

PRESERVE THE AREA'S RURAL QUALITIES

(PARQ)

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

JEAN GILLEY

Interviewed by Jane Rust
Murfreesboro, Tennessee
May 5, 2011

Jane Rust: It's May 5TH. This is Jane Rust and I'm going to be interviewing Jean Gilley.

[The tape machine malfunctioned at this point. Jean talked about driving to work in Nashville on the old 2-lane Hwy 70S before the new 4-lane John Bragg Highway was built. Her drive took her past the Readyville Mill.]

JG: . . . it was open then and they ran it and sold the products and I just, I had people ask me to get them some mill and flour and all, because they knew I went there. And, I did and I don't know what happened, they sold it and it just stayed idle there until this Mr. Brady took it over. And, as far as I know that's the story as far as I know. And, of course, what I know is what I've read about it from a historical point is all, is all I've read and heard.

JR: I remember meeting with you at Berry Ann & Laughlin's house.

JG: Yeah, I remember that.

JR: And you wanted us to get interested in trying to save the mill.

JG: Yeah. And we got someone from Tennessee, I don't know whether it's Tennessee Commission, it's for the commission, the State to come out there and talk to us. And, it had been transferred, this Mister, oh, (unintelligible). I can't think of his name. Had bought it but he wouldn't do anything with it. He wouldn't, he wouldn't do anything about it as far as developing it and, he, and he said it was up for sale but you never could negotiate with him.

JR: Mr. Epperly?

JG: Epperly? Yeah. Mr. Epperly. That was his name.

JR: Why was it so interesting to you that you would put out the effort to, to try to do something about it?

JG: Well, it was just, [like a] sore thumb sticking out there and reminding you all the time of the conditions that it was in and what had happened to it and, it's just so, anybody saw there, you know, very much why they couldn't help but wonder why that he couldn't do something about it but, uh, what little effort we put forth it, it kind of fell through. And, Mr. Epperly, he wanted to develop it into something like a, oh, something like Dollywood.

JR: Oh, okay.

JG: Or something like that. He wanted to have rides and commercialize it, you know, along that line. And he wouldn't ever get down to price. And so he, he came out to my house one day and he uh, he said well, I'm ready to sell the mill. And my brother was there and he said, uh, did you just say you was ready to sell the mill? And then, he said, yeah. And he said, well, who to? And then he said, to her. And he just started out [the door]. I said, well, we'll get, I'll contact some people and we'll get together with you. And he went out the door and he fell. As he went down the steps, he fell in the yard and scared me, and uh, I said, well, are you alright, Mr. Epperly? And I went, his wife was in the car and, and I went out there and helped him in the car and not long after that well, he had a stroke and died.

JR: Oh, my.

JG: And, yeah. And of course he was, I don't know whether it, if he had a will or if it was just went probate or, or what but, we couldn't [get a sales price]. We got Susan Melton, lawyer, up here in Woodbury, to kind of look into it and, she did. Well, you know about us going down there and talking to his son-in-law, which is a lawyer and uh, he was just highly insulting really. I don't know. We left and, I don't know much about what happened after that.

JR: That's sort of what it was. Not much happened after that.

JG: No.

JR: Well, you and Teresa [Tate] went to MTSU and met with Jim Houta. You got them; you talked him into doing that history?

JG: Yeah, we got them interested in looking in to it and they, they did. His group, they did a study and I think they spent about 20 something thousand dollars. And, put it together, but its, its helped the people. I understand that this Brady, Mr. Brady, the book has helped him a lot because they made a study of the structure, how old it was and what kind of condition it was in and so forth.

JR: He, Mr. Brady asked for the history part of that book just a couple of weeks ago and he was using it to uh, I'm not sure exactly what he was using it for but he asked for it and we had given him a copy of it but, he asked another question, so we got the history part. You know it's in two (2) big volumes?

JG: Yeah, uh-huh.

JR: The first one is the history and stuff and the second one is the structure and recommendations on what to do with it.

JG: Oh, uh-huh.

JR: So, that, that service that you all did has just helped immeasurably.

JG: Yeah. We went around and, just the town people that, like Miss Mischell that, the _____ Mischell, she was still living and, of course, she was a descendent of the Bradys and she knew a lot about the mill. And, they talked to him, some people had done that a long time ago and talked to her and she, she referred them to some other older people that knew, knew all about it. And, that's about all I know.

JR: Well, that is great. Have you been out to the mill since it has gotten all renovated?

And. . . '

JG: I've been by there once, yeah. I didn't pay, just drove up there and looked at it.

JR: You don't really have to pay.

JG: No.

JR: You can just walk around.

JG: Yeah.

JR: And see things. And on Saturday mornings, it's open for, well they say breakfast but it starts at 8 and goes until 1 o'clock. So you could have brunch or lunch or whatever, but they have a menu of pancakes and biscuits and. . .

JG: Lets see. Sunday is uh.

JP: It's only on Saturdays though, isn't it? (Jackie Parkhurst is Jean's caregiver).

JR: Right. It's on . . . we're hoping to have our community foundation[organization, PARQ] meeting there coming up soon and I'll send you a notice.

JG: Alright.

JR: Because, we have to wait until Joan Jackson gets her work schedule before we can set the time for the meeting.

JG: Oh, uh-huh.

JR: She's the secretary of our community organization, PARQ, and she's also a flight attendant. So, she doesn't get her schedule until certain time of the month for the next month.

JG: Uh-huh.

JR: So, when we get it figured out we're going to try to have the meeting on Saturday morning.

JG: This coming Saturday morning?

JR: No, ma'am. I don't know which Saturday morning.

JG: Oh.

JR: It'll be . . .I'll let you know ahead of time.

JG: Oh, yeah.

JR: We have to wait for Joan to get her schedule.

JG: Uh-huh.

JR: Don't we sound very cosmopolitan that we have to wait for an international flight schedule to . . .

JG: Yeah. (Laughs).

JR: (Laughs) to figure out.

JP: I wish you all would do it during the week.

JR: Do what? The meeting?

JP: Yes.

JR: Ah, cause you're not here on Saturdays?

JP: Yeah.

JR: Oh, okay. What's your schedule, Jackie?

JP: Monday through Friday.

JR: Monday through Friday? All day? All night?

JP: All day.

JR: All day. And then somebody comes in the evening?

JP: No, nobody comes, she goes to bed.

JR: Oh, okay. Okay. Well, we will have to think about that.

JP: (Laughs)

JR: We will have to think about that.

JG: Well, it sounds like a good thing.

JR: Well, if Jackie is here Monday through Friday, do you have someone on Saturday and Sunday?

JG: Uh-huh. Yeah.

JR: Good.

JG: But that, that wouldn't keep me from coming.

JR: No?

JG: No. Uh-uh.

JR: No.

JG: You might even call and talk Jackie into coming.

JP: I'll take you. I would love to go to the mill.

JR: But, unfortunately, they are only open on Saturday. That's the. . .

JG: Oh, oh, yeah. You're right.

JR: I mean, we can switch the meeting time but, we can't switch the. . .

JP: Place.

JR: The place. I mean, we can't make them open up early unless you're gonna have a big party and rent the place.

JG: Yeah.

JR: Well.

JG: What did you start to say?

JR: We enjoyed seeing you at church.

JG: Yeah.

JR: I hope that it will work out for you to come to church sometime.

JG: I hope I can come more.

JR: Starting in July, church is going to be at 10:30.

JG: Oh, that'll help.

JR: (Laughs) Because Lawrence is going to do both churches every Sunday.

JG: Oh.

JR: And so, he's gonna do Milton at 9 o'clock and then give him time to drive to Cripple Creek and then he'll do Cripple Creek at 10:30.

JG: Oh, well that's great. Uh-huh.

JR: So that'll be easier for you.

JG: Yeah, well it's hard for me to get up and get ready.

JR: And get out there by 9 o'clock.

JG: And (unintelligible) walk.

JR: I know. Even when we don't start on time, it's still hard to do.

JG: Uh-huh.

JR: Right.

JG: Yeah.

JR: Well.

JG: I was coming last Sunday and got dressed, half, almost dressed and it was raining so bad that I just couldn't get out in it.

JR: Right. I don't blame you. And that was wise.

JG: Uh-huh.

JR: This Sunday is Mother's Day.

JG: Yeah.

JR: And the second Sunday of the month, when we have breakfast at church at 8 o'clock so that will really be early.

JG: Uh-huh.

JR: But the men are cooking pancakes for Mother's Day.

JG: Oh the men.

JR: So.

JG: That'd be good. (Laughs)

JR: But, I don't know. Once church starts at 10:30 when, in the beginning of July, then Sunday School is going to start at 9:00 so they probably still will have breakfast at 8.

JG: Uh-huh.

JR: I guess that'll, [be] the second Sunday of the month.

JG: Uh-huh.

JR: But, anyway. I need to go, continuing with my errands around town.

JG: Yeah.

JR: So, I'm going to say adios, because today is Cinco de Mayo.

JG: Yeah.

JR: Or something.

JG: Yeah.

JP: (Laughs)

JG: Yeah, I'm glad you came on by.

JR: You look great, Jean.

JG: Oh, well, thank you.

JR: You just look great.

JG: I take, she takes good care of me.

JP: Oh, thank you.

JG: Yeah.

JR: Well, I'm glad that you have such a nice person to be with you.

JG: Yeah. It is. That means a lot.

JR: It does. And you're a special person. So it all works out.

JG: Yeah.

JR: All around. (Laughs)

JG: Uh-huh.

JR: (Laughs) All around. Well, thank you.

JG: Well, you're welcome.

JR: And I hope it.

JG: I didn't, didn't contribute anything.

JR: Yes, you did. And, I hope to see you pretty soon then.

JP: I wish I could run that mill. I used to own a restaurant. Well, I grew up in a restaurant. I would love to.

JR: Well, they would love to have somebody run a restaurant there more full time than just this breakfast thing. I think.

JP: I would love to do that.

JR: Well, you talk to Tomm Brady. You can call 563-MILL and, I mean, he has his own numbers but that's the one I've got memorized. 563-MILL and they will tell you how to get Tomm.

JP: (Unintelligible).

JR: How to get in contact with him.

JP: (Unintelligible).

JR: Oh, that would be good.

JP: (Laughs).

JR: That would be good.

JP: (Unintelligible).

JR: Yep.

(Tape turned off)

END OF INTERVIEW