Events Before

1. Brown_protest_atmosphere, length: 2:34
   Eric Brown interviewed by Eric Olmanson
EB: During the four years I lived in the dorms, one year in Witte and three years in Sellery, this was the period of maximum demonstration on campus against the Vietnam War. I came here in September, ’67. A month later, in October, ’67, was the demonstration against the Dow Chemical interviews in the old Commerce School behind Bascom Hall. And I remember quite vividly being aware of something going on there. During my three years as a house fellow, there were various demonstrations on campus. And sometimes from our dorm windows in Sellery, we could see demonstrations outside. We could see kids marching down Johnson Street. We could see police cars. We could see police chasing students, etcetera... I recall one or two of my students being tear gassed, or maybe even slightly injured during the demonstrations. I also recall one night a student on my floor coming up with a friend of his who said the police were looking for him and could I hide him. And I wasn’t quite sure what to do. So the student said, “Why don’t we hide him in the luggage hall?” In the luggage room in the stairwell at the end of the wing. So we did that. We hid the student. The police never came up. I seem to recall on at least one occasion, Sellery Hall was surrounded by police. No one was allowed to go in, and no one was allowed to go out. And I’m guessing that the police strategy was if we can at least stabilize and keep the thousand students interest eh dorm, that will keep them from going out in the street and getting involved. And students can go out... EB: I mean, actually, if you think about it, it was probably a smart strategy on the part of the police, because you could at least stabilize and keep the thousand students interest eh dorm, that will keep them from getting involved. And students can go out... From the ninth floor window in my room, I could actually, I could hear and see and smell teargas grenades being thrown. It was a pretty scary period at times. I mean, you could hear the sounds of glass being broken. You could hear sirens. You’d see fire engines. I mean, kids would light fires on campus. It was a pretty distressing time.

2. Bless_ArmyMath_as_target, length: 1:32
   Robert Bless interviewed by Robert Lange
RL: Were you expecting, or other faculty who worked in Sterling Hall, were you aware that Sterling Hall was a focus of the antiwar protests?
RB: Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. I mean, the Army Math Center was very much in the news and very much and also there was, it was frustrating because I was against the Vietnam War. I thought it was a terrible thing. I still think it’s a terrible thing. But I didn’t like the way some people were expressing their displeasure with the war. You know, the demonstrators ran the whole gamut, from people who were really sincerely against the war and, to people who took advantage of the lack of law and order to just be thugs. To people who thought any, there was no price too large to pay to end the war, blah, blah, blah. Whole spectrum.
   There was one meeting in which this paper was handed out which showed all of the
government support and research labs on campus, of which of course a lot of them, and they were all targets. Because we were all, these were the extremists talking. They were all as culpable as the government itself. We were accepting government money, although of course in most cases had absolutely nothing to do with military or anything of that sort.

3. Parter_antiAMRC_propaganda, length: 1:51
Seymour Parter interviewed by Joyce Coleman
SP: ...We knew, and we had tried as hard as we could to make it clear that the Math Research Center was not doing any classified work. Pure research project. But the propaganda against it was rather fierce.

I’ll give you two examples. There was a little booklet that came out with four authors. One of them was Rowen, Jim Rowen. And one of them was Ed (Zideman?), whom I knew. Ed (Zideman?) was a student in computer science. His thesis advisor was John Halton. John Halton was part time at the Math Research Center, and part time at the Computer Science Department. His main area of interest was the Monte Carlo Method.

Now this little booklet was describing MRC. It had two paragraphs. The first paragraph was, there’s research being done at the Math Research Center on Monte Carlo Method with John Halton. Because I knew he was doing his thesis on Monte Carlo methods. The second paragraph said the Monte Carlo Method was developed at Los Alamos Laboratory during the war to help build atom bombs.
JC: Was that true?
SP: Now, both statements are true. Both statements are absolutely true.
SP: What’s the implication?
JC: That it’s still for military purposes.
SP: Yeah, right. Right. Of course, it wasn’t. It was by now, I called Rowen on this once. He said he didn’t write that. I said, “I know you didn’t write that. Ed (Zideman?) wrote that. I know that. But you wrote it. You put your name on the damn thing.”
He said, “What, am I responsible for everything that my name is on?”
I said, “I am! I write a joint paper, I am!” You know?
When I asked Ed Zideman about it, he said, “Well, we have to fight, fight.”
I said, “But it’s dishonest.”
He said, no.
I said, “This is academia. Arguments can be made, but they have to be honest.”
He said, “No, no. Academia is now part of the real world. Everything goes.”

4. Chapman_communist_sympathizing, length: 1:42
Emily Chapman interviewed by Barry Teicher
EC: I had, one night, our son was working for a sound store on State Street. And he gave me one of these scanners that you can listen to police calls. And the night they had all the rioting and they were burning things and blocking streets all around campus, I listened on this scanner, and I couldn’t believe that this was going on in Madison! It was a pitched battle between students and the National Guard and the police. And it was just terrible. I’ll never understand why students get—well, these were all the fairly communist sympathizing students, they really were.
BT: Was that the general feeling?
EC: Oh, yeah. They were going around saying, “Ho, ho, Ho Chi Minh.” And I worked in sociology. And actually I quit that job, because the grad students in one area were flying a big
red flag. And they said they were supporting the North Vietnamese against the American soldiers. I tried to talk them into taking the flag down. It didn’t do any good. [laughs] I took an American flag in and hung it in the room that I was working in. And I’m not an American. Canadian.

5. **Knowles_difficulties_as_faculty, length: 2:00**  
   **Richard Knowles interviewed by Robert Lange**  
   RK: Well, I knew that Wisconsin had always been a center of liberal thought. Not necessarily this kind of political activity. And it was not a pleasant kind of thing to find oneself caught up in. I think all of us were surprised at the violence that developed. Our kids went to a daycare center in the basement of a Congregational church at Breese Terrace and University Avenue. And that was right across the street from the ROTC building. And quite often, my wife would have to go in the middle of the day and retrieve our children who were sitting on the steps with their eyes streaming with tear gas. They came to think that the word “student” was a dirty word, because the students had caused this to happen.

   It was a time when we didn’t have a lot of leisure to reflect how this was different from the old days. We simply had to try to get by from day to day. My job was to try to give an education to the people who had worked all summer to make the money for this education and pay their tuition, and deserved to get an education. And here were all of these things impeding that. And I guess I was on the side of authority, trying to keep things going, when that was not always pleasing to either some of my colleagues or to the students, some of the students.

RL: And just how difficult was that within the Department of English? Was there serious contention?
RK: Oh, the department was ruined. It was split right up the middle. There was bitterness. There were groups of students invading tenure hearings and chanting. There were people marching around with bullhorns. Oh, yes. All normal academic order broke down. And great schisms and hatreds that never healed. There were lawsuits brought against the faculty by some of the younger faculty, for instance. It was a very destructive time.

6. **Taylor_defending_Chemistry_Building, length: 1:49**  
   **Jim Taylor interviewed by Robert Lange**  
   JT: There was a time when a colleague and I were standing with a fire hose at the entrance of the chemistry building, ready to defend doors. And students were rapping on the doors to come into the building. And at that time, we had no way of isolating the laboratories. So if they decided to come in and rampage through the building, that would have been disastrous. To life as well as to property. Because chemistry has many volatile solvents. So if you start even a minor fire in some places, you could create a major explosion. Or you could release some highly toxic chemicals. So one of the things that I have some regrets about was to stand in front of the front lobby with a fire hose, ready to turn it on if they swarmed into the building. They didn’t. And so I didn’t have the opportunity to test the resolve. I probably would have swept them out at that time.

   We had a liquid nitrogen tank at the back of the building. And there were three bullet holes—well, not bullet holes, but bullet dents – in that liquid nitrogen tank.
RL: Really?
JT: If it had been penetrated, if the hole had gone through the metal, that would have been a major, major problem. It probably would have hurt some of the students who had fired the shots.
Because if the tank had split, the liquid nitrogen could have spilled out. And that would have taken away their oxygen or it would have frozen them in place. That was a very, very difficult time.

7. **Huberty escalating tensions, length: 1:30**

*James Huberty interviewed by Robert Lange*

JH: ...it was just like absolutely every protest, absolutely at every rally, absolutely at every march, that started out with thousands and thousands of people would end up with these groups of 30 or 40 or 500 or 1,000 that would just splinter off into the city or into the campus area and the violence that would happen and the confrontation with the police. And the escalating tactics that this is all heading somewhere and the continued the message of shut the University down. Overthrow the government. Kill the police. I mean, this messaging, messaging, messaging, messaging, it was all building towards something. And after all, four students were, had been killed at Kent State, so in reflection, and actually in actually living at the time, it was like it’s obvious something was going to happen...

RL: Was it obvious, Jim?

JH: It was obvious to me that something was going to happen because this is, I mean, where could it go? It wasn’t going anywhere, it wasn’t getting less tense or less violent or less anything. It was getting more and more and more. And what’s going to happen? What’s going to happen? Well, the four students who were shot at Kent State, what’s the response going to be? You know, somebody is going to do something. There was stuff being said, you know. I mean, I didn’t personally hear anything at all from anybody, but it was just that sense of, you know, it’s, you know, it’s going to happen. Something’s going to happen.

**Bombing**

8. **O’Brien protestperspective reactiontobombing, length: 2:03**

*Sarah O’Brien interviewed by Barry Teicher*

SO: It had been a demand for years that Army Math be off campus, that we felt that what Army Math did was the mathematics behind very sophisticated computer warfare that was going on in Vietnam. They designed weapons that were designed for the purpose of killing and maiming as many people on the ground without putting American troops at risk. And we felt that that mission to design those weapons was incompatible with a peaceful learning environment, and that Army Math should leave campus. And that demand had been made and ignored for years.

I think what it’s important to, to realize is that there were dozens, probably hundreds, maybe thousands of Karl Armstrongs out there. There were firebombings constantly. There were probably hundreds of fire bombings a year at that time. There was, you trashng going on constantly. It was inevitable that Army Math was going to be blown up. And I think everybody knew it. And it was not surprising that it happened, and it didn’t, it was not out of context when it happened. I lived on Dayton Street.

When the bomb went off, and it woke me up, I was probably close to a mile away. It was a tremendous explosion, and said to somebody else, what was that? And he said, it was the capitol, go back to sleep, which I thought was sort of ironic, but it shows how inevitable this all was, that things had escalated to such a point that violence was so intense on both sides that it was inevitable that something big was going to happen. And it just happened to be those people
and that building and that day that was the big event. But if it hadn’t been that, it was going to be something else.

9. *Brown_explosion, length: 0:46*
   *Eric Brown interviewed by Eric Olmanson*

EB: At the time of the bombing on August 24, 1970, I lived in a house with two other guys on Breeze Terrace. And it was about 3:45 in the morning. And all of a sudden, there was this huge explosion which we could easily hear on Breeze Terrace. It shook our house. It shook the windows. We didn’t know what had happened. And we ran out to the front porch. It woke all three of us up. And we saw these huge flames leaping into the air from Sterling Hall.

   One of my roommates got in his car at quarter of four in the morning. And he drove to campus. And he came back. He said, “Well, they finally did it.” Meaning they finally blew up the Army Math Research Center, which is what they were trying to do.

10. *Cadmus_mushroom_cloud, length: 0:23*
    *Robert Cadmus interviewed by Laura Smail*

RC: I lived on Mifflin Street at the time, and heard a loud noise, which woke me up, and looked out the window. And I could see a mushroom cloud going up very, very high. It’s conceivable I was the only person who ever saw it. It’s hard to estimate the height. But many times the height of the trees that were visible from the second story balcony. Very high.

11. *Haller_neighbor_on_phone, length: 0:35*
    *Archibald Haller interviewed by Barry Teicher*

AH: I awoke at what, something like 3:15, and we live about five miles or so from Sterling Hall. And, uh, I heard a boom, and woke up, and I thought, isn’t that strange? It didn’t look like it was going to storm tonight. And I went back to sleep, and about 6:00 in the morning, I got a frantic call from a wife of a, of a police officer, who was a neighbor, uh, saying, screaming over the telephone that they bombed Sterling Hall.

12. *Sondel_papers_falling, length: 2:14*
    *Paul Sondel interviewed by Robert Lange*

PS: And one night I came back to my apartment on Dayton and Mills. We knew we were going to have to move from that building by September because the building was going to be demolished because the university had bought the land and was going to put a university building on that corner. So we had made plans to move out, but I was still living there. And I must have gotten back, oh, it feels like it was 1:30 or 2:00 in the morning. And I think I got the history right. I was asleep and all of a sudden heard this huge explosion. I thought it was a car backfiring that was parked right outside my window. It was that sort of a huge, loud explosion. And I immediately ran out the door and looked out the sky. And literally, there were papers coming out of the sky. You know, loose leaf kind of paper. Because our apartment was exactly two blocks from Sterling Hall.

   And I heard the explosion and I saw the paper. And my reaction was to run towards it. Someone’s in trouble. And my college roommate grabbed me by the belt and said, “We don’t know what’s going on there. We probably shouldn’t run up there and get involved” because there was enough noise and stuff coming out of the sky. By now, police sirens and other things were happening.
So we walked up there and police told us to go back home. We weren't sure exactly what had happened. All we knew was that there was this huge explosion and we felt it in the pit of our stomach. And then that next day, the news came out as to what had happened. And Dr. Fassnacht, I believe, as the name of the physicist, a physics graduate student who was tragically killed.

13. Knowles_friend_Fassnacht, length: 0:20
Richard Knowles interviewed by Robert Lange
RK: The Sterling Hall bombing killed a good friend of mine, actually. Bob Fassnacht. He was the student who was killed.
RB: Yes.
RK: We were (offices?) on a chorus in town. We both sang in it. And we were good friends. His wife later worked with my wife in the Ag School. So I took that very personally, actually.

14. Young_Hanson_early_morning_aftermath, length: 1:41
H. Edwin Young and Ralph Hanson interviewed by Tom Bates
RH: Well, in the first place, there was the concern for the safety of people in the building and have we got them all and what have you. And this was -- it was a long time, quite a period of time we were establishing if everybody was accounted for that was in the building. The security officer, of course, Ed was in the building going up the set of stairs when the bomb went off, and suffered ear concussions and a list of injuries. Later, you know, survey [words unclear] department as a result of that [words unclear]. They had found that the police with the firefighting people, of course, had found a young research assistant...
And I remember vividly him in the [word unclear] on the stretcher with a blanket over him. He was dead then. There was no question about it.
RH: And then after thinking about the people part of it, we were down there in the -- come daylight. I think we were down there in the 6:00 area because it was just daylight then, and, God, we had legislators down there, the mayor was down. ...
RH: And still didn’t know what the hell had happened. There was not trace at all of this vehicle.

15. Shain_surveying_damage, length: 3:03
Irving Shain interviewed by Barry Teicher
IS: ...it was a very embarrassing day for me because it seemed to me that everybody in the United States had heard the bomb go off and rushed to the campus in the middle of the night. I didn’t hear it! [laughter] I had been in a sailboat race with one of my kids on Lake [Wingra?] that day and we’d actually won. And I was absolutely exhausted and had gone to bed fairly early and I was sound asleep. And we lived on the far southwest side of Madison. And I did not hear the bomb go off. So I blithely drove into work the next morning and had a, as I got close to campus, I turned on the radio. I hadn't had it on earlier than that. And they were talking about streets being closed, and police action.
BT: [laughs] Oh my goodness.
IS: I couldn’t figure out what in the world was going on. So I got to the office and found, when I looked and saw what had happened, and realized all the glass was gone—there was a lot of broken glass on the ground.
BT: Oh, yeah. Right. The buildings all around.
That was when I first figured out what was going on. And I didn’t really learn about it until about eight o’clock in the morning. And by that time, Jim Edsel and Gordon Orr were around, and of course the police all over the place, reporters all over the place. And I did go through with Gordon. And I think there were other people with us.

BT: Probably, yeah.

And trying to assess the damage. Looking at the old chemistry building right across the way, which we were absolutely astounded that it hadn’t collapsed, because Joe [Hershfelder?] had made calculations decades earlier that showed that if an explosion of less than a kilogram of maybe half a kilogram of ether were to go off inside that building, the building would collapse. And use that as a way of justifying why we ought to have another chemistry building.

BT: Very clever.

The result of that was that the building was condemned, but we still stayed in it for many, many year. [laughter] But in any event, the building didn’t collapse. The bomb went off right next to it, and all it did was blow out a lot of glass. But we went through it. I remember that I was interviewed by one of these roving reporters from CBS News. And I was on national television that night. And I got letters from people all over the country, former students, and people I had known, saying that they had seen me on television.

16. Newcomb_lab_damage, length: 1:13

Eldon Newcomb interviewed by Barry Teicher

BT: Were you in town at the time?
EN: Yes, I was. I was awakened. As I recall, it was a Sunday morning.
BT: Yeah, I believe--
EN: And I was awakened with this tremendous boom. We lived out in the Nakoma area at the time. I didn’t know what it was until later. But when I came over, of course Sterling Hall was not far from the west side of our building.
BT: Right. Yeah.
EN: And all of the windows on the west side of our building had been blown out. And my laboratory was on that side.
BT: Oh, my.
EN: And my sectioning room. And Irving Shane was controlling access to the buildings. And I told him who I was, and he let me through. Well, the damage in our lab was extensive. I mean, some equipment was damaged.

I could still go down there and show you glass splinters in the doors. And we had some damage in the sectioning room, some of our equipment. It didn’t put us out of commission. We could clean up and continue work. I have some pictures showing glass all over the sectioning room.

17. Bless_student’s_thesis_destroyed, length: 1:12

Robert Bless interviewed by Robert Lange

RB: A graduate student of mine had actually just finished his thesis that night and left early. He left around two o’clock in the morning. He was a night person who would work all night. He would have been there above the thing. His thesis was destroyed, all his work.
RL: Oh my gosh!
RB: He was a pipe smoker. And he had a bottle of lighter fluid for a pipe lighter. And that caught on fire. His office burned. Most of the building didn’t burn. It was just one—he didn’t
realize that I had, his thesis was based on spectroscopic data which were on, at that time, photographic plates. And he had done an analysis of those plates. And that was the basis for the thesis. The plates had been destroyed. His thesis and all his records had been destroyed. He didn’t realize that he had given me a copy of his analysis of the plates. And my office was a mess. But it was inside, it didn’t burn. And I could find it and give it to him. So in what was really a remarkable performance, he disappeared for three weeks and came back with a second thesis.

18. Huberty_shocked_by_devastation, 1:53
James Huberty interviewed by Robert Lange
JH: ...So when the, when Sterling Hall was bombed, um, I mean, I literally heard it. I was sleeping, but I was woke up by it...I had a sense that it wasn’t good. That’s all I had, but I didn’t know what it was, no. Then this, I mean, I went back to sleep. I went back to sleep. I didn’t think anything of it. The next morning, I heard it on the news, and I was, I immediately went down to campus. I didn’t have plans to go down to campus that day. But the news came on that Sterling Hall had been bombed, and I went down there. So it was probably midmorning the day after it was bombed. But I, you know, it wasn’t, I really didn’t understand it as much, you know, at the time. I think it was just a bombing. Students were involved. There was, they were looking for some guys that had bombed it.
RL: How soon did you know that someone had been killed in that?
JH: Oh, it was about the very next day, the very next day, um, it was the University researcher, Robert Fassnacht, one of those names, I’ll never forget. And, um, some other people were hurt in it, and it was just like, it looked like, just like the picture showed in the paper. It was [word unclear] the way it looked, and I went down there, and you couldn’t get close to it because they had it all yellow-taped off, and the police and the FBI and so on were down there.

So I kind of kept a little bit of a distance from it because I was, you know, I was very, um, you know, just very kind of like just awestruck by the devastation of it. And certainly the, the killing, the unintended killing of that researcher was very, very much head shaking, you know, what? You know, okay, this is what happened? You know, it’s what happened? This is the way things work. And so I was kind of like, um, just shocked by it, shocked by the devastation.

Immediate Aftermath

19. Cadmus_effect_on_nuclear_physics, length: 1:14
Robert Cadmus interviewed by Laura Smail
RC: I guess one of the considerations from my own personal interest at the time was not so much in whether there was, whether my books or papers were intact or not. Whatever. But whether or not there was going to be nuclear physics at this university after that. It was quite a while after, without going into details of how the accelerator is constructed, it’s fragile. And it’s conceivable that if it had been, its main structural parts had been destroyed through the shock, that funds would not have been available to rebuild it.
LS: I see. I didn’t realize that.
RC: And nuclear physics at this university could have just come to a stop instantaneously, effectively.
RC: And people might have gone to other labs to take some data and things like that, to sort of
smooth things over. But it wasn’t clear to me, to anybody, I think, for quite a while after that, whether it was going to be able to, whether the whole situation here was going to completely change, or whether we were just going to have a year of cleaning up before we got back to business. It turned out to be the latter, but it wasn’t obvious in the beginning.

20. **Code_building_destruction, length: 1:41**  
**Art Code interviewed by Robert Lange**  
The bombing of Sterling Hall resulted in, well, first of all, damage to this building. Half of the Sterling Hall wing was, had to be reconstructed. And so we lived with plywood running down the hall to separate the two sides of the building. And we lived in just the north side of the building for a while without any heating or air condition. So we had fans and electric heaters in the offices for about a year here. The, what was it that I was going to add. Well, at any rate, the old chemistry building was badly damaged. But there had already been plans afoot for a new chemistry building that we put up on Johnson Street. So this, then, involved the construction of Chamberlain Hall. And when Chamberlain Hall was finished, then the Space Astronomy moved from 35 North Park Street to the top floor of new Chamberlain Hall structure.

21. **Shain_damage_to_Chemistry, length: 1:07**  
**Irving Shain interviewed by Barry Teicher**  
IS: But we had a lot of problems associated with that bombing. It blew out all the windows, not only in the old chemistry building, but in the new chemistry building. My office in the new chemistry building, which was a block away, over on Johnson Street, faced the campus. It was on the north side of the building. And for years afterwards, I was pulling glass, broken glass, out of my computers, out of my chemicals, shelves, out of my filing cabinet. It was just terrible. And interestingly enough, the shock waves skipped some buildings. And some buildings were completely, then, there’s that church is between the old chemistry building and the new chemistry building, on University Avenue, there’s that church there on the corner of Charter and University. They didn’t have any damage at all. But the shock wave went right over the church and got the chemistry building.

22. **Ginsberg_tears, length: 1:10**  
**Paul Ginsberg interviewed by Laura Smail**  
PG: One of the most moving moments that I can ever recall was in front of Bascom Hall the day that Sterling Hall was bombed, and Fred Harvey Harrington and Ed Young in tears, tears reflecting, I’m sure, a lot of, a whole myriad of feelings, a whole range of emotions. But those tears were real.  
And one of the primary, primary, primary reflections was what could we have done to avoid this? Even though, I’m back to I have good news, and I have bad news. And bad news, Sterling Hall was bombed, and a young life was lost. But in a sense, the good news is that it was, for the first time, a vivid illustration to so many students on campus as to what violence means. And I’m sure as certain as I can be of anything, that when you look in retrospect, to the beginning of the end of the antiwar movement on this campus, Sterling Hall is certainly that, I think, time.

23. **Huberty_protests_diminished, length: 0:58**  
**James Huberty interviewed by Robert Lange**
RL: Can you talk, Jim, a little bit about what it was like returning to school that semester?
JH: Yeah, there was a couple of things going on there, that I clearly remember and that is, I went to one of the first rallies or one of the first protests of the fall of 1970, one of the first things I went to. And it was like where is everybody? Like where is everybody? And what occurred to me, you know, not just like it was, it occurred to me then, but I kind of, oh, okay, this is what happens is that event, the bombing of Sterling Hall and certainly the killing of that researcher just was like taking a pin and pricking a balloon, and all of the built-up energies from all the rallies and demonstrations and all the student involvement and participation was just reduced to a few hundred people because no one wanted to be associated with that bombing where someone had died.

24. Knowles_protest_movement_turning_point, length: 0:55
Richard Knowles interviewed by Robert Lange
RL: Now following the Sterling Hall bombing, my sense is that that ended the days of turmoil on this campus.
RK: It showed the student agitators where they were going. They were killing each other. They were killing innocent students. And they drew back. It was no longer quite so heroic. In the early days of the confrontations with police, in which the police behaved very badly as well as the students, it was easy for students to pose as heroes. To walk around with their arm in a sling and with a bruise on their head and so on. It was sexy to have been injured in the conflict, and heroic to have been engaged in it. But after the Sterling Hall bombing, they said, what are we doing? We’re becoming our enemy. And that really was, I think, all over the country, the turning point of the movement.

25. Reeder_other_effects, length: 3:11
Don Reeder interviewed by Vicki Tobias
DR: ...the effect on individuals was vastly asymmetric as well. I mean, Joe Dillinger, whose student and finally graduate student postdoc was Bob Fassnacht, who was killed--
VT: Right.
DR: He really never did psychologically recover. He died within three or four years. And he was distraught that whole time.
VT: That’s a shame.
DR: Unable to focus or essentially accomplish anything after that. There of course were the whole of the nuclear program. Their records were burned and damaged by water when they put out the fires and everything else. And that was so that, you know, some groups slip by with relatively almost no change to their activities, and others were set back a number of years. Henry [Barshall, Heinz Barshall?] was so unhappy that he left and went to Livermore Laboratory for a number of years and came back toward the end of his career, because his wife and so forth missed Madison. But he was unhappy with the university response. I’m not sure the university could have done a lot differently.
VT: Right. Right.
DR: But there’s always a certain impersonality with respect to an institutional response to what basically is a personal injury. And I think that has been a great deal of the difficulty.
There were other ancillary problems that developed, probably not obviously, along the way. One of the faculty members came over and was trying to help move, uncover things and find records and equipment and so on, and strained his back and never did, he always had back
pain after that, and he retired somewhat early as a result. So there were little things like that that tended to keep the whole business alive.

Reflections

26. Bless_bombers_intention_to_kill, length: 0:38
   Robert Bless interviewed by Robert Lange
I always resented the fact that the press believed Armstrong and company when they said they didn’t want to kill anybody. They waited till late at night to do it. But they called the police a few minutes before they knew the bomb was going to go off. And the police car was actually turning the corner off of Charter, coming up the alley between the chemistry building and Sterling at the time the explosion went off. The car was blown in the air. Had those guys been a few minutes earlier, they’d have been—[coughing] Excuse me. In the building, and probably killed.

27. Cadmus_long-lasting_effects, length: 2:41
   Robert Cadmus interviewed by Laura Smail
RC: I had to rebuild my own personal experiment from scratch. And everything that we had was sort of one way or another put back together or replaced, or got from government surplus, or something.
LS: Did you learn anything from having to put it back? I just wonder if there was anything—
RC: If you’re asking whether there was a silver lining, the answer is not much.
LS: That’s what I am asking.
RC: Every day you live is a learning experience. So from that point of view, yes, you learn something. I’m guessing maybe the greatest lessons were philosophical lessons or physics lessons. I’m sure people did learn things from having to build stuff that somebody had built five years before. But not, the educational process was severely—
LS: You could have learned it another way.
RC: —was severely hindered. We would have learned, everybody would have learned much more if they had been allowed to just continue in the normal way. Because most, a great deal of the effort was on very menial kinds of things.
LS: What was the atmosphere, then? Was it, I mean, was it pretty depressing? Or were you cheerful about it?
RC: No. It’s impossible to be cheerful about it. I think everybody was in a state of shock for a while. After that, I think, when it became clear that the lab was going to rise from the ashes one way or another, I guess that became, partly as a result of having inspected the damage and to see that it could be restored, and I think, I don’t know exactly how this all went, but I imagine that the Atomic Energy Commission somewhere along the line at least made an informal commitment to support our attempt to put things back together. At that point, I think people mostly had the attitude well, the faster we get it cleaned up, the faster we’re back in business. People just sat down and did it...
RC: The first beam was accelerated through the machine, I think in December.
LS: Oh, that’s—
RC: So the first beam didn’t take too long at all. But there were lots of supplementary pieces of equipment. It was years, I mean, it’s only been fairly recently that the effects of the bombing haven’t been quite noticeable. For a long time after that, you would need some tool to do something and you’d look around and say, “Must have gone in the bombing.” It’s really been
just the last couple of years when the bombing didn’t sort of have an effect on what was going on.

28. Sondel_disappointed_and_shaken, length: 2:03
Paul Sondel interviewed by Robert Lange
PS: I guess I was terribly disappointed and shaken. But I had been involved in several antiwar rallies where a very small component of the people that were involved allowed themselves to emotionally be swayed over by a mob violence sort of an attitude, where there would be a crowd of people marching down the street, protesting why we had to get out of this war. And from out of nowhere, someone would have a brick going through a window. No good purpose to do that. But someone would do that, and you’d hear other people laugh, and other people egg them on. And I don't know if it was one out of a hundred or one out of ten or one out of a thousand. I don't know if the person who did that was a fellow student, or as some suggested these were outside agitators that were brought in to try and stimulate students to try and go that way. But clearly there were some people who were quite impressionable and open minded who somehow thought that taking that step of violent civil disobedience was what it was going to need to take in order to have the correct end result.

And because I had seen that, I guess I could imagine some people doing an action as crazy as this thinking, they didn’t think they were bombing Sterling Hall, an academic institution. What they thought they were doing was closing down the Army Math Research Center, which they thought was just supporting the war effort. And while it may have been doing that, there was also academic activity going on there. And there were students. And the people who planted the bomb, no matter how well meaning they thought they were, hadn't thought through all of the implications of their actions.

29. Luberg_reflections, length: 2:09
Leroy Luberg interviewed by Donna Taylor
LL: It would have to be my opinion and the reflection that all of these protests did finally culminate in something which had to be very, very serious. You could feel it coming, that something would occur, which could cause the loss of life or the loss of major property. And surely, that happened in the bombing of Sterling Hall.

The protests, the opposition to our participation in Vietnam, and the fact that many faculty members engaged in protests, the fact that it seemed to be a way of life, it seemed to be the thing to do, probably gave these young men, who did the bombing, a feeling that they were doing something that was right. They were helping, they felt, to stop a war. And they were helping to stop it by some major vigorous, in their thinking, clever and courageous act. Now we know that a life was lost, massive property loss. We are lucky to come out of it as well as we did.

DT: Could have been more.
LL: There could’ve been 25 or 30 people killed. There could have been $20 million of property destroyed. There could’ve been research work lost that had taken centuries almost to build up. But that did not occur. Certainly, one life is too much to lose and one building is too much to lose, although, I don’t compare them. The life is a thing that must concern us most, naturally. If there had not been the protests on this campus, if there had not been that kind of climate, I doubt if these young men would’ve taken it on themselves to dynamite a structure.
30. Brualdi_surprised_by_bombing, length: 1:32
Richard Brualdi interviewed by Robert Lange

RL: Richard, were you completely surprised that the bombing had taken place? Or was, in your mind, a certain inevitability about it?

RB: No. I was completely surprised about that. There were violent demonstrations on campus. But if there was property damage it was, I would say, minimal. You know, people wrote slogans on buildings, etcetera, that kind of damage certainly existed. But I certainly was very surprised to see that some people were so against the mathematics research. And as I say, it was really a symbol. They were really protesting the Vietnam War by attacking this symbol which existed on campus. So it was a huge surprise, a huge upset for me.

RL: And what was the reaction within the department to that?

RB: Well, I mean, I think it was similar to my reaction. If you’re asking whether somehow those of us on the faculty who had been a bit vocal concerning the Vietnam War, who may have sent this letter about the Mathematics Research Center, whether they were blaming us to any degree, I would say no. Nobody, there were no repercussions of any sort against me.

31. Young_Hanson_reflections_on_handling_protests, length: 3:47
H. Edwin Young and Ralph Hanson interviewed by Tom Bates

TB: ...do either of you gentlemen regret any particular things you – policies you adopted or is there anything you feel you would have done differently in retrospect?

EY: Well, you see, that’s a – as difficult as that question is, knowing what we knew at the time, see if we knew everything that we know now at the beginning, we would have been tougher at some places, stopped certain things, ignored other things that we did something about, but we didn’t have the – remember, we didn’t know what was going – we didn’t have access. We didn’t have people at all these meetings and so on. We had to guess what was going on.

TB: You know, remember that – O.K., AMRC had been a target of demonstrations.

EY: Yes.

TB: For at least a year.

RH: Yeah, but you couldn’t fill that building up with security people and, you know, sense alarms, things of that nature. They’d just move – because if that were the case, they’d make another target.

EY: There are over 300 buildings here.

RH: And as a last resort, they – well, could go call on the Chancellor; if he wasn’t home, the President, so, you know, the list of targets just was impossible to calculate...

TB: Was it unthinkable to you to give into the demands of the protestors? What was it? To remove it from campus?

EY: Um-hmm.

TB: To remove it from campus....

EY: Well– there’s certain – some people you can’t deal with. Collective bargain only works in negotiations if both parties want the enterprise to survive. But if one of them wants to tear it down, that’s like bargaining with the TAs. You couldn’t bargain with them. They wouldn’t abide by anything and so it’s impossible. Because the bigger the – the most active ones and the leaders are going to be leaving next year because they [words unclear] no costs. Very hard to bargain with people for whom it’s free. See we bargain with the guys in the factory. They want the factory to stay there. They’re not going to destroy it [words unclear]. You got some radical cells in the auto workers. They just put some stuff in the gears and so on now and then, but by
and large, they both – you want the enterprise to survive. But we were dealing with people that didn’t, and I realize that. So making concessions to them – I had so many people explain to me if I just give in on this issue or that issue –

TB: Did you – were you in accord with that tough line?

RH: Well, I didn’t think it was a tough line. I called it reasonable. Same thing – they’re still debating the placement interviews here. “Why should the CIA recruit on campus?” Why are they any different, you know, for recruiting for that principle, than the General Electric, the Dow Chemical, the Honeywell people? You could go on and on and on...

EY: 90 percent of the students by 1970 were against the war in Vietnam, but that didn’t justify, in my mind, trying to destroy the one place where they could be free to talk about and discuss it and argue it. That’s what these people were doing. Some of them were just thugs. They were anti-social in the sense that they were – loved mankind, but they were going to save him by a revolution where they’d take over and run it.

32. Haller_no_more_Robin_Hoods, length: 2:39
Archibald Haller interviewed by Barry Teicher

AH: ...up until the bombing, the bulk of the students really didn’t know who to believe. They tended to believe the, to believe the, um, the few radicals, who were pretty good orators among other things and probably pretty courageous people too, although, I’m sure some of them had their own games that they wanted to play. But and, and the country as a whole was so unused to this kind of divisive situation, that a lot of official responses to, to, to rallies and things like that, were really overdone, or and we had events in -- such as in 1967, when the Dow Chemical riots took place.

And we had other riots at about that time. But in other words, up until the bombing, the bulk of the students thought that these radical leaders, who were really relatively few, compared to all of them, all of the students, were Robin Hoods, uh, with no weapons and so forth, facing a brutal and, and very well armed establishment. Well, then when the bombing took place, immediately after that, a woman whose name I don’t remember now if I ever knew, who was editor, as I recall, of The Cardinal, got on the radio, and she said, and, well, by the time she was on the radio, it was already known that this one fellow had been killed in the, in the bombing.

And she got on the radio, and she said in the most callous way, this is war. Of course, people get killed in war, too bad. The students were appalled. All over the nation, not just here in Madison, but all over the nation, the students who had taken the, the leadership among other young, the young leadership of the revolutionary movement as Robin Hoods suddenly saw them as the face of evil as well, so that they didn’t, that didn’t change their opinion of the establishment. It changed their opinion of the former Robin Hoods. And it killed the student movement, the student revolutionary movement all over the country.

TOTAL ALBUM LENGTH: 0:54:02