Nevada Test Site Oral History Project
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Interview with Joyce Parkhurst

November 27, 2004
Long Beach, California

Interview Conducted By
Suzanne Becker

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[00:00:00] Begin Track 2, Disc 1.

Suzanne Becker: *If I could just get a little about you, where you're from and—*

Joyce Parkhurst: I was born in Long Beach [CA]. My parents were born in Long Beach. So I have a history here. We live here in Long Beach part of the year, and part of the year we live in the Sierras. We have a small cabin in the Sierras. And we don't always get to spend that six months, but we did this last year, and we came from there to go to the [Nevada Desert Experience] meeting in August. So we're both retired, and have that luxury of being able to move around, spend that time.

And when you say "both," you're talking about your husband?

Yes.

What's his name?

Jim. And, let's see, I am sixty-nine years old.

You mentioned earlier you're a nurse, or were in nursing?

I went to the University of Wisconsin but I only stayed a year and a half.

So did I!

Yes, I think we talked about that. And I got married, then I was fortunate; I didn't have to work while the kids were growing up. But I went back to school when I was forty-one and got my nursing [degree], and nursed then for fourteen years. Then when Jim retired, I retired with him and we moved to our ranch outside of Bishop.

And that's where your cabin is?

Our cabin is actually north of there. It's outside of Bridgeport.

And you also have a ranch.

We sold the ranch, and then we moved here. We had been working with the Catholic Worker, and when we moved into the Catholic Worker house in Los Angeles, we left the ranch. We gave it to some people to use for six years, and then they finally bought it. Then we moved to Oakland briefly to have our own Catholic Worker house for almost four years. Oakland shut us down, shut down what we were doing. They were gentrifying the area that we lived in and that we were serving breakfast in, so they didn't want so many homeless people visible. Now the homeless lived there in that area anyway, but they were trying to gentrify the area, and didn't want the lines [we served breakfast five days a week]. So we said OK, let's go back home. We came back and have worked for the last three years with the L.A. Worker again, on a part-time basis; not living in the house but helping out with their work and doing their protests and vigiling and serving. So we've done more back-and-forthing in moving than we did for a number of years before that when we were more stable as a family.

I, being the age I am, was ten years old when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and I remember how horrifying that was, the pictures. My mother was devastated. She had at one time been going with a Japanese man, and so I'm sure that that struck her very hard. It has always been something that I have found very distressing.

Did you have a sense of it as a kid, that it was just pretty horrific?

Yes. That's always been an issue, I think, because of being so young and the pictures—*Life* magazine and the pictures in the paper. And I remember even when I was teaching a class, and this was when I was in my twenties or early thirties, for young people, confirmation [class]. I cut out these big pictures and made posters of them, and they were of the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. So [for] a lot of the years that was something that was just a continuing issue.

After being at the Catholic Worker, that's always been an issue of **[00:05:00]** theirs because Ammon Hennacey who was one of the Catholic workers, he was a friend of Dorothy Day's, he spent a lot of time at the [Nevada] test site every year. The house in Los Angeles is named for him. He would go out to the test site every year, and every year he would fast for the number of days for the number of years that it had been. Well, by the time it got down to like forty years, why, he was—

That's a long fast.

A lot. So the Catholic workers have always had a presence. In that year that they were trying to decide what they wanted to do for—you know they do have the regular demonstrations, and we have always participated in the kind of a choreographed thing where they know we're coming, we say we're not going to do anything bad, and we cross the line, and they give you a ticket. I think they tear them all up as soon as we're gone. It has a meaning but it's still, you're still cooperating with the test site people. So this year we went up early and we decided that we would do something a little more. We had spent a lot of time thinking about it, a lot of time trying to discern what it was we wanted to do, so we decided we would cut the fence.

And what year was that?

It was—I think it was '97. It was the August of '97, and it was the ninth of August that we did it. And we had bolt cutters—these long-handled bolt cutters with the red handles. A couple of artists in the house had drawn symbols all over them, cactus and coyotes and rabbits and flowers and clouds and rain. Then the liturgy we had before we left, they were on the table, and they were really quite pretty. Then they the deputies confiscated them. I was always so sorry about that because they were really well done. And so we decided Martha and I would do this.

Martha's last name is—?

Martha, well, at that time her name was Scarbrough, and she's since married. And so we spent the night at the test site, outside the fence.

In the peace camp area?

Yes. And the next morning, it was still dark, five o'clock. The rest of the group went to the line and they had their guitars and they were singing. Martha and I, in the dark, we started out. It was five-strand barbed wire, so we had already planned ahead of time what we would do so we could go as fast as possible—we'd each go to a fence post. I would take one, she'd take one, and we'd go *clip, clip, clip, clip, clip*. Then we'd move up the ten feet and do it to the next one so that we were completely cutting ten-foot, you know, the fence all the way down.

So it was cut from top to bottom, all the way down?

Top to bottom, all the way down. And then we'd move to the next one. We started—well, they've changed the fence a little bit, but we had started right by the freeway and were heading up, which was almost a quarter of a mile, I think. We kept thinking—it kept getting lighter and lighter and the people were standing there singing and the guards were sitting right there, looking right at us, why can't they see what we're doing? We just kept right on going. They usually have to see you doing something before making an arrest. So we started singing as we cut. Well, we got all the way up to the line, right in front of them, before they really saw what we were doing. Then they *jumped* up **[00:10:00]** and ran across the road, because we were so close at that point, and *yanked* the bolt cutters out of our hands and put us under arrest, put us into the patrol car, and took us to Beatty.

So they didn't just write you a ticket.

No. No. They were *really* mad. I think they were mad because they missed it. So Martha and I were in Beatty for—I think they have to see you after twenty-four hours, and there's a magistrate there.

This is on a Sunday that you were doing this?

Yeah. And then this was early in the morning.

Right, so you had all day—

So we were all day Sunday in this hellhole at that time, that old jail in Beatty, and they took us into the—I'm not sure now—I think they saw us twice. I think they saw us the next morning, and then we were in jail for eight days.

You're kidding.

Yeah, I think so.

And you were in there for eight days because they wouldn't see you or because—wouldn't there be any bail posted?

I think they had one hearing, and then we were going to have another one, an arraignment or something. So I think they kept us in Beatty for three days, and then they sent us to Tonopah, because it was a gross misdemeanor. Nevada is the only place that has a gross misdemeanor. It wasn't a felony. But this judge, magistrate, could only hear misdemeanors, so they had to send us up to Judge [John] Davis. I think we were three days in Beatty, and they were really nasty to us. We had a little 20-watt bulb in the cell and it was one of those concrete cells with the bars in the front, and nobody would come and see us. We couldn't make a phone call. We couldn't take a shower. It was nasty. It was really nasty. When we got to Tonopah, it was like this was—

Luxury?

Luxury, yeah. And you could tell. I'll get to that later. But when we were in Tonopah, you could tell when people were coming in from Beatty because they were dirty and disheveled and had this deer-in-the-headlights look. So they took us to Tonopah and then they brought us back for our arraignment. That same judge did see us on that one, and he indicated that even if we didn't sign out, he was going to sign us out anyway. He wasn't going to keep us. So we went home after I think it was eight days.

So how is it that you weren't allowed a phone call or to contact anyone? Because I would assume that the folks back at the test site knew that you had been arrested.

I suppose if we had wanted to call a lawyer or let somebody [know], we could have done that. But we couldn't just make a phone call like in most jails you can call somebody collect. This was a pay phone and they just didn't have that facility.

But we did have to come back [to court again]. They had said we were going to have to come back in September to Tonopah. So we did that. Martha and I had already decided—I don't know if you heard this story, but Tonopah had a really *nice* courthouse, and we decided we weren't going to stand up for the judge. So the bailiff comes in and he says, All stand, and everybody stands but us, and we're in the front row. They *glared* at us but they didn't say anything. Then when he left for the recess we didn't stand up, and we still hadn't been heard. The next time the judge came in after lunch, we were still sitting down. The bailiff got really upset and yelled at us. And the judge said, OK, you're **[00:15:00]** in civil contempt, and they took us and put us in a cell all day long while different guards kept coming in, trying to get us to change our minds. Well, it got to be six o'clock. Poor Jim had been in the courtroom all day long, waiting to see what was going to happen. We finally went out into the courtroom. And we didn't have a lawyer. We were just doing this on our own. I didn't qualify for a public defender

anyway, but Martha could have. When we came back out to see the judge they had taken all the chairs out, so we had to stand. I thought that was *so* funny.

Unbelievable.

Well, they then told us that we had to come back again for another court date. You can go on and on and on with this. So I think we went back one more time. The next time we went back, they wanted us to fill out a probation thing and that whole business. Martha and I finally told the judge we wanted to plead guilty to this. We were not doing a non-guilty thing. We finally managed to get him to accept our plea.

He didn't want to accept it?

He didn't want us to be doing this without a lawyer. You don't *talk* to the judge.

But he finally said, I accept your plea of guilty. You come back in December for sentencing.

And we said, You know, we've been here four times and we're not coming back. Sentence us now. We're coming a long way.

And he said, No, I'm not going to do that.

And Martha said, Well, we're not coming back.

And he said, Well, you *will* come back or I'll send somebody after you.

And I said, I don't think you're going to send people to Los Angeles to pick us up.

He said, Oh yes I will.

So Nevada State kept sending us bills for two thousand dollars apiece to pay for the fence. It turns out we had cut something like sixteen hundred feet of fence. No, it's more than that. I figured out by the time we got done, that with the five strands we had cut approximately a mile of fence. So it would've been more like five thousand. So time went on. Martha had gone to visit

people in jail and nothing had happened, so she felt free to protest at the federal building that following December. [She was protesting against the sanctions and the subsequent deaths of children in Iraq.] That would've been eighty—ninety—

Late nineties? Ninety-eight?

Let's see, the action was in '97, it would've been December of '98. She got picked up. They found her record and they extradited her—they let her sit there for almost two weeks. You have fourteen days to come and get somebody. It was I think twelve days, and somebody called me from the house and said, Nevada has come for Martha and they're taking her to Tonopah. This was January eleventh. So Jim and I got in the truck. We were in Oakland. We had just started our Catholic Worker. We drove all night and got to Tonopah at six o'clock in the morning, and I turned myself in. So Martha and I got there almost at the same time. She, having been there a few hours more, got to be seen arraigned the next day—Tuesday. It worked out that we both went to court on the [following] Wednesday. He [Judge Davis] sentenced us both to nine months. Everybody was absolutely *stunned*. I think what really **[00:20:00]** made him angry was that there was a huge demonstration outside the courthouse. A *lot* of people came from Los Angeles. The Native Americans came—the Shundahai.

Yes.

He was there with his people with big—

Was that Corbin [Harney]?

Yeah, Corbin. Big signs, and the courthouse, the courtroom, was *jammed*.

Now this is in Tonopah?

This is in Tonopah.

OK, and they're protesting because you are having your sentencing that day?

Yes. They were in support of us. Well, I think he (the judge) was just really angry that they were all there and that he felt pushed. Martha went first, and I could hear him yelling at her, and she—I have it here in this *Agitator.* It's got Martha's statement in here, as well as mine—I think this is the one. I went second and after hearing him screaming at her—we did have a public defender, Martha did have a public defender for that. On his own he said, I'll stand with you so that you'll have somebody with you. So just as I was going to stand there and make my statement, he leans over and he says, You need to know, Martha just got sentenced to nine months. Oh, great I thought. Oh well, nothing matters now. So I went ahead and made my speech.

What were you thinking when he said nine months?

Well, we were just so stunned. Jim wasn't there. I told him, I said, I really don't want you to go. It would have been a long drive for him all the way from Oakland. And he was sorry afterwards, but I was glad he wasn't there because I was so nervous that I knew I would be even more nervous—here it is [sound of pages turning]. Here's the picture of the—

Oh, wow! That's a lot of people.

So you can keep that if you want to.

OK, if you have an extra copy I would like to.

It has my statement in it and it has Martha's statement in it.

OK. And The Catholic Agitator. *Now is this—?*

That's the Catholic Worker newsletter, the Los Angeles—

Great. And you guys made the front cover.

Oh, yeah, I have that picture a big picture of that—with our bolt cutters in our hands. You probably can't see them there but we—

A little bit. So it ended up being nine months.

Yeah. Now with good time, I think you get a day a month good time. We'd already served eight days, so it ended up being seven months.

That's still significant.

It's significant. It was hard.

And that ended up being in Tonopah.

Tonopah. Which after being in other jails, I would have to say that Tonopah was run very nicely. It was not a horrifying place to be, like Los Angeles is a horrifying place to be. And the sergeant in charge, his philosophy was if you treat people with respect, they will respond the same way. So I have to say, it could've been worse.

And so you were in there with all the—I mean how large is the Tonopah jail?

Not large. Sentences varied from one day to a few hours. Sometimes there was just me and Martha. Our **[00:25:00]** pod could house sixteen women. Mostly we had an average of ten, so we could have our own cell, which was really nice. They were single cells and a couple of them had an extra bunk, but not like L.A. where you were stacked three high and jammed in. The doors were solid with just a little window in. And you were under constant surveillance in the day room. They had that new kind of jail where the pods all circle a central bubble, and then you have cameras and they can see right in all the time. And I think they can hear you. A couple of times, we became aware that they were responding to us as though they could hear what we were saying. But the woman who was the person overseeing it in the bubble and the one guard were really very nice people. These were town people, and they were country people. Tonopah's not a very big town. So it was a whole different attitude. Their community was observing them, to a certain extent, so their behavior was nice. They weren't going to be awful and then have people

talking about them. They were really nice people anyway. I mean one of the women was buying me stamps and envelopes so that I could keep up with my mail. And I even had one guard who was reading the *Agitator*, because the *Agitator* was coming to us. So, you know, I think we did a little bit of [good]—they [the other inmates] called us the church ladies. But I think that they felt like we were doing good in there because we were able to keep a lid on a lot of stuff that was going on. We were just so calm.

Did they [other inmates] know why you guys were in there?

Yes.

What was their reaction to that?

Oh, they were *very* positive. They were very supportive of us. We found whenever we were in jail that the people we were in jail with got it—they really understood what we were trying to do. It was very interesting. And women, of course, in jail are great. They're very supportive and very helpful and generally take care of each other.

I imagine it's a whole different experience than guys in jail.

The guys, even Jim when he was in men's downtown L.A., probably because of his age, but they'd call him Pops. But he didn't have any trouble either. Maybe because he happened to get in with a couple of the old-timers that were there and they looked out for him. One guy came up and tried to intimidate him and tell him that he wanted his money and wanted him to get him something. Jim just laughed at him and that was that.

How long have you guys been involved? Both you and Jim are involved and have been involved with the Nevada Desert Experience [NDE] on and off throughout the years, is that right?

Actually no. Through the Los Angeles house, we have been involved with it since '96. Jack, I can't think of his last name, Jack and Felicity who put out the *Nuclear Resister*, they live in

Arizona, he called me and wanted to do an interview while I was in Tonopah, which was kind of fun. But as far as the Nevada Desert Experience, I think we've [been going] off and on [only] since '96.

Had you been out to the test site prior to that, prior to being involved with NDE?

No. We'd gone out to do the usual thing on—[anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki] and we went out in '96 to do the action and then we went again—

The anniversary?

[00:30:00] The anniversary thing, and then we went again, a couple of times after I was in jail, but nothing more than that. No, we hadn't really gone out there beforehand. I had been out that way, I think, accidentally. When I graduated from high school in '53, my mother and I were driving to the University of Wisconsin, so we were taking a road trip to get there. We were in Vegas the night before, we were heading for St. George [Utah], and the ground was shaking in the showroom. Somebody said oh, they just put off another test out at the test site. And of course then we drove straight up through downwind of the whole mess, you know. That was '53. But no, I was mostly not involved.

But it seems like you've always had an awareness of the nuclear testing issue. Do you remember obviously when the test site came to be, when it became the Nevada Test Site? Because I know in Las Vegas, it was a big deal. I don't know how big of a deal it was to in California or other surrounding areas.

Well, we were very aware that they were doing testing there, partly because my father really liked gambling, and so he would go to Las Vegas a couple times a year. So he'd tell us a little bit about it. I think we just always knew it was there, but I never had the opportunity to drive that far to go and see it.

What inspired you at the point back in '96 to go out there?

Oh, I think it was just that—I don't know. Part of it, we had had a speaker on the nuclear weapons, and I think that that—

At the Catholic Worker?

Yeah. Dan Hirsch who knows a lot about the evils of that whole thing. I think that I was in a place that I needed to do something concrete. You could see with the sanctions in Iraq and that we were heading off into a direction where we might be going to use those [weapons] again. We had a sense that they hadn't really stopped testing, that they were still doing it. And I think I wanted to make a stand. I wanted to just say we can't go there again.

What were your impressions when you actually got out there?

Barren. Barren. But you know there *is* so much life in the desert. The night before we did the fence was probably one of the most beautiful nights I've ever seen. Somebody drove out and tried to tell us that we couldn't camp out there because there was going to be a terrible rainstorm and that we would all get washed away. Well, it *had* rained, but it cleared and the moon was up. It was really quite spectacular. And then you could see where they'd done their bomb runs and all that. It's such a shame because the desert really is lovely. The night that they moved Martha and me from Beatty to Tonopah, they did it in the middle of the night at like one o'clock in the morning, but it was *such* a gorgeous night with the stars and the moon and everything. When they brought us back down to court that first time at **[00:35:00]** Beatty, the driver pointed out to us a herd of mustang out on the right-hand side of the road that we got to see. You know, it looks barren but it really isn't. It's full of life, and I *really* feel so sorry for Nevada. I feel like Nevada has just had terrible things done to it.

Yes. A lot of people argue it both ways because it is the desert, I think, it really gets perceived as—

Nothing.

—something that you can sort of use. And it's barren like you say, but by the same token it's something full of life, so it's an interesting juxtaposition.

Yeah.

I think this was probably before you went out there, but I had the chance to talk to Jim Merlino, who was the sheriff in Mercury. I don't know if you ever had the opportunity to meet him, but he ran the test site security for years, and he had a really interesting perspective and rapport with a lot of the regular folks that were going out there. I'm wondering if you, in your times out there, had a chance to interact with any of the guards?

While they were patting us down?

Yes, aside from being arrested.

No. I think that probably the Las Vegas Catholic Worker people did because they had to make arrangements with them.

I assume, though, you've also taken part in crossing the line in one way, shape, or form and just getting the ticket.

Yeah.

I'm curious what sort of meaning that holds for you, the significance; whether it's personal or symbolic or both.

I think it's both. It's keeping it fresh in your memory that it's there and what it means and what we've done. I think we can't forget what we did to the people of Japan. And it's symbolic in that I believe that everything we do adds up. The symbolism of cutting the fence, from my point of

view, is to symbolically take down the fence so that people could see what was happening inside. It was making an opening so that this was not hidden away and done in secret, which it still is. So it's both. It's too easy to forget, and the younger people, younger generation, they don't even know. I couldn't believe, what was it, [Secretary of Defense Donald] Rumsfeld who said at one point when they were trying to talk up bombing Iraq because they [Iraq] had weapons of mass destruction, and they didn't want to ever see an atomic bomb detonated on this planet. What? Are you forgetting? Or are you just making it so that all the people who don't know *won't* know?

Right. It certainly is an interesting part of our history. Definitely a part of our culture, for sure.

It is interesting, too, that it came up in Congress just last week [Nov. 2004] to vote for a renewed proliferation of these so-called small nuclear weapons. I wrote to both Senator [Barbara] Boxer and Senator [Dianne] Feinstein, and I didn't get an answer from Senator Boxer but I did get one from Senator Feinstein. She was voting against it. And it did go down in the Senate. But they're going to keep trying. There's only two issues that I really would get out there **[00:40:00]** again and go to jail for again; one of them is the nuclear issue, and the other is the draft.

Do you foresee them making the test site active again? I know there's been talk.

I do. I really do. And at some time in the next four years. The troops are sparse. They're going to want something that's really, really bad.

It seems like you've been politically active—you're just a politically active person.

Yeah, but more though in the last ten years probably.

What other things have you been involved in? I mean this seems like something of pretty great magnitude.

I've never protested or done anything like that before. I've written letters and made phone calls on various things: the environment, high-rise buildings on the beach, you know, all those kinds

of things. And then after I'd been in jail this time, then it was easier. I mean we protested Nike, we protested The Gap, we've been arrested and then let go. We protested the Iraq War and did eight days in the Twin Towers [Los Angeles County Sheriff's Correctional Facility] for that.

Oh, wow.

Yeah, that was really an experience.

And that's here in L.A.?

Yes. We also protested at the federal building and we got arrested by the federals. They would not put us in jail, Jim and I, because we had too much money in the bank. We weren't like the other Catholic Workers who have zip. So they fined us. They put us on probation. We have two more years to go. And they fined us thirty-five hundred dollars. And *this* was for standing with a sign, not moving, saying a prayer, not in anybody's way, not blocking a doorway—

This was in L.A. at the federal building?

In L.A. The federal building downtown. I mean it was strictly within our rights. This paper has both of our statements to the judge which, as Jim said in his and I echoed it in mine, that a right that when exercised is punished, is no right. There were no signs in there saying that you could not stand there.

Right. And this was based on what, being on private property?

Being on their property. They told us to leave and we didn't. But you know people were there all day long. It just happened to be because we were carrying a sign. People sit there and eat their lunch but they don't bother them.

Right. The act of protest has changed.

And they're all in their SWAT things. So I think it's only going to get worse. It seems to be getting more punitive.

Makes you wonder how that's going to actually impact the act of protest. Something like going out to the test site, even.

It'll be interesting. The federal government did not get involved with ours. It was the State of Nevada, because that periphery fence is on, supposedly, Nevada. So the federal government did not get involved. Now if we could figure out a way to get into Mercury then it would be federal.

Right. And it probably would have looked like a very different scene had the federal government gotten involved, I would imagine.

It's hard to say whether it would've been more or less, but due to the damage, people have **[00:45:00]** gotten six months for just crossing the line at Fort Benning [Georgia, School of the Americas]. So because we did damage it could've been more.

Given your experience, would you do it again?

Yeah. I think at this point I would have to have an excuse, more of a—if they started testing weapons out there again, then I think I would.

You mentioned a little earlier that you had kids.

Yes.

How many kids do you have?

I have five, two men and three women now, and they range from forty-eight to forty. Every two years.

Very close in age.

And then we have eight grandchildren, ranging from three to twenty-two.

That's quite a range. What do they think about your involvement, and are they politically active at all?

Our daughter that is forty-one—forty-two, she'll be forty-two in December, teaches—is a professor at Soka University. She finished her dissertation she started three or four years ago. It was on nations and how they're perceived by the way the media presents them. The nations she was working with were North Korea, Iraq, those two mostly, and think there was one more but I can't think of what it is. She's teaching political science but she also has a lot of non-nuclear stuff in there. She has a lot of foreign students, a large amount of Japanese, and she has spent some time in Japan and has visited Hiroshima. So I would say that she is politically active. The textbook she's using has a forward in it by Phil Berrigan. So she's very much.

The other daughter who's forty-four is getting her teaching certificate. But she has protested with us at some of the marches, but what she prefers, she is very interested in the children that are being left behind in the "No Child Left Behind" project; children that there's no way that they can keep up. She's very good with troubled children.

The youngest who is forty was so appalled that I was in jail, she couldn't even write me a letter. Jennifer, the one who's the teacher, came to see me. Jocelyn was in Washington State at that time, so she couldn't. But she wrote and her children wrote. And the two men, they would take a phone call if I called them but they—one wrote one letter, but the other one didn't. I think that they were just horrified that we were in jail. They were worried about us, and just really didn't know what to do. Jim, bless his heart, drove from Oakland once a month to visit me. My father had me phone him once a week. And I have to say he is definitely not—he's definitely a right-wing Republican, but my being his daughter superseded that. He at least, I think, wanted to know if I was doing OK.

We lost a lot of friends. My sister and my brother were very angry and didn't want to talk about it. They didn't write—

Do you think because of the actual physically being in jail or the whole circumstance, the being out at the test site and the—

I think my sister thought it was just an awful thing to break the law. My brother was not **[00:50:00]** quite that adamant. My brother had been in Vietnam and I just don't talk to him about the whole peace movement. He can't handle it. For him to admit that his government put them all in harm's way for no reason and are doing it again, he can't deal with that. It's just too painful. So he has to pretend that they're OK.

I have another friend that I've known for fifty years and she has made me promise—well, I told her I wouldn't promise but she tries to get me to promise that I will never do that again. They don't really quite understand.

What you were doing, and why.

Yeah.

Well, it's a lot of personal dedication and conviction, which I think people don't [understand] unless they have something that they can relate that to.

The funny thing is that I heard from some friends when we were getting ready for our fiftieth high school reunion, and had mentioned to them that I couldn't come because I was going to be in jail at that time. Then one thing led to another as far as explanations and they found my—one of them had put in Joyce Parkhurst in the Google and up came my rap sheet. And I got several phone calls from people I hadn't seen in fifty years saying good for you. So you never know.

I had a question sort of unrelated but I'm wondering if—I've had people tell me that they remember being able to see some of the clouds and the bright lights, when they used to do shots out at the test site, from California. I'm wondering if you ever—

You know, I don't remember anything like that. I really don't. I remember things from during the Second World War but I don't remember that. I think we're just too bright, maybe.

And it sounds like, too, you were headed toward Wisconsin at that time for part of it, as well.

I think maybe if you were up higher, too.

Yeah, that could be, because I guess these folks were closer to northern California. But I just thought well, that's really a powerful blast.

That would be pretty scary.

So are there any other thoughts or stories or related stories that you feel are important?

I'm sure I'll think of things after you stop, but I can't think of anything right now.

Do you have plans to go next summer to the [test site]—?

Probably.

Is that something you're going to continue?

Yeah, we like to go on that weekend. It's meaningful to us partly because one of our friends, Ladon Sheats was very involved in that and he died on the seventh of August, so it's a kind of a memorial for him as well. But *I* remember it every year. I always *have* remembered it every year. I can't remember a year since I was a child that I did not remember the people of Japan on that day. It's just part of me.

Right. Well, as you mentioned, it was significant in your mom's life as well.

Yeah.

Were both your parents fairly conservative?

Yes. I think my mother, if she had been—you have to understand the times. My mother was kind of under my father's thumb to a certain extent, and I think my mother on her own, left to her own devices, would have been much more liberal.

So it's interesting that you took the opposite route.

Yeah. I think where I am, I think that's the way she was when she was younger. And my brother and my sister didn't get quite as much of that input, so they didn't come out the same **[00:55:00]** way. We're polar opposites, really.

Yeah, often is in families. I always find that interesting.

Yeah, Jim and his brother, same way.

So you're here in California now through the winter?

Yes.

And then you're heading back to your cabin?

Yeah, hopefully next April.

I definitely appreciate you taking the time to do this and to tell your story. It's very interesting.

Oh, it's a pleasure.

Probably just because of your timing, you don't have a chance to meet folks that actually work out at the test site, I'm imagining.

No.

And of course there's only a couple thousand people that are still employed there, but just wondering what you think. I mean do you have any animosity toward them, or maybe "animosity" isn't the correct word—

Really, my animosity is more towards the government that does this. I understand people have to make a living, but I would hope that they would think about it.

Right.

I mean I can't make a judgment on what somebody has to do.

Right. Well, and especially for Nevada. At one point it was such a huge employer for people.

Yeah.

But just curious, you know. So, all right, if you think of anything else that pertains to this, let me know. Otherwise I certainly appreciate you taking the time, especially on a holiday weekend.

I'm glad to. I don't mind. I don't know if you can use this. This is something I wrote while I was in jail. It may be too religious but it's kind of like a meditation.

Can I keep this stuff?

Oh, yes, you can keep that. And this one is a—I don't know if you're interested in the jail time in Los Angeles.

Sure.

This was an article. I can give you the whole paper, but this "Tired, Cold, and Hungry" is my story of what it was like to be in jail in Los Angeles.

How long have you been involved with the Catholic Worker?

I worked with the Catholic Worker in the mid-eighties. I worked in their clinic for a year. I went every Friday and helped them out, and then my—

In their clinic?

Downtown L.A. And then my grandchildren started coming and so I was doing pretty full-time babysitting so my daughters—because they were single parents—could go to work. So when we retired, Jim was looking around particularly for some place to go. In '95 he went to stay with the Catholic Worker for a month, and then he began going from the ranch to L.A. for two weeks every month to stay with them. And after about a year of that, I started going. That's when we began to realize that it was sort of silly for us to be running up and down Highway 395—somebody wanted to use it [the ranch] for a halfway house, so we turned it over to them.

So you became involved with them on a, I don't want to say you stumbled into it, but it was a less overt.

Yes, he chose it because I had been associated with them, and partly because we began getting their *Agitator* and it really sparked our interest and it made sense.

Yeah, which is good. Well, again, thank you.

Well, you're welcome. Did you want to take this one, too?

[01:00:00] *Sure. Yes.*

You may not be able to use it, but I have a bunch of these, so you're welcome to them.

OK, if you have a bunch and you can spare one, that would be great.

[01:00:14] End Track 2, Disc 1.

[End of interview]