INTERVIEW OF NANCY LOUDEN

BY ABBY JOHNSON

EUREKA COUNTY
LESSONS LEARNED VIDEO PROJECT

held in

CRESCENT VALLEY, NEVADA

April 21, 2011
MS. CLANCY: Okay, the tape is rolling. This is Gwen Clancy from behind the camera. I’ll be doing the video today. It is April 21, 2011, and we are in Crescent Valley, Nevada. Interviewing today is Abby Johnson.

MS. JOHNSON: My name is Abby Johnson. I’m the Nuclear Waste Advisor for Eureka County. We’re doing the Eureka County Lessons Learned Video Project, and we’re interviewing Nancy Louden.

MS. JOHNSON: Nancy, how did you come to live in Crescent Valley and what is it about Crescent Valley that is special to you?

MS. LOUDEN: Well, my husband makes necklaces out of turquoise and he always would come out here, and he worked for an old guy named Eddie Mossie (phonetic), and then he finally decided that he wanted to move out here so he could be around turquoise. And, then when that hot springs ended up being for sale, and so that seemed like a good place, you know. I fell in love with that.

MS. JOHNSON: What’s that like, the hot springs?

MS. LOUDEN: The hot springs? Well, it’s this old, it was that old A-frame building that a chiropractor used for treatment, health for people. And, then, he built a swimming
pool there, which it’s still usable, and there’s a couple of
different pools that you can soak in. So, that’s what I like
about it. And, I did my stained glass for a long time, too,
but that’s what we like about it.

I also like it because it’s out here in a place
where there’s not a whole lot of traffic and people and a lot
of stuff going on.

MS. JOHNSON: Much quieter than--

MS. LOUDEN: Quieter, emptier, yeah.

MS. JOHNSON: So, when you heard that the federal
government might build a railroad for nuclear waste to be
transported to Yucca Mountain, what was your reaction?

MS. LOUDEN: I just visualized a railroad track
going through the middle of the Valley, and we have a shop in
town here in Crescent Valley, and we drive out there a couple
times a day. We sleep out there a lot, and we go back and
forth all the time, and here I’d be stopped at this train
track pulling canisters of nuclear waste, and who knows if
one of them would be leaking or not, because I’ve heard of
them leaking, and then I’d get nuked. And, I didn’t want it.

(15:39:11 End of Tape 2-1.)

(15:35:48 Begin tape 2-3)

MS. JOHNSON: Nancy, what else bothered you about
the proposed rail line through Crescent Valley?

MS. LOUDEN: Well, I don’t like nukes because my
nephew died from nukes at ten years old. And, my husband’s 
brother died from nukes, and I don’t trust the people that do 
the work with them, because I don’t know how—you know, they 
do make mistakes, and nothing is perfect, and there can be 
accidents. And, I just don’t want to be around them, because 
they can cause death, and, it scares me. And, the people in 
town here, none of them wanted it, not one of them, whether 
they were on the right side of politics or the left side of 
politics, nobody wanted it. And, that kind of tells you how 
people really feel about it. When they’re threatened with 
nukes being near them, you know, maybe if you’re rich enough 
to be able to afford a place somewhere off and you’re not 
going to be near them, you might want them. But, when you 
have to live with them, you don’t want them. Nobody does. 
Nobody wants to be close to them.

MS. JOHNSON: Let’s move on to the next question.

(15:37:19 End Tape 2-3)

(15:40:04 Begin Tape 2-4)

MS. JOHNSON: You indicated that you have family 
members that were downwinders that died as a result of atomic 
testing. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

MS. LOUDEN: Yes. My nephew was downwind. After 
one of the tests, the nuclear fallout blew over St. Louis, 
and they reported it, and it got in the milk. And, his 
mother was going to college, and my mom was feeding him out
of a bottle. So, he drank, that’s all he had, was that nuked milk to drink. And, he got cancer when he was ten, and died when he was twelve. And, I was there when his mom got him up in the middle of the night, when he was in pain, and I heard him say to her, “Mom, am I going to die?” And, she said that she wouldn’t tell him. She said no. And, it just crushed me to death to hear that. I mean, that was the most painful thing ever. And, so, yeah, it just makes me think that a lot of people are insensitive about their need for this nuclear power when I don’t really think there’s a need for it. And, nothing like that has ever happened to them, so maybe they don’t understand it.

MS. JOHNSON: Let’s move on to the next question.

(15:41:37 End Tape 2-4)

(15:40:00 Begin Tape 2-5)

MS. JOHNSON: And, what about your brother-in-law.

MS. LOUDEN: Okay.

MS. JOHNSON: And, tell me about your brother-in-law.

MS. LOUDEN: Yes, my brother-in-law, my husband’s brother, he died when he was 16 of pancreatic cancer, and his dad and mom would take them out to the Death Valley around the time of the nuclear testing, and they didn’t really know that, you know, it could hurt anybody. So, he died when he was 16. It hurt my husband a lot, because that was his
favorite brother.

MS. LOUDEN: A parade or something, and we had some little things on wagons and bikes and stuff that we added onto to make posters against the nuclear train coming.

MS. JOHNSON: I think you did. I think it was maybe a Fourth of July parade or--

MS. LOUDEN: Some kind of parade, yes.

MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

MS. LOUDEN: Yeah, we always have a parade here once a year. I forgot what day we have it anymore.

MS. JOHNSON: I think you did a nuclear awareness. MS. LOUDEN: Yeah, we did. Yeah. I might still even have some of those old posters at home.

MS. JOHNSON: If you did, I would love to--

MS. LOUDEN: Would you?

MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

MS. LOUDEN: Okay, I could give them to you. I’ll check and see if I can find any.

MS. JOHNSON: Yeah, please do.

MS. LOUDEN: Okay.
MS. LOUDEN: We had a parade and we made little floats out of bicycles and wagon and whatever we had, and we put signs all over them talking about “no nukes,” and how we didn’t want nukes in the Valley.

MS. JOHNSON: Eureka County, throughout all this, didn’t take a position in favor of Yucca Mountain or opposed to Yucca Mountain. Do you agree with the County’s decision not to take a position?

MS. LOUDEN: Well, I don’t know, because that gets into politics and all this different stuff, you know, that people have all kinds of reasons, especially people that run counties and different stuff like that, you know, they all have different reasons for what side they want to be on. And, so, that’s all I know, you know, I don’t know why they didn’t take a position, but it was probably because of some higher-ups in there that were for it, and they didn’t want to commit themselves.

MS. JOHNSON: Let’s move on to the next question.

MS. JOHNSON: If the Yucca Mountain Project is revived and if the Carlin Nuclear Waste Rail Route would
again become a possibility, what would your reaction be?

MS. LOUDEN: My reaction would be one of sheer horror, because I just—I’m horrified by nuclear reaction. You know, the whole idea of it seems anti-human to me. It’s just, you know, I know it’s killed a lot of people, especially up in Utah, and I think the people that want it, are the ones that aren’t going to be around it, and they don’t have to worry about it as much, although they should. I just think that certain people want to make money off of it, and they don’t want to take the responsibility for what kind of accidents could happen from it.

MS. JOHNSON: Thank you.

(11:10:17 End of Tape 2-10)

(11:09:08 Begin Tape 2-11.)

MS. JOHNSON: If the Carlin Nuclear Waste Rail Corridor Project came back, how do you think people in the Valley would react?

MS. LOUDEN: Well, before when they were threatening us with it, we were—everybody in the Valley was against it. And, we all fought hard together, we really stuck together on that. We never stuck together on anything before, but we really stuck together on that one. No one wanted that.

MS. JOHNSON: Do you think that would happen again?

MS. LOUDEN: Probably, yes, I think so, although
maybe some--maybe things are changing now, I don’t know. Maybe people are getting programmed by the television more, or something, I don’t know.

(11:10:02 End of Tape 2-11.)

(11:09:18 Begin Tape 2-13.)

MS. JOHNSON: If the Carlin Nuclear Waste Rail Line Project came back, how would it affect the Valley? How would it change the Valley if it actually happened?

MS. LOUDEN: I don’t think it would change it a whole lot. It would just mean that, well, maybe some people would move away. They wouldn’t want to be around it. But, then, again, it wouldn’t do much unless there were leaks coming out, and then maybe ten years later, you’d come down with cancer and you couldn’t prove that it was from a leak. And, so, you just stay here and live with it, and never know, but you’d feel--I wouldn’t feel good about it. It would affect me in kind of--give me depression. It would make me depressed, and we might move away, but I don’t know. I think it would bring a lot of depression on the place, really.

(11:10:27 End Tape 2-13.)

(11:09:22 Begin Tape 2-14.)

MS. LOUDEN: It’s okay if you use this for any purpose you like.

MS. JOHNSON: Thank you very much. We’ll probably use it for the web, and also for researchers. Thank you.
MS. LOUDEN: Okay.

(11:09:32 End Tape 2-14.)

(Whereupon, the interview of Nancy Louden was concluded.)
TRANSCRIBER’S CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing has been transcribed by me to the best of my ability and constitutes a true and accurate transcript of the mechanically recorded proceedings in this matter.

Dated at Aurora, Colorado, this 5th day of June, 2011.

s/ Mary Chevalier
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