

Interview Transcript: William Lawrence McLaughlin

Katie McLaughlin: Do you remember anything about the spraying of DDT?

William McLaughlin: When I was little, like kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade, we lived in a suburb of Detroit, Michigan, and they used to come down the street with a truck and it had this great big load on it and it would blow this fog out and all the kids would run out and play in it and it was DDT, I found out when I was older, used to kill mosquitoes and there were so many complaints from parents that they decided to do that at night and so I remember both in the daytime and then again at night my mom would be running to shut all the windows because this fog was drifting towards the house. So after that they did it at night, so you'd be laying in bed at night and hear that truck come down the street blowing all that stuff out there. So nobody ever got sick that I know of, but we didn't have many mosquitoes.

Katie McLaughlin: What were people's reactions when they discovered that DDT is dangerous?

William McLaughlin: I don't really know. I think most people wanted it sprayed because the mosquitoes were such a problem and so I don't know that any of them were upset or not. I just don't know because I was too little. My mom was upset because everybody was running in it and she knew it was not good and she didn't want it in the house because she'd run and close all of the windows.

Katie McLaughlin: How have you been affected by the use of Agent Orange?

William McLaughlin: I've had some health problems because of it. I had a (violent?) cancer and that was contributable because I'm on the Agent Orange list so they documented that. So I mean at the time, I didn't realize there was anything going on but it affected you years later. So you know, when you think about it you can't spray something on a tree and have it dead within 24 hours and not expect it to affect the people who are spraying it on there.

Katie McLaughlin: Do you remember anything about Rachel Carson or her book *Silent Spring*?

William McLaughlin: I remember reading it, I mean a long time ago when it came out and I think that's what started them getting rid of it, not being able to use it.