you got to see.. and I can't remember even how it went anymore, but it was comic, you know. I guess you take a boat ride on the radioactive Susquehanna, and all these things... or so much extra you'd... It was make like it was a regular tour, but it was a joke.

INT: Did it come in here to the office?

NAR: We had it in here, but I'm not sure where it came from. I can't remember. It seems to me it went through one of the factories and someone brought it in here or something.

INT: Did pass it on then from here?

NAR: Oh we were reading it, yeah.

INT: Do you know what happened to it, do you still have it?

NAR: No, no. That's what I was racking my brain...I don't know where it got to. If someone else...I don't think I had it, I think I just read it, but I don't know what happened to it. But it was cleverly written, just like the AAA travel agency would have done it, you know. But it was a fictitious name to it of course.

INT: Why do you think people laugh so much about Three Mile Island?

NAR: I think after they knew it was shut down and it was no longer as dangerous as it was at first, I think then to ease their... people just naturally, this is human nature, to make a joke of things and so forth a lot of times.

INT: You say this happened after it was shut down?

NAR: I'm sure it was a week or two after that.

INT: Did you have any jokes, well I guess you had a joke about it right away as your...?

NAR: The radioactive.. .yes. (laughing)

INT: That was right at the beginning while it was still (unintelligible word). Were people joking here right at that time also?

NAR: I don't believe so, I don't believe so.

INT: Let's see, we're just about done here. The only last question I have is, have you developed any kind of opinion about nuclear energy as a result of the TMI incident? Have you changed your opinion, have you strengthened your opinion? What do you think about nuclear energy at this time?

NAR: I think as long as it's controlled it has to be a part of our future. I never really had given it any thought about a radar range or a microwave oven. And I didn't realize.. .I mean I'm not technically minded, perhaps, but I never gave that a thought that that is run by radiation—microwave. And probably in a joking way people would say, "you're not going to use your microwave I don't have one, but they would say this, you know, if we...aren't allowed to use radiation and so forth, nuclear and so forth. And I just never thought about it, but just this past weekend my one son and daughter-in-law got a microwave. And I was telling her, "Well are you going to use that, you know with all that radiation coming over there" I mean it in a joking way. But I think there in controlled in something like that, I mean it is a part of our life, and it is a part of our future.

INT: Would you get a microwave oven at this point?

NAR: I wouldn't be afraid to but I don't care to have one, and it's not because I'm afraid of it.

INT: So you would be for nuclear energy if it were better controlled than it is now?

NAR: Yes, I think that we have to expect this, I think that it's going to be a part of our lives.

INT: Do we have to expect accidents also, do you feel that that's going to be a part of it inevitably, or do you think that...?

NAR: There may be but I think it's going...I think that all the governmental controlling agencies are going to be a little more on their toes maybe to for inspections and for control of these things. They're going to pull the harness a little tighter I feel that they are being...They will but they're also going to be forced to by the American people.