

**Madison Sangrey**  
**Honor: US History 2**  
**October 15 2017**

**Lindeman, Dawn. Personal interview with the author. Lancaster, PA. October 15, 2017.**

<https://soundcloud.com/user-455872574/>

“-” - changing wording or cutting off what you or other person was saying

**Overview by Madison Sangrey:**

Dawn Lindeman is one of the many people that were alive during the Three Mile Island meltdown. She lives in Wrightsville, Pennsylvania which was about 10 miles away from the plant. At the time she had two children (one only 9 months old). Dawn had evacuated her home to go to West Virginia while this was happening because they advised that young children and people within 10 miles of the plant leave. Dawn was not seriously affected from the meltdown other than that she evacuated. She went home a few days later after being told that they got it under control and safe and there was no more radioactive air.

**Question (Sangrey): Hello, my name is Madison Sangrey. It is October 15th 2017 and I am interviewing Dawn Lindeman, my grandma. Can you spell your name please?**

Answer (Lindeman): Uh, D-A-W-N L-I-N-D-E-M-A-N.

**Question (Sangrey): Okay. So to start of, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?**

Answer (Lindeman): Yes. Um at the time of the TMI accident I was a stay at home mother with two small children and I was married living in Wrightsville, Pennsylvania.

**Question (Sangrey): Okay, and growing up; like siblings, your, where did you live, like stuff like that.**

Answer (Lindeman): I had one sister, and we bo- we lived in Wrightsville. All of my life I've lived in Wrightsville .

**Question (Sangrey): Okay and then so how, like when did the TMI accident take place? Like how old were you? What was going on in your life?**

Answer (Lindeman): I was 26 years old when the accident was-happened. When it was announced I was shopping with my sister, my mother, nieces, nephews, and my children at a kids clothing store and it came across the radio.

**Question (Sangrey): How old were your kids?**

Answer (Lindeman): My children at the time were three years old and nine months.

**Question (Sangrey): And you said that you lived in Wrightsville during the time?**

Answer (Lindeman): I did, yes.

**Question (Sangrey): Okay, and what was your initial reaction when you heard about it over the radio.**

Answer (Lindeman): Well when I first heard it they really weren't giving you, releasing very much information. They were telling us that at that time there wasn't a threat to the public, but myself knowing that it is a nuclear incident going on alarmed me. So when we were finished shopping we left the store and came home so we could stay tuned to the TV set.

**Question (Sangrey): Okay. And when after like you went home and listened to TV and all that what did, like what did you end up doing from it.**

Answer (Lindeman): Well we listened Basically for a day. The following day we made the decision to leave Wrightsville, so my sister and myself her four children and my two children, we left and we were heading to stay with relatives in West Virginia. On the way, because we had six children total, we decided to stop halfway. We stopped in the state of Virginia and spend the night. My husband and my brother-in-law decided they weren't leaving because they still had work and they weren't sure exactly what was going to happen at the react- with the reactor. So after the following day they're now telling pregnant women and young children to leave within a 5-mile radius which we lived over- we did not live within five miles but we kind of figured that the way the wind blew we were maybe ten miles away. So at that point my husband and brother-in-law joined us in Virginia.

**Question (Sangrey): Okay. So so you were, like when they changed- so they changed it from 5 miles to 10 miles then?**

Answer (Lindeman): Yes.

**Question (Sangrey): And you were in that ten mile range?**

Answer (Lindeman): We felt we were by the way you drive a car, but by the way the wind blows down the river we would be within that 10 miles.

**Question (Sangrey): Okay, and then you said that you went to West Virginia-**

Answer (Lindeman): -Well we went to Virginia-

**Question (Sangrey): -Yeah, and then yeah. Okay. And you, how long did you stay there?**

Answer (Lindeman): Well we stayed there actually a total of three days, not knowing what was happening, and on the fourth day they told us that yes the bubble was getting smaller and that

they felt we were safe to go back to our homes. At that time we decided we would start heading back knowing that they had things under control. So that Sunday night we did go back to our residence in Wrightsville.

**Question (Sangrey): And then while you were gone in Virginia, you like, I'm assuming, you like listened to the news to keep up-to-date with what was happening?**

Answer (Lindeman): Every day, every minute of the day we were, we were just glued to the TV set wanting to know what's going on. Can we go back to our homes. We still have family in Wrightsville, will we ever see them again. So we were constantly listening to the TV set.

**Question (Sangrey): And like, do you remember like specific stuff that they were like saying over the news like on the TV?**

Answer (Lindeman): Well it, first they didn't really tell you a lot, they kind of I guess didn't want to alarm people, and they were telling you that it was under control. And then eventually they had to come out and tell you the truth that it was not under control and that they had released some radioactive air and that I felt then also that everybody was going to be exposed to that.

**Question (Sangrey): And. You, did you know anybody or like at the, yeah did you know anyone that was like working there or heavily affected by the-**

Answer (Lindeman):- Uh, my- my girlfriend, Annie, her husband worked there and this, he was in the control room at the time, and through all the stress and the pressure and I guess the feeling of guilt because they did release some radioactive air that eventually their marriage, uh they divorced each other and because he just couldn't handle that pressure and knowing that he was part of releasing that air.

**Question (Sangrey): And do you like what specifically like happened at Three Mile Island?**

Answer (Lindeman): What happened?

**Question (Sangrey): Yeah.**

Answer (Lindeman): Well they were doing repairs and what happened, I guess some water leaked into the core and that's what caused all the problems. Some of the alarms some of the gauges weren't reading right and I guess the operators thought that it was working, it was corrected when it wasn't. So it was within I guess hours of a meltdown.

**Question (Sangrey): And like after it was over and everybody was like safe and came back home do you- like what was the aftermath of it like-**

Answer (Lindeman): I think no one felt secure with that there for a period of time. I think everybody was on edge just not knowing what were the effects of the radiation. Would it happen again. So I think for a while nobody felt safe and secure with that there, with the plant running.

**Question (Sangrey): And do you have- do. Um, are you like are you aware of any like changes or precautions that the plant made to like make sure that this doesn't happen again.**

Answer (Lindeman): I am sure that they have since trained employees in every aspect of an accident happening. Many of them did not know what to do. At the time they had one phone line going into the center and that was the only way of communication. Well of course the people were always on that phone trying to call for help for instructions. And the makers of the nuclear core, they could not get through to TMI because there was only one phone line, and they couldn't even give instructions to the people that worked there. I'm sure they've added many phone lines and now everybody has cell phones which now there is more ways to communicate.

**Question (Sangrey): Now due to the accident what do you think were some of the like long-term health effects of it?**

Answer (Lindeman): I think that some of the cancer that people were getting has something to do with the release of the radiation. It's never been proven, but it was just high cases from that I think, and also the animals nearby there, the cows and things, they've had high multiple birth rate. I just think that the radiation did some damage to the organs of the human body.

**Question (Sangrey): Yeah because I, when I was reading an article I heard something about- saying how the cow's milk was getting affected too and so yeah.**

Answer (Lindeman): And also when this all happened there were workers down at the Downs Co. Foundry that have went outside on break, and here when they went in, in their hair was a white, dusty material that was in the air during the time that this was going- first happened.

**Question (Sangrey): And if this were to happen again today, do you think that the media would be covering it differently?**

Answer (Lindeman): Yes I do. I think there was so little information left out to the people and the news media was taking their information from one source. Now I think they would be digging into all avenues, all different stories. I think they'd be talking to first responders. I think there would be a lot more coverage and information for the people to know.

**Question (Sangrey): And I'm aware that like within the next few years they're going to be closing the plant, Three Mile Island. Do you think that this has anything to do with the closing of it?**

Answer (Lindeman): I do not think that the accident had anything to do with the closing of the plant. I think it's nature that there's just other avenues now that people are looking into.

**Question (Sangrey): Yeah. And now that's all for the interview, so thank you for taking the time out of your day to do this.**

Answer (Lindeman): You're welcome.

### **Follow up phone call**

**Question (Sangrey): This is Madison Sangrey and I'm on the phone with a follow-up call with my interviewee Dawn Lindeman for my TMI project. Um who was the president at the time?**

Answer (Lindeman): The president was Jimmy Carter and he did fly into Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and toured TMI during the nuclear accident. His background is in the nuclear field, so he was familiar with what was going on at TMI.

**Question (Sangrey): And who was the governor?**

Answer (Lindeman): Uh Dick Thornburg.

**Question (Sangrey): Okay.**