
“Looked like the sky was painted yellow”

The story of Raymond Najar.

By Joshua Wheeler (Text) and [Reto Sterchi](#) (Photo), 16.10.2021



Raymond Najar.

Raymond was 7 years old at the time of the bomb test. He was living about 40 miles from the blast in the town of Carrizozo. “Looked like the sky was painted yellow,” he says. “We was out in the yard that morning. There was all kinds of people milling around out there. I just remember the air and sky was yellow. Like somebody poured a bucket of yellow paint in front of me.”

He remembers how they would get milk a few times a week from their neighbor. He brought it over in an open bucket. “Everything was like that,” he says, referring to consumption of local agriculture that would likely have been tainted by fallout. “We carried water from the railroad’s round house where they had an open reservoir. This was before plumbing. I carried two little buckets nearly every day.”

Eventually Raymond’s mother and all of his siblings developed thyroid problems. His mother had cancer and Raymond is himself a cancer survivor. His wife, raised in nearby Tularosa, has lost her father and brother to lung and stomach cancer.