

PRESERVE THE AREA'S RURAL QUALITIES
(PARQ)

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
Teresa Tate

January 21, 2012
Readyville, Tennessee

INTERVIEWER, TRANSCRIBER, AND EDITOR:
Jaryn Abdallah

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
Dr. Martha Norkunas

Teresa Tate Biographical Sketch



Teresa Tate is a lifelong resident of Readyville, Tennessee. She is an avid supporter of the restoration and educational use of the Readyville Mill. The Mill, the dam, and the Stones River have all played a pivotal role in her life. Although she grew up within walking distance of the Mill, Ms. Tate's family did not farm, and therefore she did not have important interactions with the Readyville Mill as a child. Her father's employment as a postal worker, delivering on the Readyville Route Two, brought her family to Readyville. Ms. Tate and her friends spent many summer days swimming and floating at the dam that provided the power for the Mill.

Her involvement with the Mill began as an adult. During her teaching tenure at West Side Elementary School, Ms. Tate's classes participated in field trips to the Mill in order to supplement the social studies curriculum. As a teacher, Ms. Tate consistently sought out opportunities to encourage her students to engage with history in meaningful ways.

Ms. Tate is now retired from teaching and lives with her husband in her childhood home. She enjoys collecting Native American artifacts and unique stones, which she finds on her walks along the Stones River. She uses many of these artifacts to create pieces of art, which she displays in her yard. Ms. Tate also collects old country store artifacts, particularly souvenirs from the local area, to add to her Country Store Museum that is located behind her house.

Teresa Tate Interview Abstract

Teresa Tate's interview spanned a broad range of topics related to growing up in Readyville, Tennessee. She spoke about her many memories of the Readyville Mill, the dam that powered it, and the Stones River. She described experiences with various owners including Rat McFerrin, George Justice, Gerald Flipse, Mr. and Mrs. Carignan, Wayne Epperly, and Tomm Brady.

Having lived all of her life in Readyville, Teresa Tate was able to share many stories from her parents and community members. These included trips to the Mill, the electricity it provided, and local history. Ms. Tate did not recall many important interactions with the Mill when she was growing up, but she did talk about spending many summer days swimming and floating at the dam, which seemed to be a central recreation spot for community members. She also recalled many memories of growing up in Readyville. These memories include participating in a Royal Crown Cola sponsored contest, visiting family in Woodbury, Tennessee, the mill in Woodbury, flooding of the Stones River, and craft fairs held at the Mill by the Carignan family.

The preservation of the Readyville Mill and the hope for the eventual restoration of the dam were important themes throughout the interview. Ms. Tate emphasized the importance of the Mill for educational uses, and recalled taking students there on field trips to supplement the social studies curriculum. Ms. Tate has been involved in many of the preservation efforts, and described afternoons spent covering the Mill windows with plastic to prevent weather damage, as well as fundraisers and partnerships with local politicians interested in the preservation of the Mill. She described Tomm Brady's purchase and restoration of the Mill as an answer to her prayers. She also discussed continuing efforts to repair the dam, which would allow the Mill to operate on waterpower.

Ms. Tate lives in walking distance of the Mill and the Stones River, and she described her current relationship with both. She enjoys relaxing at the river and spends many afternoons walking along its banks, collecting Native American artifacts, unique rocks, and geodes that have washed up.

The interview ended with a description of Ms. Tate's Country Store Museum where the conversation took place. She described some of the most meaningful pieces that she has collected over the past 35 years. These pieces include memorabilia from the Readyville post office, various country stores in the area, and items purchased at flea markets on her travels throughout the United States and Canada.

Teresa Tate
Lightly Edited Transcript
January 21, 2012
Readyville, Tennessee

Jaryn Abdallah: This is Jaryn Abdallah and I am here with Teresa Tate. We are at her home in Readyville, Tennessee. And what is this building that we're in?

Teresa Tate: This is my country store museum.

JA: Okay.

TT: This is my collection that over the years when I travel and see stuff I need or thinks cute, I get that and bring it home as a souvenir. So over a thirty-five year period of time I've collected more stuff than you can imagine. (JA laughs) So this is just a little bit of the stuff in this store that we have for music. My husband and his friends come down and play music.

JA: Oh.

TT: And we have this table as our game – we play dominoes and checkers and Chinese checkers, and it's like a little hang out place.

JA: Cool. Well we'll definitely talk more about this country store museum in a little bit. But I just wanted to state for the record that today is Saturday January 21, 2011 and I have your permission – 2012! Oh my gosh, you're right. That's so hard.

(both laugh)

TT: I know. I just wrote a check and I couldn't put – I couldn't get that on there.

JA: Okay, so it is January 21, 2012. And I have your permission to record this?

TT: Sure.

JA: Okay, great. I was thinking maybe we could start out maybe as far back as you know. Like, you said you're family is from around here.

TT: Yeah.

JA: So how far back are your family's connections with the Readyville Mill?

TT: Oh, when my dad was just a small child. My dad passed away in April of 2011, and he was 86 years old. And he can remember coming down whenever they brought wheat, or they brought corn, and they had it on the, I don't, they call it the shares whatever. You come down and they grind stuff for you, but if you have fifty pounds of stuff you might not want fifty pounds of flour at the time. So what they did was just wrote down that you had fifty pounds or you had a hundred pounds of whatever. And then you could come back and get it until you used all yours up. So he can remember coming down on a wagon, and he's told me that many times.

Of course when I was growing up, I was raised here, so the Mill has practically been in my sight my whole life. And my dad was the mailman on Route Two Readyville, so it was a rule that he had to live on his mail route. So this is where I was when I was two days old, I've been here ever since.

JA: Are there any other stories that you can recall that your parents told you about the Mill?

TT: Well my dad, I've heard my dad talk about the ice.

JA: The ice?

TT: The ice part. And my mother was a McFerrin, so her relative, who was named Rat, called Rat McFerrin, is who ran the Mill at one time. So that was a member of our family. And my daddy grew up with the Adams boys who ran the ice plant down there and delivered ice. Or you could come and pick up the ice there at the, at the Mill.

JA: How old were they, I guess, when the Mill started provided electricity. Was that in their time that they could remember?

TT: Uh-uh. My mother lived in Woodbury and my dad lived over in Bradyville, so they didn't live, growing up, they didn't live here. So I don't remember them

telling me anything about the electricity. But I've heard Miss, Miss Oliver talk about it. Miss Oliver who lived out at The Corners, when she was just a child, they had electricity there, and she said they would blow a horn and let everybody in Readyville know they was fixing to turn off everything and so you need to light your lamps. I've heard her talk about that. She passed away in the last three or four years. And I've heard her talk about that. She could remember Civil War veterans that came back long after the Civil War was over. They had passed through here during the Civil War and got a drink at the spring down at The Corners. And she could remember them coming back and asking, telling that they were here during the Civil War, and could they please get a drink out of the spring. They remembered where that was. So she was probably, you know five or six years old, and she could, she could remember that. I thought that was cool.

JA: Yeah!

TT: I mean, because that house was a hospital after the Battle of Stones River.

JA: The brick one up here?

TT: Uh-huh. A Union hospital. And so it has a lot of stories about that that I don't know.

JA: Uh-huh.

TT: I just know that there was a hospital. But I've heard her tell that story, the electricity story, they'd say, "Oops, that's the horn! Light the lamps." And I thought that was so cool (laughs).

JA: Yeah, if you remember any other stories that she told, or any other community members, that they might have told you about that time, I would love to hear them.

TT: Well I heard Ms. Carmine Bragg, who she lived up Tasse Road when she was growing up, and I've heard her, I heard her one time say that she got to ride on the wagon down with her daddy to the Mill, and they would get ice down there or they would take grain down. And she's already passed away too. That's the only electricity story I've ever heard was Miss Oliver telling that about the horn blowing. And it was on, they turned it off like five o'clock at night. And that's when you had to light your lamps because there wasn't going to be

electricity. Of course Readyville had electricity whenever other communities had none whatsoever.

JA: Yeah, I read that Readyville had electricity before even Murfreesboro because of the Mill.

TT: Yeah, because of the dam. The dam could generate the electricity. I think that's cool. And we always laugh, too. In Cannon County there's no water runs into Cannon County. All the water runs out of Cannon County. So every drop of water that people that people, Murfreesboro, they get it from Stones River. The East Fork of Stones River, that might be another fork of Stones River, but the East Fork of Stones River comes right straight from Short Mountain. So we used to laugh and say, you know, "Hey, don't make fun of us. We'll cut your water off." (both laugh) Well that's what we – "We had electricity, haha!" You know. (both laugh) Course TVA came in and bought it all, you know, bought it up, and then it was gone. But that, that was long before I was ever – I was born in 1951, and I have no recollection of that whatsoever. Never, never even saw a picture of what it looked like.

JA: So you were born in 1951 and the Mill was still operational into the '70s, right?

TT: Oh yeah. Mr. Justice run it, who just lives around the road. His house is right around the road from here. Mr. Justice and his son, Ray, ran the Mill, and they had King of Patent flour. And had that logo on the bags was King of Patent instead of the Readyville Mill. And of course I, when I was growing up, I had absolutely no reason to be down there. I, you know, I just didn't go to the Mill. My daddy didn't have a corn crop. We didn't have and animals to feed, and we didn't have a, you know, any reason to be down there other than the fact that he might have taken them down to visit, or he might have taken the mail down there to Mr. Justice. But I can't remember going down there when I was a little kid at all.

Now, later, when I started teaching school in 1971 and the Flipses owned the Mill, and their children went to school. And I had their children in school. So they fixed that, oh it was amazing how they came in and fixed the Mill. And of course I'd go down there when they ran it because they sold stuff, you know, cheese and that kind of thing. And then the Carignan's bought it from them, and I had the Carignan children in class. And the Carignans would let my, my class come down every year and watch them grind. And that's basically how I learned

how that worked. I was already grown whenever I watched them sharpen the millstones. I thought was so cool. I thought, "You have to sharpen a rock?"

JA: Could you describe that?

TT: It has grooves in those, in those stones, and he was, he was sharp – I don't even know what kind of instrument he was using. But he would sharpen that to where those grooves would be just perfectly deep, to where those, it would grind those. And it was the corn, it was the one that was grinding the corn. My kids would load up and go down there and watch how that. Because even though these kids are in the country, I call it in the country, they have no, absolutely no knowledge of any of that industry that took place. That's why this mill is so important, that if we can get education, on an education basis, to come down there. I took kids one time, I'll never forget this. I took kids one time down to the Sam Davis Home. They have On The Farm Day. And not one of my children that are from Bradyville and Burt and the hills of Cannon County knew that you could pluck a goose for down feathers for a pillow without killing the goose. None of them had ever seen that take place.

Well none of my kids had ever seen that Mill in action. They didn't know how that could be ground, and they were fascinated, well I was too, fascinated about how it went from an ear of corn to, "Here's your meal to make your cornbread tonight." And whenever the tour was over, Mr. Carignan would give everybody a two pound bag a piece of free cornmeal, and they got to go home with that. I go, "Make your own cornbread. You know, you watched it, now go make your cornbread." So, for an education purpose, this is priceless. And we were so absolutely so happy to see it saved and people enjoying it like they're enjoying it now.

JA: It's beautiful.

TT: It is absolutely beautiful. And if we can somehow get the dam fixed to where it will hold the water back in the – we'll call it, it was always called the Mill Pond – hold the water back to where the water can be drawn out of the Mill Pond and up through the race way where it can be run on the wheel instead of electricity like it is now, that would just be an extra something that I wish we could get done.

JA: Yeah, that would be really, that would be something. You know, it's so interesting, you talk about how important this mill is, and I mean, just the history of it. It was built in the early 1800s, if I am remembering correctly.

TT: Well they think that there was an original one built by Charles Ready's son-in-law, Mr. Talley. That, that hill over that you can see right out that window is called Talley Hill, named after him. And so the Mill just sits at the base of Talley Hill. They think maybe the Mill might have been on, at another location when it was first built. But we don't have any idea where that was, I don't. And then that mill burned either during the Civil War or near the Civil War, some way or other. And then that was rebuilt. So the original one was about 1812, something like that. But then this one now here is later than that.

So, it's run by the water from the Stones River, but the water from the Stones River is taken out of there and gone to the raceway. And then it goes through the wheel, and then it is expelled down another raceway to go back into the river. So it's a little odd of how some of the other mills – and it is the last one. It's the last mill on the East Fork of Stones River, so that makes it even more important.

JA: How many –

TT: I think it's the last one.

JA: How many were there at one time?

TT: I think at one time there was like forty.

JA: Oh, wow.

TT: On there, and I could be wrong about that. There was a mill everywhere. There were mills everywhere because every community had to have one. And this one is it. So if anybody wants to see anything in action, that's the nearest one here. Of course there's others, there's others in Middle Tennessee that are running, but this one's the nearest to just about anywhere. He has done such a magnificent job.

People laugh when I say this, but I used to pray that somebody would get that mill and save that before it fell down. When I would start (laughs) when I would go to school every day, I had to pass by there every day. I would look down there and I went, "Don't fall. Don't fall. I'm doing all I can. (laughs) I'm doing all

I can. We're doing all we can to save you. Don't fall." And I'd come back that afternoon, I'd go, "Okay, she's still there. (laughs) Don't fall tonight!" Because Brown's Mill fell in. At Lascassas, and they had that stabilized. A structural engineer came in and stabilized and one night they said it was the biggest crash. And now, you know, it's gone forever.

JA: Yeah, I was reading an interview with Mr. Brady and he was talking about that process of. He had to raise it up 22 inches and they had to be very careful. And I think that might have been the mill that he talked about where they had been raising it up and it just, it fell. And he said that they were so careful, and it was a really long process because they'd just crank it up, you know, half an inch, a quarter of an inch, a little bit at a time.

TT: Yeah, one thing about the Readyville Mill – it's not a story about the Mill running or anything, but it's a story about living here in Readyville. When I was a younger child Mr. Justice called my dad and Mr. Thomas Read who lived next door, and Mr. Paul Tenpenny who lived on the other side of us to come and help get the grain from the first floor. Because it started raining, and you see what the water looks like today? Well the water was over, not over the road, over the bridge. And water was running in the front door of the mill and out the back windows. And so my dad and Mr. Tenpenny, before the water got up so high, got over there and got the, helped Mr. Justice get the grain moved to a higher level.

JA: Mmm-hmm.

TT: Now that's the highest I've ever, I remember the water getting. What you see today it's, it's pretty high.

JA: Yeah. So how high did it get at that point?

TT: They got places marked. I don't know whether it was saved during the renovation or not, but there was places marked down at the Mill of how high the water got. But I know it was coming out the back windows and going in the front. The house next to the mill, that sets on the highway there, they've, when you was talking about raising something up, they've raised that I don't know how many feet. They raised it up literally feet higher. Because the water would come in that, get in that house. And Ms. Hollinsworth, who was the postmaster when my dad delivered the mail, she lived in that house and the water got in. And it got so high up it floated her dining room hutch that had her china in it. It

floated it and turned it over. And my mother went over the next day when the water went down and helped her scoop the mud out of her house and pick up her china out of the mud. So when you say we're in a low place here, we're (laughs), when you say flood plain, (laughs) this is it. So water's the whole life of the Mill, and we get lots of it.

JA: Yeah (laughs)!

TT: Yeah we have, we laugh. There's a joke that it says, "If someone could spit in the water, in the river in Woodbury, and it would be muddy down here in Readyville." (both laugh) I heard that as a child.

JA: So when your parents were growing up you said your mother grew up in Woodbury and your father grew up in Bradyville. Did they each have their own mills in those communities?

TT: No, no. My dad had to come down to here if they was going to come down to a mill. But my mother had a mill right where the Middle Tennessee Electric office is in Woodbury. That was the Edgefield Mill. And there was a dam there that held the water back so they could use the water to run the power. And I can remember, I was probably really small, but I can remember how sad my mother was when they dynamited the dam. And they tore down the old mill, and they filled that all in. They just filled it all in and they built that, it was the Edgefield Bank of Commerce is what was there when they filled that all in. So I can remember going down to that mill when I was a little kid with my Uncle Don. But I don't remember the dam. I don't remember seeing the dam. But my mother grew up right there in the shadow of that place. And she talked about going swimming there and all the fun they used to have down there, and how sad she was whenever they dynamited that dam.

JA: And when you went there, with your uncle, you said, what –

TT: Yeah, he'd go down and get grain, something ground up for cow feed. You know, crushed corn or crushed feed and stuff. And Mr. Jeff Jones ran that mill. I can just see it right now, how it looked and all. Oh that's what, if my Uncle Don was going to go somewhere, I was in the truck ready to go, you know. (both laugh) It was nothing like a half a mile down the road. We could see it from my grandmother's house. But I'd be in that truck ready to go down there and see that, get that feed or whatever he was going to do down there.

Yeah, it's sad when the things are gone, historical stuff is gone, gone forever. They're gone.

JA: What was the name of the mill? The Edge?

TT: The Edgefield.

JA: Edgefield?

TT: If it was called something else, I don't ever know it. It was just the Edgefield, that's the mill down there.

JA: But you didn't ever come down to the Readyville Mill?

TT: No because my grandmother who ran a farm, a dairy farm in Woodbury – well she lived in Edgefield too – now it's called Woodbury. They always went to that mill. And then my dad drove the mail route six days a week, and we didn't, we didn't have any business to be down at the mill. You don't have anything ground up or anything.

JA: Hold on one second, the levels on this. I'm going to turn the volume. Let's see. I wasn't paying attention to the levels on the recorder.

TT: That's alright.

JA: Okay, so we were talking about the Edgefield –

TT: Yeah, the fact that we didn't have any, any reason to have – we just lived here and I had about three acres of land, so we didn't have anything that needed to be ground or anything like that. Course I knew everybody who ran the Mill, and Mr. and Mrs. Justice, and Ray and his wife, even their children, grew up with their children. But I didn't go down there as a child. I had to get grown to get down there to say, "What's going on down here?" You know. (laughs) Or I had to get grown and see the fact that it was, something's going to happen to it before I went, "Oh my gosh! I need to get down here and learn how this is happening." I told my children one time in class about, I said, "Ya'll." We were actually studying about colonial history, and it was talking about a mill, and grinding, a water wheel. The kids had no idea what I was talking about. I said, "Well you know how that – you know down at the mill in Readyville." They go, "No." They don't. I said, "Ya'll never saw that?" No. Of course at that time it was

abandoned. And I said, "Guys, just look. When you go past Russell's Market, just turn your head and look down there, and there it is." They'd come back, you know a week later or something. They'd go, "We never saw that down there." I thought, "Man, what a waste." Because if you are living in the shadow of this place, and you have no knowledge of it, and you have no knowledge of what's happening, how it works, how important it was to the farmers in the area, then these poor kids in Murfreesboro, they don't have a clue either.

JA: So have you seen any of that, you know, you were taking your classes down there and trying to build their awareness of the Mill and what it was and its importance to the history of the area. Have you seen any of those students then take an interest in it as they've gotten older?

TT: Well I see kids who are, who have gotten older who are coming down to the mill now and saying like, "Oh [it's] so pretty, we're so glad it's been saved. And we know how important it is now." I don't think any of those people – well, my daughter and her friends helped us whenever we would go down and cover up the windows. One day, just this lady named Miss Jean Gilley, Miss Jean Gilley and I were talking and, and she says "You know, those windows are out that rain's just pouring in." And she said, "That's the thing that you can't have. The roof can't be gone, and the windows can't be gone, because it, the rain's going to get in. It's going to ruin it." She said, "Let's go down there. Let's get permission to go down there and put some plastic on the windows." I said, "Alright, sure." So we got Wade MacMackins to go with us.

JA: Who's that?

TT: Wade MacMackins. He lives up Tasse Road. And he was interested in the Mill. So two women and one man went down there and put plastic on the windows. Well, the first time we went, I had a plastic cup of nails and a hammer that Miss Jean said, "We need to throw it in the river, just throw it in the river, it's useless, get rid of it." (laughs) So we said, "Okay." We took a floor a piece to get the plastic up. Well that wasn't going to work because the windows were so big we needed two people to help hold the plastic. And then we just couldn't nail the plastic down. We had to have strips of wood to hold the plastic and then, alright, would just tear right off. So we learned right then that we needed more stuff to get the thing fixed. Well we came back and I had the third floor. And about the third nail that I hammered in, I knocked my cup of nails over and they went all the way to the river. They went right down the wall and they just went and just poured right into the river. So I announced to the other two that I was

through for the day. (laughs) I had done all I could do. So we got a little bit more organized, and we got people, more people interested. And we had, actually it was printed in the Daily News Journal [newspaper based out of Murfreesboro, Tennessee]. I got my daughter's 4-H group to come down, some of those kids to come down and help. And we had twenty, probably twenty, twenty-five people by then that was interested. We kept the plastic on the windows and tried to keep the weather out as best we could. And prayed that somebody would come and get, (laughs) buy the place and fix it up. So I just love it.



(Community members covering windows in plastic, 1993)

People come down there. Of course, I'm fortunate enough that if I want to go down there, I just ride my bike down. And it's the funniest thing was, I went in one day to get some meal, I was out of meal, and so I went in to get some meal. And I rode my bike over, and there was a group of little ladies over there. And they went, "Oh, here comes somebody on a bicycle." They said, "Honey, how far did you ride to get down here?" (both laugh) I wanted to say, you know, say, "Fifteen miles!" (JA laughs) But I went, "A third of a mile." (both laugh) I could have walked, but I was lazy and was going to ride my bicycle. And that's always been how fortunate that I am, that I am that close to the Mill. And I saw it be, I said resurrected, and reborn. And it's just awesome how pretty he's got it done, and I'm just so happy for it.

And there are groups that go down there. I talked to Nora one day, and she has educational groups that go down there. And she tells them about the Mill. So, yay! The whole thing that we hoped for, that we individually couldn't afford to do, is now come to life. That's all we wanted. I said, "I don't care who has it. I don't care who owns it, just so they save it." That's all, that's what our whole idea is.

JA: Maybe you could walk me through some of the preservation efforts, especially that the community took part in before Mr. Brady came in and took ownership of it.

TT: Well, we on several occasions tried to purchase it from the family who owned it. And –

JA: This was the Epperlys?

TT: The Epperlys. Mr. Epperly owned it, and we talked to him several times about trying to purchase the Mill, and the price was totally out of our range. We tried to get Senators and Representatives interested. I came home from school one day, and we were promised, we said, "Look." You know, they said, "If you will acquire the property, then the State of Tennessee will do something to help you get this fixed." Well, we couldn't acquire the property. But one day I came home from school and the phone was ringing. And, well I went to the mailbox and got the mail. And when I came in the house the phone was ringing. So I answered the phone and it was Bart Gordon's office. And he was our Representative, Congressman. He says, you know, "what are you doing? How are you coming along with the purchase of the Mill?" And so, while I was talking to this lady I opened up a letter from Jim Sasser, who was our Senator at the time, our Washington Senator, not state. And while I was talking to Bart Gordon's office I got another phone call coming in. I said, "Hold on just one second." I said, "This might be my daughter, and I don't want to miss a phone call from my daughter." And it was Tommy Burnette's office, [Ms. Tate misspoke and later corrected this to Tommy Burks] who was our State Senator. So I had a letter and a Senator and a Congressman on the phone about trying to save the Mill. So people were really interested in trying to do something if we could acquire the property.

So, we had a family who actually, they had a, what do you? Like a trust fund, a family trust fund, and they, they give, donate money from that trust fund every year to a worthy cause of one sort or the other. And so they promised us \$25,000.

That was great. But we couldn't make up the difference. I laughed and told them, I said, "Look, ya'll, I might be able to get in this, you know, run my hand underneath this cushions of the seat of the truck and find a dime. But I teach school, and I don't have, and I can't afford to go on a note or anything like that to try to buy this. Because once we buy it, then we just have it. We don't have it fixed. We don't have it repaired. We don't have it saved. We just have the property." So, we went through a lot of trouble doing that. In the mean time, we tried to keep it the plastic on the windows, and tried to keep it as weather tight as we possibly could until, you know, somebody came along.

JA: Was this a big push in the community in general, or was it just a small group of people?

TT: Well, we had a group of people, we have our PARQ [Preserve the Area's Rural Qualities] organization was one that was pushing this. And we had a, I guess you'd call it a fundraising party, out at The Corners when Miss Oliver was still living there. And she opened the house for us to have the party. And people came in and donated money to the fund to try to get the property and save the Mill and stuff. But, of course we didn't have enough to purchase the property. So what we tried to do is help anybody else that wanted to, or had the money to buy the property.

JA: So, the Mill, do you remember when it closed? Do you remember being aware of that?

TT: It was in –I don't do years.

JA: Oh, no. But I just mean –

TT: I can remember, yeah, when it closed. Mr. Epperly came in and opened it, and bought it from the Carignans. Miss Carignan had a business going down there to where you could go buy cheese. And she had a consignment business to where, you know, if you made quilts, or if you had anything homemade or, she would sell it down there for you for part of the price. My dad had Jersey cows, and one big old Guernsey cow. And he and Miss Gaither, who lived two houses down from us had a butter business. My daddy would give her the cream from this big Guernsey cow, and she would make it into butter, and they'd take it down to the Mill and sell it down at the Mill whenever the Carignans owned it. And then Mr. Flipse [Ms. Tate misspoke, and meant to say Mr. Epperly] bought

it from her and closed all that up, and didn't run that. And he didn't, I don't even know how many, he didn't keep it open too long. Sorry.

JA: That's fine.

TT: He didn't keep it open too long. I can't remember how long. And he completely closed it up. And, it just sat there. I said how easy it would be for somebody to go down there and just burn it, even accidentally or on purpose, because it would not take too much to get that done. That's the reason I went by every day and talked to it. "Don't go anywhere! (laughs) There's somebody, I know there's somebody. We're doing all we can."

JA: Well I'm glad she listened to you.

TT: Yeah, she listened. When I go down and visit I go, "Hey, girl, you're looking pretty. (both laugh) For your age, you're looking pretty."

JA: That is an old mill.

TT: When I look at it now I remember what it looked like when I was down there trying to put plastic on the windows. We always had a little drawing, what floor you was going to get. And I got the fourth floor one time. And that fourth floor is, I call it like an attic. And there was no floor. There was no floor in that part of it. It was just those big wheels and gears and pulleys and stuff that had all those belts and stuff that turned all that machinery that did all of that, heaven only knows what all it did. And I got that one day, and I literally had planks across places where I had to walk across a plank to get over to another area to walk. Well I got that one one day, and I'm terrified of heights, but I put plastic on that just like a trooper! (laughs) I told somebody, I said, "If somebody throws a rock through this I don't know what I'll do!" (both laugh) After I did that they said, "You did such a good job, Teresa, we're going to give you that floor every time." I go, "Well thanks a lot." Well now, if you go down to the Mill, that is such a dangerous place they don't even have it open to the public. And I stood up there, (laughs) me, who has trouble walking on earth I'm so clumsy. I was given that floor to walk those little planks across that area and put that plastic on those big old windows. So every time I go down there, that's the first place I look at. I go, that was my area for such a long time, that when I go down and visit, I go, "Gosh I wish he'd let me go up there, because that's my territory up there." In that crow's nest is what I called it.

JA: How did you become connected with the Mill as far as when you were teaching? Because you said you really didn't have much of an awareness of it growing up.

TT: Mostly when the Carignan's bought it, and I asked if I could bring the kids down there on a trip one day. And I thought, you know, "This is such an educational facility that it should, more people should be aware of it." I know if my kids who live in the country, my kid's lived in Burt, and there's people who have lived in Murfreesboro their entire lives, they have no idea how to get to Readyville or Burt, you know. So those kids that live in Burt, they have no knowledge of it. They must know so they can tell other people about it. And then other people can come in and find out information about the Mill and how it works, and how important it was just to the history of the area, as well as the agricultural history. And the fact that just the industry itself, the mechanism of how all these things work.

Somebody asked me one day, they said, "What was this for?" Pointed up to something, and I went, "I don't have any idea." It ran something, there was a pulley on it, and it did something. And there's a lot more to that mill than just grinding grain. Once it got ground, it was blown up to a sifter and then gravity, it floated back down through all these sifters to get all the, you know, trash out of it and stuff. And so all these pulleys, and all these big, I call them big wheels, that's hanging everywhere, I don't have a clue what some of those things are for. And that whole thing, you know, said, "Okay, then go ask somebody." Who? You know, a miller? How many millers are there in the world? So, around here there was not a lot of people that you could ask of how this thing works. And so people ask me, you know, "What's this for? What did this do? What did this do?" And I just, "I don't know." I don't know. And I'm sad of the fact that I don't know.

JA: Who does the milling now?

TT: Mr. Brady.

JA: Okay.

TT: And he has it fixed on electric. And so none of the big stones do any of the grinding now. Because that has to be turned with the machinery that is operated by the big wheel turning underneath the thing.

JA: Okay. So the millstones that are in there, they're not actually grinding.

TT: No.

JA: Okay.

TT: No, they're not grinding now. But he has them fixed where you can see them real well, and see how they would work if they, if they did the grinding.

JA: And basically if you could get the dam set, which it's a, I heard about this, it's not literally a dam, it's a weir?

TT: It's a weir. Mmm-hmm.

JA: And so if that was in place, then is the Mill set up where if they had water it could grind?

TT: Yes, yes.

JA: That is so –

TT: As far as I know, yeah. That's all it's lacking is water. And I'm going to refer to it as the dam. Because the dam has eroded, around the dam, the dam is still standing like it always was. But the ground around the dam has eroded to the point where the water will not back up behind the dam. (00:36:50)

I knew exactly, because I was down there swimming my entire growing up life, to know where the raceway was. I like to never found it one day. Because it's probably twenty feet higher than the river level is now. So the water can't possible get into that raceway unless that dam is repaired. And it's not the dam that needs repairing, it's the bank around the dam.

JA: Because the river's kind of cut around it at this point.

TT: Yes, eroded around it. Mmm-hmm.

JA: You mentioned going swimming there?

TT: Oh, yeah. That was the place to swim. You know, the rope in the tree and the, you know, swimming, floating. We had my friend, Jane, who lives across the

street from me was terrified to go swimming. So, but she always went down there with me and watched me swim and float. And my friend next door, Betty, and her brother, and my sister would go down there and swim. That's where I learned how to, not necessarily swim, but keep myself from drowning. (JA laughs) There's a difference, I know. (laughs) And it was a place to where it was enough gravels in the area that it was good for kids to just go out so far and do the swimming and stuff. But we were down there, I was down there on a raft one day, and my friend Jane was down there with her two dogs. And the water, if the water wasn't going over the dam, you could just swim right up to the dam and just prop your arms up on it and just look over the dam. And people jumped off the dam into the water below it and stuff. Even dive, there was a place deep enough you could dive off the dam. But it was just a narrow, one narrow place that you could dive off there. Anyway, I looked up while I was floating, and Jane's two dogs was walking across the dam. The biggest one was named Buttons. And he got about two-thirds of the way across the dam and he chickened out, decided he wanted to go back. It's probably six inches wide at the top. And he turned around, when he turned around he knocked her little Chihuahua dog off the deep end of the dam, off the dam. Oh, she was terrified. I swam over there and he was just dog paddling, he come on out. He wasn't even hurt. I told her, I said, "If people jump off here and dive off here, it's not going to hurt that dog." But that was so funny. We went, "Oh! There goes that!"

It was a fun place. It was a fun place to swim. And below the dam, we used to go below the dam and put our – there was always water running somewhere, you know, below it, or whatever. We would take our lounge chairs down there, and just put it in the water, and be covered up with water but sitting in your lounge chair. And just sit down there for hours and just talk, do nothing, just, you know, just, whatever. I could walk down there from here, and it was a beautiful place.

It still is a beautiful place. I go down there now. I have, tell my husband, I say, "Shh! Listen. You hear?" He goes, "No, what is it?" Because he didn't know what I was talking about. I said, "Do you hear the river calling our name? Let's go down there and see what we can find." So I'm always saying, "Let's go down there and see if we can find some treasures." Like, right now, I can tell you, there's something washing up. There's some log that would be, cute somewhere. Right outside the window, out here outside the door, is a tree that washed up. And I was down there, and I said, "Joseph, this will be great." I said, "Let's drag this home." And we drug it home. We got the tractor and drug it home. And, the way the thing has grown, the tree had grown, it had three limbs coming out of the top of it. And Joe cut those off level and put a birdhouse, put it in the ground

and put a birdhouse on each one of those three. So we're hoping in the spring we'll get some, somebody to move in to there. So that's what we call when I go down and find the treasures down and the river. I say, "I know something's washed up." You know, that's neat.

JA: What else have you found down there?

TT: Well, I have found Indian artifacts.

JA: Really?

TT: Yes. Then I have found – Cannon County has geodes. And it's the only place in the state of Tennessee that's got that kind. There's geodes in other places in Tennessee, but Cannon County geodes are different. They'll wash up. Now they come – they come from Woodbury Dam. And I just pick them up everywhere. I love to pick those up. So I have a list. I can pick up geodes, fossils, Indian artifacts.

JA: What kind of artifacts?

TT: Arrow heads and tools of some sort or the other.

JA: Really?

TT: Yeah. And holey rocks, this is one of my funny ones, the holey rocks. If it has a hole all the way through it, I call them holey rocks. And then the fifth category is any other rock I deem worthy of being picked up. (both laugh) Now that covers a lot of territory right there. It could be a flat one, it could be a whatever one. But, you know.

The river, the river itself is a wonderful place. And kids growing up on this street, when I was growing up there was probably twenty five kids up and down the street all the time. On bicycles, walking, playing, going to the river, swimming, it was a wonderful place to grow up, the country kids. We could walk to the store that was out here where the post office is, which was Mr. Beckton's store. And that's the only place I got to walk to, because John Bragg Highway wasn't built. And so this highway out here was the connection from Murfreesboro to Woodbury, and the traffic on it was horrendous. And it was too dangerous, my dad deemed it too dangerous for us to walk from our house over to Miss Burnett's store, which is over where Russell's Market is now, unless we

had an older girls, which was Nancy Tenpenny, who lived next door, or her sister Patsy would sometimes walk with us over to the store. But other times we would only get to go out to Mr. Beckton's store.

And we had a story, I love this story, about Royal Crown Cola had a contest that when you bought a Royal Crown Cola, if you pried the cork out from under the top, then there was a letter under there. If you could find the letters that spelled out "Royal Crown Cola," then you won one of these prizes that they had on a sheet. I forgot all of them except a baseball and a bat. My daddy drove the mail, so he went to the store in Bradyville, the store in Curlee, and he, they saved all the lids. And he would bring those lids home, caps home, so we could dig, and we took a screwdriver and would pry that cork out to get our letters. Well the hardest letter to find was a "Y." Well we walked out to Mr. Beckton's one day, and Carol found the "Y." So we had "Royal Crown Cola" spelled out. So we boxed everything up and shipped it off to Royal Crown Cola to get our baseball and bat. That was the prize we wanted. Of course, you know, it'll take what, six to eight weeks for it to arrive, which is an eternity if you are, you know, eight years old. Well, one day they arrived. We got out in the front yard out here, and because Carol found the "Y," she got to bat first. So I was pitching. And this was an honest to goodness baseball and bat. The first pitch I pitched her, she foul tipped it off, and it hit the windshield of the car. So my daddy was on the side porch watching. He stood up said, "Now girls, be careful." So we went like, "Whoops!" Didn't break it, but just hit it, you know. Now, the second pitch, she hit a line drive and hit me right on the calf muscle, and left the imprint of the sewing on the ball in a big, black place on my – of course, I just fell like, fell down like I was dead, you know, in the yard screaming and crying. Daddy made us put the ball and bat up. I never did get to even bat (both laugh) with it. It was, it was a wonderful life here. Still is. That's the reason I still live here. I don't want to leave Readyville ever.

JA: It seems like a really nice community. So you remember swimming down at the Mill. Any other activities down there?

TT: Well now, this was not at the Mill. This was at the dam, which is totally, you know, a totally separate thing.

JA: Oh, okay.

TT: Even a whole road, it's not even the same road between. I can tell you this funny story. I guess it'd be okay to tell this story. We went down –

JA: You can, you can like not use names if you want or – is that what you're concerned about?

TT: No.

JA: Oh, okay.

TT: We was going to go down to see Senator Andy Womack one day. I was trying to get him to understand where the Mill sat, in reference to the dam. That, if anything was done for the Mill, it was going to have to do for the dam too. Because it couldn't work without the dam being working. So I could not – I had drawn a picture. I drew a map. I could not get him to understand. He said, "Well how do you go? How do you get? How do you go from – how do you get from the Mill to the dam?" And I said, "The dam road." That's what it's always been called, dam road. And he looked at me with this terrified look on his, in his face, and he said, "The what?" (JA laughs) And I said, "The dam road." And he looked, you know, he was just still wide-eyed. And I went, "Not the damn road, the dam road, okay?" He went, "Oh, I understand! It's the road that goes to the dam." (both laugh) And I said, "That's it. You turn off this major, you know, Highway 70, and you go down the dam road." You know, and so I said, "We have a failure to communicate here (laughs)."

JA: Oh, that's funny.

TT: I don't know whether you can use that or not.

JA: Oh, yeah!

TT: I don't know if you even want to.

JA: Oh yeah, absolutely. Oh my gosh, no, that's so funny.

TT: But see, you're confused too, that the, the Mill and the dam is separated by, I don't, what, 300 yards or more. There's what we refer to as the big bridge, and the little bridge. Well the big bridge out here next to the post office is the river bridge. The little bridge is the race bridge. And so, you know, it's a long ditch that carries that water into the mill. So being swimming at the dam is not even, you're not even close to the Mill.

JA: I got you.

TT: When you're down there.

JA: But you did mention you would take your lounge chairs down under the Mill?

TT: No, below the dam.

JA: Oh, okay. I thought you said below the Mill.

TT: And see, when you would be swimming down there, you knew exactly, you could tell exactly whenever they started to grind. Because you'd be swimming down there, and the water's just coming down the river. And they turned that wheel on, and start pulling that water out of the river, and you could watch it leave the river and go up the race.

JA: Huh.

TT: And you had to sort of keep out of the way, because it was pretty, you know, if you were little, it would sweep you back up there. And then we didn't go swimming below the Mill because they'd put that, turn that water loose, and it would go out through there. And besides, that's all around the river. And that was, that was around an area that we didn't go swimming.

JA: Did you ever maybe like go picnicking there, or maybe throw parties there when you were a teenager?

TT: No, no I didn't. I didn't throw a party or anything. (JA laughs) Shoot, my daddy was a Deacon in the Baptist church. We didn't throw parties down at the river. (both laugh) Just went swimming, we went swimming a lot. And loved it. We had a big tree down there that's been cut down now, but had a big tree, had a rope in it, you could swing off that rope and hit that water on a hot day. A bunch of people would go down there after school. And this is not when I was growing up, but after I started teaching school. We would go down. And the Carignans owned it. The Carignan boys, and we'd bunch of us go down there and swim after school. Be hot and tired and go down there and swing off that swing and hit that cold water. Man, it was, that was great. One of the funniest things we'd do is, we had some great big truck tire inner tubes. We had contests, and we'd go, "Alright, going to swing off this swing and hit this, you know, hit this inner

tube." And you tried to hit it sitting down, and it'd just bounce you right up off, you know right into the air. It was pretty neat. It was pretty cool. And it was way over our heads, so we're out there treading water while we was holding the inner tube for somebody to jump. (phone rings) Invariably –

JA: Okay, so you are swimming at the dam, and –

TT: We had the inner tube. And we'd say, "Okay." It's like Lucy and Charlie Brown. There was always somebody who'd go, "You going to move that thing?" "No! We're not going to move it. (laughs) You see if you can hit it." Of course, they'd swing off that swing, and they might be two feet to the right, or over shoot it and not hit the inner tube at all. But if you could ever sit, just come off and sit down and hit that inner tube just right, just your butt right on it, and it would shoot you up just like some of those things they do now where they jump off on the big thing full of air and shoot somebody off. But we'd get somebody up there, and they'd go, "You going to move it?" "No, we're not going to move it!" "You promise?" "Yeah, we promise we won't move it." Of course, as soon as they got in the air, we moved it. (laughs) Then the next time that same one come up, "You going to move it this time?" "Honey, we won't move it. We promise we won't move it." Of course as soon as they got in the air we moved it again. It was awful (laughs).

JA: Oh, that's so funny.

TT: We had so much fun. People say, "Did you ever go down there and get on a snake?" And I went, "No, I never did get on a snake." Because there are people that's terrified they going to see a snake. That didn't mean we didn't see them. We just meant I never did get on one.

JA: What do you mean by, "Get on one?"

TT: You know, actually put your foot on one.

JA: Oh, okay. Just step on it.

TT: Yeah, step on it or something.

JA: Ride a snake? [unclear]

TT: (laughs) Hey, I'm from the country. (JA laughs) We were down there one day, and I was floating on the raft, just floating. And the water was not going over the dam, so you didn't have to watch anything. You just floated. And that's whenever you don't have a care in the world. The – the essence of doing nothing, you know, floating on that raft. And I was just, just about snoozing, when somebody else that was down there hollered my name or something. When I opened my eyes, I mean, within inches of my nose, a snake was just swimming by. I said, "Oh, okay. You go on, I won't bother you." So we saw snakes down there, but they never did bother us, we never did bother them. We loved it. Still love it.

I meant to go yesterday, because it was warm enough to go yesterday. And we got busy, and I didn't get down there. And so now, whenever I got up this morning, I went, "That's okay. There's more treasures that's just washed down."

JA: I was just going to say, with all the rain that we got last night, there's probably some treasures for you. So where do you, what do you do with the treasures, I mean especially the Native American artifacts? That's so interesting.

TT: I've got a case in the house I put them in. I found some that, they were just tools. Sometimes they're scrapers or knives, looking to use. Sometimes it's something that you pound with. I have one that I found that you can put your fingers in the exact place that some Indian some time or the other held that. It's pretty fun.

JA: That is, that's really –

TT: I don't find them often. But I look often. I told my husband one day, I was coming home from school, this is before I retired from teaching school. And when I crossed the big bridge I went, "Oh, I have got to go to the river today." So when I got home, he was working, and had been working all day. He said, "Teresa, I'm tired, I don't want to go down there." I go, "But you don't understand. There's sometimes I cross that bridge and it does not call my name. But today it's calling my name, and I need to go down there." He said, "Well, I'm just too tired. I don't want to do it." So I didn't go. So the next day I came home from school, when I crossed that bridge it was like, "Teresa!" I said, "Joseph, we're going today! Okay?" So we went down there, and we weren't down there fifteen minutes and I found the most beautiful knife that's almost as long as my hand is. And when I found it I squealed and Joe thought I had got on a snake, I had found a snake, stepped on a snake.

(both laugh)

JA: I understand now. It's okay.

TT: And I told him, I said, "Well I wouldn't even have done that. I wouldn't have squealed if I'd found a snake." And so I said, "Look! Look right here at my feet." You didn't have to dig in the dirt or anything, dig in the rocks. It was just right there. That was one of the pieces. But now, I have not found anything in probably a year that was, I thought was anything, anything.

JA: Didn't meet the criteria?

TT: Yeah, yeah. There's – there were some things that I had pitched down that I thought looked like might be something. And I looked some stuff up on the internet, and I went, "Oh my gosh! I think that I threw that away. I think I threw that back down, one just like that." So I have stuff that I think, if there's a chance that it might be something, I just go ahead and pick it up. That's category five.

JA: Right.

TT: That's anything I deem worthy.

(both laugh)

JA: When you find the rocks with the holes, are those like naturally occurring holes?

TT: Yes they are.

JA: Okay.

TT: Yeah, they're naturally occurring holes. Although I have found some that I think are drilled, that are, the Indians wore stuff that they called pendants. They put them on their clothes, and they drilled the holes in them by using a stick. And you'd be surprised how you could actually, if you drilled it. And you can tell the difference in if it's a natural hole or if it's a drilled hole. And these natural holes, somebody asked me, they said, "Where, where did you find these rocks?" And I go, "Well, at the river you can find them anywhere." Anyone whose got rocks in their driveway, I'm just, I never, I look down all the time, see if I can find

a crinoid fossil or sometimes I can find petrified wood, stuff like that. And, but I'm always looking for it. And they said, "How do those holes get there?" And what is so natural for me to know, they didn't have any idea. So that's whenever you can just pull their leg, and tell them anything. Because if you go down to the river you can find a rock that's got another little rock that's right, sitting right on top of it. And whenever it just spins round and round and round and round until it eventually will drill a hole in it. Sometimes you can find rocks that's got a hole in it, and it's got a little rock stuck in that hole. You know, well that'll just go round and round until it makes that hole bigger. Sometimes I find that it's got a hole partially the way through it. I tell him, I say, "I'll be back in a thousand years to pick you up when you get the hole all the way through there." But I'll tell people, they go, "How do those holes get there?" And I go, "Well, you know, there's, down at this, in this river, there's rock worms. And they eat through those rocks and make those holes." And those people look at me and go, "Really?" And I go, "No! (both laugh) Not really." I said, "I was just pulling your leg. No there's no such thing as a rock worm." But I have got thousands, literally, when I tell you thousands, I'm not joking. I have thousands of rocks that have holes in them, one way or the other. Some of them is as big as your little finger nail, and some of them, you know, big as a football.

JA: I'd love to see this collection of treasures from the river.

TT: Well, I'll show you some that's just, I've got hanging around.

JA: Yeah.

TT: Literally, I have some hanging around. Because a friend of mine that I taught school with, she and I were floating one day. Which we've, this is our yearly thing. This is the thing we – you know, how boring is your life? Well I think it's thrilling. We float from the dam to the slab, which is off of Bivens Hill Road. If you're driving, it'll take you about a minute and a half to drive it. But if you're floating it, it's an all-day thing. So we get our inner tubes and stuff, and our rafts and everything, and we float from the dam. Well we drive over there and leave the truck, and then we can walk back, but we'd rather drive back. And we were floating one day down through there. And we were finding these rocks, and she said, "You know you need to do something with all those holey rocks." I said, "I know it, but I don't know what to do." She said, "Well you need to make some kind of yard something, yard art or something or the other." And I go, "Like what?" She said, "Well I don't know. But we need to think about it." So I got my dad, told my dad about it, and so we did some rock stringing with some wire,

diddly, dilly-dallying around with it and stuff. And finally I come up with getting old necklaces at yard sales, old jewelry, and breaking them up and using the beads on some of those, some of those holey rocks. So I'll show you some of the stuff that I've made out of the driftwood and stuff. Somebody says, "You should sell that." I said, "No. Somebody would laugh at it." Because I know they think, "What is that?" But it's just another way to have those rocks, that instead of being in a plastic bag somewhere, I've got them strung. I call it my yard art. So that's just some fun stuff that I do when I find those. Sometimes I come back from the river and I'll have two gallon Zip-Loc Bags full of nothing but holey rocks. So somebody said, "You should do something more constructive with your life." Well, that's as constructive as I want to do right now.

JA: If that is what you want to do, then that is what you should do.

TT: Now that is a fun thing for me to do, is to just go to the river and, well it's a peaceful solitude thing. And you can think, and you can do some serious talking to God if you need to. And there's not a whole lot of people down there bothering you. (opens Dr. Pepper can) And in fact there's nobody down there bothering you. Sometimes I'll be down there and somebody will come by fishing. One day I was down there and this guy came floating by on an inner tube. He said, when he floated by he told me his name and waved. And I said, I told him my name and there he went, you know. (laughs) Just floated by. People who will interested in protecting the river, keeping it clean, and that way it's easier to find all the treasures. (unclear)

JA: That's okay. Yeah, that is so interesting to hear what the river and the Mill have meant to you.

TT: I want it to last a long, long, long, long time. And I love it whenever, the further people come, drive to come to the Mill and see the stuff at the Mill, the better it is. Because they're going to tell other people, and they're going to come too.

JA: I came from Columbia [Tennessee], and I've been telling people. I had no idea this Mill was here, and it's so beautiful. I haven't been to breakfast there yet, though.

TT: Oh, you should try that!

JA: I am definitely planning on it.

TT: Way more than you can eat! And it's good.

JA: Mmm-hmm. I'm planning on it. I'm not sure when. It's a little bit of a drive, but I definitely –

TT: And how many places can you go, in the world anyway, that you can go into the mill and watch them grind, and then walk right in the restaurant, and they're using that, that they just ground, to make your pancakes.

JA: That –

TT: Now that's about as fresh as you can get right there.

JA: That is. That definitely is.

TT: Then take it home with you.

JA: Mmm-hmm. Yeah, my colleague and I, and our professor, got a tour with Nora and Jane, and some of the other ladies from PARQ. It's beautiful in there.

TT: I know. The granary, that's where the restaurant part is, the granary, the wood in that is just absolutely gorgeous. He's done a beautiful job. All the antique stuff, and it's just a fun thing to do. We rode our bicycles over one day and had breakfast. I told him, I said, "I can't, I just can't believe it. It's just exactly what we wanted." It's exactly what I wanted him to do with it, to save that old girl.

JA: So let's go back, talking about more of the history. So you were born in [19]51? And who owned it about that time?

TT: Mr. Justice.

JA: Mr. Justice.

TT: Mmm-hmm. Mr. Justice was the, while I was growing up, he was the only one to own it. And he sold it to Mr. Flipse.

JA: Now, but what did Mr. Justice have there?

TT: He had the mill and the granary. He didn't do ice.

JA: Okay.

TT: Not, not that I can remember. You know, the part, when you went in there, there was a part where you could eat, that first red building, that's the icehouse. And then the granary is the rest of the restaurant. So that's all I can remember being there, is the icehouse and the granary. And the mill.

JA: And did he have a store there?

TT: Uh-uh.

JA: Okay, so just –

TT: Just the mill.

JA: And he, they ground –

TT: At one time they ground corn and had buckwheat. But all the machinery that ground the buckwheat, was sold out. I think Mr. Epperly sold some of that to somebody that had a mill in East Tennessee somewhere. So it's not even capable of doing that anymore.

JA: So Mr. Justice had it, and it was pretty much a standard mill, and then he sold it to –

TT: Mr. Flipse, I think his name is Gerald, Gerald Flipse. And his son, it was father and son who owned this. And they came in. They put the eye beams underneath it to stabilize it, fixed it up, did a whole lot of work on it. They had a organic garden down there that was just, I was amazed because they grew celery in Readyville. They had celery in their garden. Now, right where this little building is sitting, just down below this was my daddy's garden. We couldn't have celery. I thought, "How do they do that?"

JA: Why is that?

TT: Ground was too hard. But he hauled in sand and used some of that river dirt and was able to grow carrots and celery in his garden. I thought that was just

absolutely amazing. So, they had three children that I can remember, that was in school whenever I taught school.

JA: Did they grow that stuff to sell, or just for their own use?

TT: For their own use, mmm-hmm.

JA: So they had the garden, and they were grinding corn. Did they have a store there?

TT: I don't think so. I don't remember if they did. I remember when the Carignans bought it is whenever Miss Marie is her name, where she had all the cases in there that were refrigerated cases where you could buy the butter and the cheese. So people brought stuff in from different places and sold it down there.

JA: And did you go there often to buy stuff?

TT: Well not often, but I was down there pretty often because, you know, the kids were in my class. I'd gather them up. There was always kids here, and they'd say, you know, "Let's go bicycle riding," or somewhere, you know. We'd go down, I'd holler at the kids, and they'd go bicycle riding with us. Or they had a boat, and they'd come down to the river with their boat while we were down there moving the inner tubes. Some of them would move the inner tubes. They were cute. They were really good kids. They were absolutely wonderful children. And one of them still lives in the area. I see him every now and then at the grocery store.

JA: And would you buy stuff when you were there?

TT: Yeah, I liked the cheese. I liked the homemade cheese that she—

JA: Who made that?

TT: I have no idea. I have no idea who made it, the homemade cheese. But it was just different than store cheese. And I liked that. Of course you always get the meal. And she had cookbook that she sold there, and you know, just different things that was interesting. Quilts, people made quilts and bring them down there, and —

JA: I'll put it on pause. (01:07:42)

JA: Okay, so we've got our fire back going, and we were talking about when the Carignans owned the Mill, and you would bring your classes down there – Mrs. Carignan's store, that's what we were talking about.

TT: Yeah, she had the cheese and the butter. That's what my daddy and Miss Gaither had the butter going. I would remember, and I was a pretty big child, when my daddy would milk the cows and take the cream to Miss, Miss Gaither. They would take it over to the Mill, it was white. And I couldn't understand. I said, "What? How come it don't look like store bought butter?" Daddy said, "Because she didn't put anything in it to make it yellow." I did not know, because I never had seen anybody make butter, although my grandmother used to make butter in years ago. Years and years ago, and instead of churning it, where you take the dasher and go up and down, she just had it in a jar, and you shook it. Well I wanted to do that. She said, "No, you're too little. You can't do it. You're not big enough to do this." And I said, "Please let me, let me, please let me." She said, "Nope, can't do it." So I said, "Oh please!" So finally she said, "Well, here." Of course I didn't shake it but ten times until I was ready to quit. She said, "No, you've got to keep going!" (laughs) Well, I don't know exactly know how Miss Gaither did the, the butter churning, but it was always white butter. And that just fascinated me because it was not like store bought butter. Now, my daddy milked the cows, Miss Gaither, who was probably in her seventies at the time, if not older, churned that butter or made that butter somehow or the other. And they took it over there to the store. And there's people that bought it, and they was out all the time wanting more.

JA: Did you get a lot of butter from her?

TT: Uh-uh. No. They sold it all.

JA: So where did your family get their groceries?

TT: Mostly from Miss Burnett's store over where Russell's Market is now. The post office was right across the street from there, where Claudia's Hair Shop is now was where the post office is, or was. And my daddy had a charge account. And so we could go over and get groceries. And Miss Burnett had a quite a selection of stuff. If we needed, you know, stuff that she didn't have, we would go to Murfreesboro every now and then, but not often. But she had, we had a

charge account, and my daddy would just pay it whenever he got paid every two weeks. He got paid, so he'd pay off what we bought.

And the school bus, I know you couldn't do that nowadays, not under no circumstances. But when we came home from school, the school bus would stop at the store, and the kids would jump off and all go in and get candy and Cokes and stuff, and all pile back up on that bus and go the rest of the route. (JA laughs) Every day! And sometimes we would get off at the store there because my daddy was just across the street, and he'd pick us up. We'd sit down on the front porch and drink a Coke or eat a candy bar or something. And then Daddy would pick us up whenever he got off from out of the post office. But anyway, he had a charge account there. And one day, one time, of course I just, we just go in and get stuff, and then Miss Burnett would just write it down and put it in Daddy's bill.

JA: Is that what most kids would do? Like, did all of their parents –

TT: No, most people, most kids had the money and everything. Of course Cokes was a nickel, and they went up to six cents and then that was awful because you could never find that one penny, you know, to make that six cents. And one of the things we would do too, about the Cokes, we never had any money. When we got bigger, we were allowed to walk from here over to Miss Burnett's store. When we walked, my sister and I walked either side of the road. And we could find enough bottles that people threw out to take them to the store and sell them, and buy another Coke a piece, and then walk home with it. But we were somewhere one time, and I wanted something at the store. Now we were not at Miss Burnett's store, we were somewhere in Woodbury. And, I wanted something, wanted it and my daddy said I couldn't have it because he didn't have the money to buy it. And I said, "That's alright. I'll just wait to go down to Miss Burnett's so I don't have to pay for it there." (both laugh) That's when I learned about credit.

JA: That's funny.

TT: That's neat. Now when my daughter was growing up, we sort of had the same thing. She went to Kittrell to school and there was a little store next to Kittrell School. And so the lady wouldn't let the kids have credit, but the parents could go down there and say, "Okay, here's a twenty dollar bill, let my kid buy twenty dollars' worth and keep up with it, and tell me whenever we need more." So it was sort of like the same thing, where she'd go in and get potato chips or

something and wouldn't have to pay for it, didn't have to have the money. My daddy used to love to tell that story where I said, "We'll just get it at Miss Burnett's because we don't have to pay for it there." I had no idea that, you know, he went in and paid for that stuff.

JA: And your father was the postman for this area?

TT: He was the mailman for Route Two Readyville. This side of the road was Route Two, this is Cannon County. But across the street's Rutherford County. I have to go across the street into Rutherford County to get my mail out of the mailbox. So the other side of the street, the way they had it divided up, was Route One Readyville. Mr. Jack Oliver ran that, that lived in The Corners. That was his pigeonhole mailbox thing there. So at the time, there was a rule that you had to live on your mail route. So that's why my daddy built the house here, bought the land and built the house here, because it was, he was started the mail, driving the mail, so he needed to live on his mail route. And Route Two, he drove about 82 miles a day, six days a week. And there was about 220 mailboxes on that 82 miles. And then Mr. Jack drove Route One, and that went way down into Rutherford County, past Kittrell School, and way down to Floraton Road was Route One Readyville. Then they come up with the, you know the 9-1-1 addresses and stuff, and they changed the route, and it's not exactly the way that my daddy used to drive it. But, my daddy would go all the way to Bradyville every day. And, one of the funniest things is that if you live in Bradyville, you're on the Readyville Route, because my daddy took the mail all the way to Bradyville and delivered that. If you, on the Bradyville Route, you live way up like Woodland, out the Manchester Highway, that's where that route went. The first time I met my husband, we were at a New Year's Eve party that one of my friends was giving. And he was at the party, and I never had seen him before. He was sitting across the table from me, and I said, "I don't think I know you." I said, "Where do you live?" He said, "Readyville." And I said, "That's a lie." (laughs) I said, "I've lived in Readyville my whole life, and I've never laid eyes on you." I said, "Where exactly do you live?" And so he said, "Cunningham Road." Well Cunningham Road is on the Readyville Route, but it's at Bradyville. So we laugh and say that I married him so he could live in Readyville and know where he, actually know where he lives now. He said that should have been a signal, a warning. (JA laughs) He said the first sentence we said to each other was she called me a liar. (both laugh) And I went, "This is Readyville. You don't live in Readyville. You might live on the Readyville Route, but you don't live in Readyville."

JA: It's always good to have someone keep you honest.

TT: I tell him, I said, "We're going to get married and you can live in Readyville, and that way you'll know where you live." It's always important to know where you live.

JA: It is very important.

TT: Of course, he didn't know. He had just moved in here, and because, he thought if he lived on Readyville Route, he lived in Readyville. I went, "No you don't! It doesn't work that way." (both laugh) Then he learned, you know, people live in Burt, but they're on the Woodbury Route. Doesn't mean they live in Woodbury, not even close to Woodbury. They just, they just be on the Woodbury mail route. That's all that means. Yeah, he laughs about that. He tells people, "It should have been a warning right there."

JA: Okay, so, back to the Mill. So the Carignans owned it, and that's when you started bringing your classes there. What was a typical trip like to the Mill when you had a class?

TT: Well he would show everybody exactly how it's ground. He would put the, take the corn, literally take the corn from the cob and put it like in a shoot that puts it into between the two grinding stones. And then that, show that meal coming out. And then literally catch it, bag it up and hand it to them, say, "Here you go."

JA: And it was still run by the water, the wheel at this point?

TT: Yes.

JA: Wow.

TT: I know the Carignans actually did some repair to the bank that was starting to erode whenever they lived there. And then it was nothing done to it for years and years, and it just got, you know, it kept eroding away until it's some serious damage to it now that. I know it can be fixed, I just don't know. One of my answers when I tell people, I say, "I'm just a school teacher. I don't know how it can be fixed. But I know that they fix stuff a whole lot worse than that other places in the world. So I know that can be fixed. I just don't know how."

JA: It's true.

TT: I'll leave that to an engineer. I used to tell people, and I said, "I don't ask you to grade papers, don't ask me (laughs)."

JA: Whoa, it's chilly.

TT: I know, I don't think we've got a, I don't think we got a fire.

JA: Here, let me pause it. (01:18:28)

JA: Okay, now we are nice and toasty with the wonderful fire, and we had been talking about the Carignans owning the Mill. And you would bring your school classes there, and they would show them how everything was ground, and they would give them some cornmeal to take home with them. Do you remember like the impact, I guess, that that made on your students? Or maybe any funny questions that they asked?

TT: Well they were studying about it in history to begin with. And studying it from a New England point of view, of how many mills there were and how they ground everything. They couldn't relate, that there was actually stuff here. Once they saw it in their own backyard, then they, they were not even aware of it. Because it had not been used in their lifetime to – they had no need for it. They didn't have any family that went and ground, had anything ground or anything like that. So they didn't have a use for it, a need for it. And so they knew nothing about it. Well, once they went, you know, they learned how, then they could relate to the questions that they had in history. Because they saw how it actually worked. Now, what kind of impact they had on it, what they say now is, "We're glad it's still here. Because more people can find out about it, more people can learn what kind of industry that was, and how it was for people before there was store-bought cornmeal." And I tell people, says, "If you buy store-bought cornmeal, and you make cornbread with it, if you'll just change and make cornbread with the Mill corn one time, you'll never go back to the other stuff. You'll never use it."

JA: So where was the meal that the mill was grinding, it wasn't so much going to the community, where was it going?

TT: I think what they were grinding – this was when Mr. Justice did it. A lot of it was for cow feed and stuff. But now, I know when the Carignans owned it, they

shipped stuff out to different stores, some of them in Georgia even. So there was, what do you call that, you know, when you have natural stuff?

JA: Organic?

TT: Organic, organic grocery stores and stuff. Because none of that has any kind of preservatives in it. It's called, the cornmeal that they sell over there, is called unbolted. That means there's no preservatives in it whatsoever. You have to put it in the refrigerator. So I know that Mr. Carignan had shipped stuff out to some stores. I know I heard him say Georgia so, probably other places too. No telling how many other organic places that they went to.

JA: And what about Mr. Epperly? What was going on at the Mill when he owned it?

TT: Nothing. I don't know. I don't know. He bought it and it was, it closed so soon, which it could have been months, but to me it was soon afterwards, and didn't do anything else with it.

JA: At one point it was kind of a hippie community, right?

TT: I, I don't, I don't know anything about that.

JA: You don't know anything about that?

TT: Whenever Marie Carignan and her husband owned it – Bill, his name is Bill. Practically every weekend there was something going on. And they owned the house that's sitting in front out there, next to the raceway, and they used to have craft shows. There would be people in that, all lined up, up and down that little, in that house and up and down the, I call it the driveway, going down to the Mill. Having some kind of craft fair or something going on. She kept something going on all the time and have interested people coming in and going through there.

JA: What other kinds of stuff aside from the craft fairs?

TT: I can't remember all the stuff that was going on. I just know she did have some craft, she did have craft fairs going on. And that brought in people from far and wide, lined up. People lined up all along the highway because there wasn't parking places enough in the area. Mr. Brady has got some parking areas where

there is lots of room to park, but it wasn't like that then. That just came to my brain, just while you were sitting on that, "Oh yeah, she used to have those craft fairs down there."

JA: What were those like?

TT: Just people come in with different, basket making and art and stuff. And that old house was empty, nobody lived in it, and they just opened that up and put every room was full of something that people who was making and trying to sell their stuff. Of course everybody was interested in that, getting out for the day, and coming down to the Mill and enjoying that. Of course, we only had one little store, and that little store always had somebody in there all the time buying something, which was great for Readyville. Yeah, I'm glad that there's stuff going on over there. I think that's one of the dogs.

JA: Well what kind of stuff goes on now?

TT: Well, they have music in the summer time, outdoor music. And there's weddings over there all the time. I think from June to October there was a wedding every weekend. And of course we hear it. And sometimes they'll have music, and you can hear them. It doesn't bother us. It's not like something that's going to keep you from sleeping or something like that. But you can hear them making toasts, and they've got the microphone going, and music and going. Oh, we're just thrilled for them, because it's, how pretty, you know. It's beautiful.

JA: It is beautiful. Do you ever think of sneaking over there and getting in on some of the food?

TT: Crashing the party? (both laugh) Walking over, that's how close it is. People don't realize, you know, that it's just across the river, and sound does carry. Because a lot of times when kids are down there swimming at the river you can hear them laughing and everything, having a good time. As long as they're behaving, you know. Don't want somebody down there doing something they don't need to be doing.

JA: Have you ever had problems with that, where you have had to call?

TT: No, uh-uh, never. If there's anything going on, it's not past eleven o'clock or anything. It doesn't bother us any. Now, if we're out in the yard you can hear it great. If you're in the house, you can't hear it at all. So that's not a problem. The

amount of attention and the amount of finances that comes in because of it is well worth any kind of toast we might hear coming from it. We have absolutely no problem with that at all, glad they're having a good time.

JA: Yeah, is there anything else that you can think of, either that you remember hearing from community members, or your parents, or from your own experience? We know the Mill provided electricity. And I'm trying to think of the other things. Was there a sawmill there at one point as well?

TT: Yes, there was a sawmill there at one time. I forgot about that. It was. On down the highway, almost, well about half-way between here and Kittrell, there's a big white house that's, we used to say that our house was Seven Gables, and Dr. Hall lived there. And I read, there is actually a history of Readyville that the Rutherford County Historical Society published years ago. And, in that history of Readyville, it told about running, the people running that sawmill, and the guy fell into the saw and cut him in half. That was the story in the, that's the look I had, I had that same look on my face when I read that as you do right now. And they called for Dr. Hall to come. So, of course this was at a time when he had to come in a horse and a buggy to see about the guy. And they said well, there was nothing they could do to help him. But yes, it ran, that mill, or the dam produced electricity to run the sawmill. And I don't know who did that, I don't know who all run that. If you've not read that history of Readyville, the last I heard, which that was years ago. I don't do time well. When I say, you know, "Not long ago," that could have been five years. But the last time I read that history, you could go in and it was on a reserve at the library in Murfreesboro. It's not something you could check out. And the volume that I read, Miss Oliver owned it. And I never got one of my very own, because whenever they published it, they only published it for a short period of time. And then they stopped publishing it, and you couldn't get your hands on any of them. You had to check it out of the library or go to the library and read it. They did a history of all the little communities around Murfreesboro, Walter Hill, Rockvale, all have a little published book about it.

JA: It's funny, because, you know, with the weather being bad last night, and just in general, whenever there is tornado warnings and stuff, and you see all of these little communities, where they are saying, "Oh, if you live in this community," you know, "Take cover now!" You know, someone like me, who I've only lived in Tennessee for three years, almost, going on four years, and I'm like, "Where are these places? I've never heard of them or anything." It's so interesting now to

be a part of this project and hear you say some of these names of areas that I hear on the news.

TT: Well, I've lived here my whole life, and they will call out places that's not fifty miles from me that I have never heard of. That's why it's really fun. Of course the gas prices nowadays make it's not where, it's not like it used to could. You used to get out on a Sunday afternoon, drive around and find these places. We have places around Cannon County, which I just absolutely love. Just up the road, on the old road, you go through this little community that's named Culpepper. And then right past Culpepper was Braxton. And Braxton actually had a community where they actually had a bank. And part of the vault can still be seen. The foundation of the old vault can be seen, because, it's not there anymore because a tornado wiped that little town off the map. Now, long before I was ever born. I remember asking my daddy, because that was the only way to go to Woodbury was up that road. And I said, "What is that building right there?" And part of the old vault was still there. Now it's just a foundation. And Daddy said, "That was a bank there, and that's the vault for the bank." I go, "Really?" Because there's nothing there. Now it's a barn that says Braxton on it. Daddy said, "Well it was a little community that got blown away by a tornado." Really? (01:30:13)

Well, on the other side of us is Kittrell. Well, when I was in college, practically every professor made us stand up and tell where we were from. Well people stand up, they were from Nashville and Knoxville, and you know, it'd be my turn, and I would be Readyville. And everybody would go, "Where? Where is Readyville?" Well I figured if you were living in Murfreesboro you ought to know. But, these people, just because they were living in Murfreesboro, didn't mean that they left Murfreesboro and went around anywhere. So I started telling them that Readyville was between Kittrell and Culpepper, and that shut them up. (JA laughs) Of course they didn't have any idea where that was either. In one of the papers that we had to, English class, Composition English class, we had to write a 500-word essay. And that 500 words had to be on something about where we lived. And one of my statements was, "If you're traveling east on Highway 70 South, (JA laughs) you will come into Readyville. No stop lights." And I used that, I didn't use traffic lights. I went, "No stop lights." I would tell people that that's where I lived, if you were going east on Highway 70 South. They go, "Wait a minute, how can you go east on a Highway 70 South?" And I go, "Because Highway 70 South goes east and west." Well why is it called Highway 70 South? It's because it's south of Highway 70. I had to look that up. I had no idea why it was called Highway 70 South, you know. So that's one of the things I learned in

college, where I lived, you know. (JA laughs) So people were talking, they were all from, yeah, "Come out to the country!"

My daughter was in a 4-H exchange program when she was in grammar school and high school. And we were getting a girl, when I say that, you know, we were getting a 4-Her from Superior, Nebraska. And she wrote my daughter a letter and said, "What's on at the movie theater in Readyville?" So Ann explained that we didn't have a movie theater in Readyville, that we had to go to Murfreesboro to go to the movies. Then she said, "Where do the teenagers hang out in Readyville?" Now this is how it goes. Out in The Corners was Miss Oliver, who was in her eighties. Next door to me was Miss Reed, who was in her eighties. Then there was Ann. Then next door on the other side was Miss Tenpenny, who was in her eighties. And beside that was Miss Rogers who was in her eighties. And then beside that was Mr. and Miss Gaither who were in their eighties. Then there was Miss Odom who was in her eighties. Then across the road was Mr. and Miss Alexander who were near in their eighties. Beside them was Mr. and Miss Barrett, who were in their eighties. Then across the street from us was Miss Moore who was in her seventies, almost in her eighties. (JA laughs) So whenever Ann wrote back, she said, "Well, I am the teenager in Readyville. (both laugh) We don't have a hang-out place. I'm at my house." Because all of those people I just called out, at one time had children the same age as I am. And so, there was kids everywhere, but they grew up and left. Well, I didn't leave.

I couldn't find anywhere else in the world that was better than right here. And I'm often saying, I said, "I've gone to almost every state in the United States, and Canada, and I have never seen anything as pretty as coming down Peak's Hill on Old Highway 70." Whenever we'd go on vacation, whenever we came down that way, I was home. I could see that little valley that I lived in, and I just absolutely loved it. I see people a lot of times if I'm telling them, or they ask where I live, or whatever, and I tell them Readyville. They go, "Oh, I love Readyville. Oh, that's so pretty, we drive through there." I said, "I know, but we're full. Drive twenty-five and wave as you go on. We like you, come drive through any time you want to, just don't stop. We're full." (both laugh) We don't want a lot. We don't want Wal-Mart coming this way, you know. We want to be out here in the country. That's what our PARQ is for. And I can't tell you how upset people are at the fact that we have rock quarries everywhere. So, that sort of messes up our little country life, that we don't want. That's the reason we live here. People go, "How do you stand to live out this far from town?" Well we're not this far from town. We're just far enough from town that we can get into either town that we want to, and still live out in the country.

JA: Yeah, you're not very far from Murfreesboro at all.

TT: No, uh-uh. Just far enough.

JA: Mmm-hmm.

TT: We can go, be there in ten minutes, fifteen minutes, and well, we're away from all that traffic. And that's what we like.

JA: Well this is obviously, you know, a really special little area. And it's really neat to hear about how the Mill has been a part of that.

TT: It's important. It's important whenever, you know, you think about the electricity, the sawmill, the mill itself and what it meant to the farmers in the area because it was such a farming community. You know, it has its own life, and we're so glad it's still going. And it's a different life. You know, it's still alive, and it's still producing cornmeal, but it's a totally different reason now. It's not because the farmers need it. It's for education, entertainment, a whole different thing, but it's just this important as it ever has been. And to a whole different, totally different group. People come in from long distances that would not have come from a long distance if they were coming to use the Mill whenever it was just doing the grain and stuff. So tourism, you know, travel and tourism. That's important. People are looking. People are eager. People are searching for that far away place that is quiet and peaceful. And we have it every day. Listen. We have it every day. (laughs) We love it. It irritates us to no end, everyone on this street, irritates us to no end for people to speed through here. Because it's, well, disrespectful, it's a twenty-five mile speed zone, we want them to go slow. And there's kids. We have kids back now that we didn't have before for a long time. And so we have kids that we're trying to protect. We have pets. And people say, "Well, your pets shouldn't run wild." Well they're not running wild, but occasionally they'll be on the road. You can be awake enough that you don't hit one of them. Stay off your cell phone, go twenty-five miles an hour. Respect us out here in the city, from the city, out here in the country. The city of Readyville. (both laugh) Well we laugh too, somebody says "Where do you live in Readyville?" I go, "I live in downtown." That's over there. I said, "I live on South Main Street, the historical district." Because The Corners is on this road, and the house down here that Mr. Arnett, Mr. and Mrs. Arnett live in. That's the, call it the McKnight House, where they live. And if you've not seen that, you can go, when you leave here, instead of going back that direction [points right], go that

direction [points left], take you right back to John Bragg Highway, and you can see that house on the corner. Instead of being a 1827 brick, it's a Queen Anne Victorian. Oh my gosh, it's just absolutely awesome. This road actually makes a circle right on back out to that highway you came in on.

JA: Okay, and then I would just take a right onto it?

TT: Take a –

JA: Because I took a left from John Bragg Highway.

TT: You're going to get right back on the highway and take, when you make the circle, go left, and you'll go right back up to the, through the bluff, and back onto John Bragg Highway.

JA: Oh, okay. Well yeah, this has really been so interesting. But I was wondering if, before we end our interview, if you could tell me a little bit about some of the stuff that's in this country store museum. And I'll take some pictures so that I can include them with the interview. But this is just so cute, and I mean I know we don't have time to go through everything that's in here, but maybe if you could just talk about some of the more meaningful pieces in here, maybe some of the stuff that you've gotten from the local area. (01:39:33)

TT: Okay, well this was built because I was a collector of old store stuff for, since I was in college, really. And I've always liked old stuff. I don't want anything new. Don't like it, don't want it. And, I've collected for probably thirty five years just stuff that interested me. And I said, one of these days I'm going to have a store. Because I love to go to antique places, and one of the things that aggravates me to no end is the, to see something that I desperately want, and it says, "Not for sale" on it. And I went, "That's what I wanted!" So if I ever got it, if I ever got something like it, I go, "I'm never going to sell it, I'm never going to sell it. I'm going to keep it and let people enjoy it." This, like, old country stores like this are a thing of the past like the mills. That kids have no clue how old country stores worked, and how you went in, and what you did at those country stores and stuff. And even though this one is not exactly like an old country store, it's as close as we could get it.

And one of the things that is, I think, such a beautiful something is the old counter. They closed the old store over at Bradyville that Mr. Elmer Lowe owned. And when I was growing up it was Lowe's Store, Mr. Lowe. And it had

this counter in it, and whenever that store closed up, I asked the owner if I could have that counter. And she said, "You can have all of them." And so there was more than one counter that, this other one that I have is twice as long as that, it's in the garage. And so I put this in the garage, it's been in there for twenty five or thirty years now. And that store building is even completely gone. That's not even there anymore. When we were going to build this store, actually we didn't build a store. Actually we built a storage building, and when my husband saw some of the things that I had, he said, "You need part to make some of this into the country store." So we drug this counter out, and it was too big to put in here. So Joe cut it down, made it shorter and more narrow. And the door that goes back to the back there, that's part of the stuff that came out. That's how much he took off to make it shorter where it would fit.



The post office pigeonhole came out of the Readyville Post Office. They were upgrading to metal. And that's where the mailman worked the mail, it's what you call working the mail, when you go through all the mail. Then you had each one of those pigeonholes had a name on it, and that way you put the mail in that. And then you took it out in order of how you were going to deliver it and stacked it up. And then you could just take it out and put it in the mailboxes whenever you went on the route. And this was Mr. Jack Oliver's, and in his handwriting it has names of the people who lived on his mail route. And it is has things like if it's Floraton Road, or if it's Cripple Creek, or if it's whatever, it's got

even the sections of where the people live. And some of the people whose names are on there still live at those places. They're still living, and they're still at that same place. So they were going to throw those away. And I came out going to school one morning, and saw them sitting out there to be thrown away. And I asked the postmaster what he was going to do with it, and he said, "I'm taking it to the dump when I close the post office this afternoon." Well I almost fainted, you know, "What?" So I said, "Can I have it?" He said, "Sure." I said, "Well don't do anything with it until I can get back home from school." He helped me load it up, and I took it up to my dad's, and it's been up in one of the outbuildings at my daddy's house in Woodbury for years. So when we started building this, Joe said, this is 240 square feet. And when he brought that in, he said, "Teresa, old stores used to be post office and store at the same time." So he put that up on the wall. And I use it now as a place to keep all my little stuff out of the way and stuff.



Another thing that came out of that post office, before the Readyville post office, when it moved over to the building that it's in now, it used to be Mr. Beckton's store. That's where we found the "Y" for the Royal Crown Cola. And I was just a little kid whenever they sold that. He passed away and they sold all the stuff. I'd love to have some of the stuff that was in that, the candy, cases and stuff. But, alas I was too little and I couldn't get any of that. But whenever I saw that post office pigeonhole, it had a bench. And this green bench came out of Mr. Beckton's store. The only reason I know it is because my dad identified it as

coming out of Mr. Beckton's store, that they used to sit on that and play checkers. So I saved that. I was so excited.

Over on the wall, I have a calendar that came out of Mr. J.B. Whitfield's store that used to be in Curlee. And that's the only thing I have out of that store.

JA: I see there's a Readyville Mill flour, or cornmeal bag –

TT: That's the bag that, whenever the Carignans owned the Mill, that was their logo that they had on there. I have a lot, several old feed or flour sacks and stuff on the wall.

JA: Do you have any other ones from the Mill from other time periods?

TT: Uh-uh. No. That's the only ones. I used to have a King of Patent, and it disappeared in some of my moving. And I've grieved over it, and I've only seen one other one. I went to a yard sale over at Lascassas one day, and these, this guy had his garage fixed up, and he had a King of Patent flour sack. And I went, "Oh, is that for sale?" He said, "Oh, no."

JA: Oh.

TT: So, I don't have one, and I don't know what happened to mine, and I'm sick about it. Let's see if I have something else. I can tell you about these doors up on the ceiling.

JA: Oh, I did not even notice those until right now.

TT: These screen doors that's on the ceiling, I got those years ago, and they've been in the garage forever and ever and ever. So, when my husband saw them, he wanted to put them on these two double doors right here that goes back into the other storage area, that we built this thing originally for. And I said, "I'm afraid somebody will run a piece of lumber, like a two by four. I call it pulling a Three Stooges thing, you know, turn around, and run something through it. Or a kid put their hand through it. So I didn't want them to put on the door. So we talked about it and talked about it, and one of my friends suggested that we do like Cracker Barrel, put them on the ceiling. So that's why these are on the ceiling. It had those door pushes. Those Sunbeam door pushes, there was one on each side. So Joe took the ones that were the worst ones and put them on the door, these front doors right here. Kept the good ones up on the ceiling.

JA: And where did you get the doors from?

TT: I have no idea. I do not remember. One of those, which I laugh and say, "One of those 37 states or two countries, I'm not really sure which one." I get a lot of stuff at the Nashville flea market, and the things that they have down there nowadays, are not like what they used to have. So I got that pair of screen doors down there. And I said, "One of these days, I am going to put them on my store." Well, they're too valuable now to put on the store, so I put them on the ceiling. And so we're beginning to hang stuff up from the ceiling.

A lot of other stuff I just collected over the years, if I find it. If it's old, I like it. Those old candy boxes. Those cans up there are new cans that I just opened up a can of soup, but they're old labels that I've found over the years. I try to collect stuff that has something to do with Middle Tennessee if I can find it. I do have a sock advertisement sitting on the shelf up there that is from the hosiery mill that used to be in McMinnville [Tennessee]. And I try to keep my milk jugs, my milk bottles, from Tennessee if I can. And my maiden name was Lassiter. If you see on that milk bottle I have over there, that's Wells and Lassiter. That's not a common name, Lassiter's not a common name. The funny thing about where I got that milk jug from, is my husband, my husband and I have been married three and a half years. Since we've been married, his mother passed away. And his sister cleaned out some stuff that she thought I might enjoy in the country store. And his mother had that milk jug that had my maiden name on it, of all things. So I try to keep things that is stuff that people can associate with. The old thermometer up there is Roy Fuston's jewelry store that was in Woodbury, Tennessee.

And my husband made that knife. The blade actually opens up and closes and stuff. He's pretty handy about stuff. He built this whole thing. He built the doors for it and everything. We looked for doors to buy, and we searched. We drove and drove and drove trying to find doors, double doors that would fit that opening. We couldn't find them anywhere. Well, we found one that was they wanted like five hundred dollars, and we went, "Eh, no, no, no. We're not going to do that. Because it's too high." So we built the doors. I am not joking you, two days after he got those doors built and hung, they had an estate sale out at The Corners, and there was three pairs of doors standing out there for sale.

Now all this lumber here, we had the trees, we had the logs, and Joe had the logs sawed, and we used the rough lumber from the logs that we had to build this

thing. And the guy who did the sawing for us was in a sawmill at Woodbury. And Joe went up to pick up some of the lumber, and he said, "I need some more, I need some flooring." And he had some red oak logs laying out there, and Joe said, "Hey, I need that red oak." And that guy sawed up that red oak lumber. And this is the floor for this.

JA: Well, this is so beautiful and neat and education.

TT: Well thank you. We had the phone, you saw it really works.

JA: Yeah.

TT: It really works. We try to keep stuff in here that's, someone can, anyone that comes in can relate to something in it, one way or the other. We have stuff that people have never seen before. Let me show you this thing. We love to go out and find stuff that nobody has, nobody knows what it is. We have this thing that we found, and I'd love for you to take a picture of this thing.

JA: Okay, I will. It looks like a box.

TT: Yeah, and you can see it attaches to something. We don't know what. Inside here it has numbers written on those little gear looking things.

JA: There's a little viewfinder at the top.

TT: Like a window. When you click this (clicking noise), that moves, and now it's got another number on it. So it's some kind of counter. We had no idea what it was. It was seven dollars and a quarter. It had a key hole, but we had the key. And the key would actually fit it, and it would turn, but it won't unlock it.

JA: So you've never opened it?

TT: See the hinges are on the inside, so Joe said, "I'm going to pay seven dollars and a quarter for it so I can take it apart and find out what it is." So we got home with it, and I said, "Joe, look at the writing on it." So we got the name and Googled that name, and found out that this thing is a grain tally. That whenever they were putting, combining or whatever, putting grain into a big wagon, that there was somebody there with a shovel, shoveling it into bushel baskets. And every time he got a bushel, he'd click this (clicking noise), and that counted how many bushels he had. And they could see how many bushels they got to the

acre, or how many bushels they had if they were going to sell or whatever. Because you know, if you're like me, if you like walking, and you're walking in a circle walk thing to keep up with your miles, you forget how many, where you were. So I would have, I'd put gravels in my hand. If I was going to walk around ten times, I'd have ten gravels. And when I got to a certain place, I'd drop one of those gravels. And that way I knew where I was. That's how they kept up where they are. They say, "How many bushels?" I call it a grain tally. Never heard of it. It's got an 1861 patent on the thing.

JA: Really?

TT: Never seen or heard of one. And we thought it was, because we knew it had some kind of tally thing, we thought it was a turnstile counter kind of thing. Everybody guesses, nobody knows what it is.

JA: Right.

TT: We wouldn't have known what it was either if we hadn't looked it up.



JA: Well I'll definitely include a picture of that. But yeah, do you have any other stories that you can think of relating to the Mill?

TT: I can't think of anything else, honey.

JA: Okay, great.

TT: I hope I've helped you some.

JA: Oh, yeah.

TT: I can't think of things. I can't think of a lot of stuff.

JA: Well this has been so interesting. But before I turn this off, I just want to, on tape, get your permission, which I'll have you sign a form as well, but your permission to donate this recording to the public domain, to be used for educational purposes. So I have your permission to do that?

TT: Sure.

JA: Okay. And then I'm just going to –

TT: That's the reason I was afraid to tell you what I told the senator.

JA: Oh. (laughs) Oh no, I thought that was hilarious. But, yeah, thank you so much for your time.

TT: You're welcome. You're welcome, hun.