

PRESERVE THE AREA'S RURAL QUALITIES
(PARQ)

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
JANE RUST AND THEA PRINCE

MAY 8, 2012
READYVILLE, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWER, TRANSCRIBER, AND EDITOR:
LAUREN BAUD

AUDITOR:
SAMUEL BAUD

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
DR. MARTHA NORKUNAS



JANE RUST AND THEA PRINCE

Jane Rust and Thea Prince are both officers in the non-profit organization called Preserve the Area's Rural Qualities (PARQ), established in 1992. Jane is PARQ's treasurer, and Thea is its president. They both live in Readyville, Tennessee and are very dedicated to the community. Through PARQ, they have organized many events and projects that have helped the members of the community of Readyville and others in both Cannon and Rutherford County by way of spreading knowledge about recycling, participating in and heading fundraisers, and providing the needy people of these communities with equipment like weather radios. They are also deeply devoted to history and preservation, working diligently to help preserve the cemeteries and other local historic landmarks. One of their biggest projects has been that of preserving the Readyville Mill physically and in the minds of the residents of Readyville. All oral histories about the mill have been done by their request, and it is because of them and PARQ's other members that Readyville and the Readyville Mill have received the attention and care that they deserve.

INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

Jane Rust and Thea Prince, along with various other members of Preserve the Area's Rural Qualities, have worked very hard over the years since PARQ was initially created to help Readyville and other communities throughout both Cannon and Rutherford County. In this interview, they discuss how PARQ came to be and how it has helped the surrounding communities in many various ways since its establishment in 1992. It has helped a lot of people and brought individuals from all walks of life together for a common cause of community enrichment and betterment.

Jane and Thea discuss in this interview how PARQ has been involved with helping to preserve the Readyville Mill since its establishment twenty years ago. Before the current mill owner, Tomm Brady, purchased it in 2006 and worked to restore it with his own funds, they worked with the Epperly family to obtain permission to stabilize and winterize the mill. They even tried to raise the funds to purchase the mill themselves to as to fully restore the mill. When they realized that buying the mill was out of their reach, they asked for permission from those who had donated funds to the cause to use their money in an effort to preserve the memories of the mill. Almost all of the donors agreed, and oral histories about the mill were conducted periodically by various oral historians. They also worked with Middle Tennessee State University and the Center for Historic Preservation there to create reports on the mill's condition in the 1990s, and current mill owner Tomm Brady has taken steps to correct all of the issues found in this report and the others that developed over the decade from its creation to his purchase of the mill. The mill now is in much better shape, and breakfast is served every Saturday there in one of the buildings on the mill's property. It thus holds its place as a community gathering place.

Jane and Thea also talk about PARQ's other efforts to help the community beyond the preservation of the mill in this interview. They have helped to preserve and locate many local cemeteries, engaged in recycling programs, participated in concerts and other community events, and helped to ensure the safety of the community's residents by giving out weather radios to those in need and also battling to keep Cannon County's rock quarries in check as much as possible. Their organization is a true asset to Readyville, Cannon County, and the parts of Rutherford County that it serves, and it has been recognized as such through various awards and other recognitions. These women are dedicated to their cause of bettering and preserving the vital features of the community of which they are a part.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Lauren Baud: This is Lauren Baud. I'm here with Thea Prince and Jane Rust at Jane's home in Readyville, Tennessee. It is May 8, 2012. This interview is for Preserve the Area's Rural Qualities, a non-profit organization that is interested in preserving the history of Readyville, Tennessee and the Readyville Mill. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

Thea Prince: Yes.

Jane Rust: Yes.

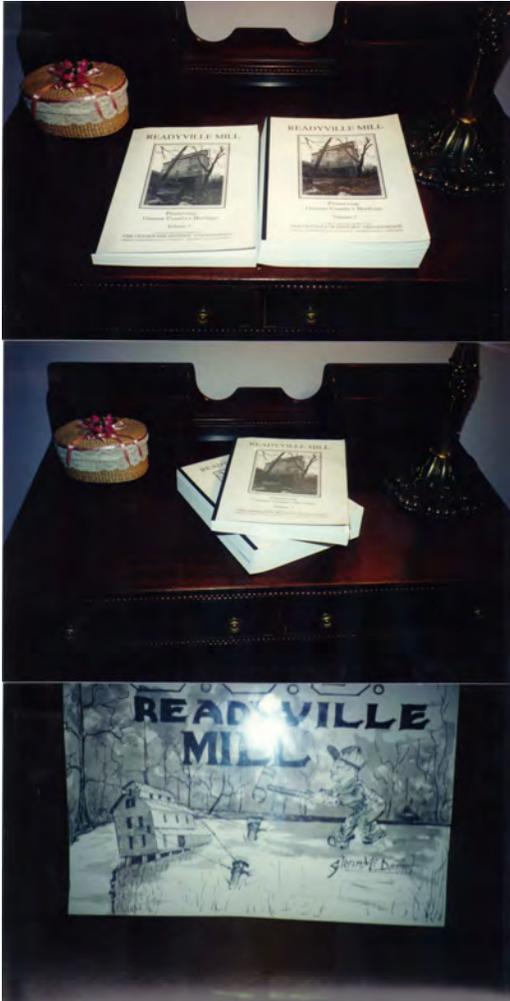
LB: All right. Well, from what you've been telling me, you're wanting to discuss PARQ's involvement with the Readyville Mill, so where were you wanting to start with that today?

TP: I think I want to start with Jane Rust giving the idea to a small group of people in 1992 to organize, to name ourselves, and to set our goals. One of the goals was what we could do to preserve an 1800s grist mill that was in poor condition, and that's how the involvement began. There were other issues at that time too though. There was a quarry that was not a good neighbor that was causing pollution and noise problems. So there were issues on our wish list that got us involved with working in the area. Ask me another question.

LB: Okay. All right. So what were some of the first things that you did once PARQ was organized?

JR: There was a public hearing about the rock quarry, and that's where I first met Thea. She said, "We need to do something about this." I was taking a class at MTSU [Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee] to renew my teaching certificate and got the idea of a community organization. So we sort of took it from there. Jean Gilley and Teresa Wilson Tate were very interested in the mill, and they had approached Jim Huhta at the MTSU Historic Preservation to do a survey about the mill, and that's where we got the big fat books that gave us the history of the mill and how to fix it and what needed doing and has served as a source in all of these proceedings that we've been doing. I think we gave y'all a copy of that. The Gore Center has a copy of it, so it should be available to anyone who wants to look at it.

LB: Um-hmm. Okay. So what are some of these photos [on the table] about? Like these right here in front of me?



Photographs from 1994 fundraiser at “The Corners” in Readyville, TN

TP: The photos in front of you come from I believe—maybe the dining room of Ms. Oliver’s home, which is called The Corners. It’s an old 1800s home, and she was generous enough to be a hostess for a mill party—a fundraiser to see what interest there was and what financial help there might be available in the community to go on with PARQ’s hopes for the mill. These pictures show the two volumes that MTSU had done. Also we’ve dealt with several artists who have donated prints or drawings which have been instrumental in doing some fundraising. The event included not only local prominent farmers, ordinary folks who just loved the area and visited the mill when it was still functional, and also political friends like Bart Gordon, who was a family friend of Ms. Oliver’s. Those connections were all good at the time and always are. It was a good event.

JR: That was part of what got us going on—Dr. Huhta’s suggestion was to try to get funds, governmental funds. So we contacted a lot of different state and national, and from that, we received a grant—

TP: From Senator Burke. Senator Burke from Cookeville [Tennessee] was one of several officials that we personally talked to or spent time with in our pursuit for funding and help with the state funding to go with our personal area funding to be successful in preserving the mill. Do I say the amount? Five thousand—

JR: Okay.

TP: Five thousand dollars became accessible to us, which we've used very carefully over the last fifteen years. We also met with the gentleman from Smithville [Tennessee]. Okay—Frank Buck. He had served in the Nashville legislature for quite a few years, and he was another person that we visited with to try to encourage participation and funding.

LB: So before Tomm Brady bought the mill, was your main goal to raise funds to preserve it like he's been doing and restore it and things like that?

JR: Our main goal was to purchase the mill and restore it. We did different fundraisers and tried to—would you like us to tell you about some of these different fundraisers?

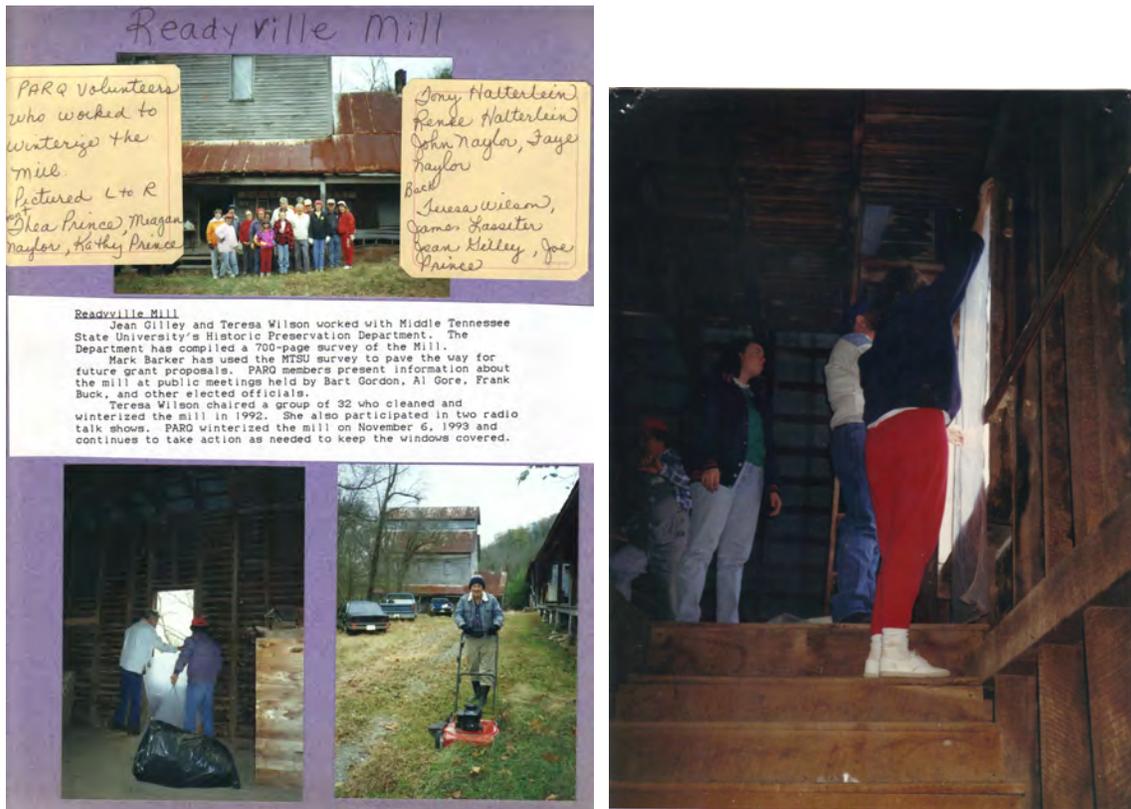
LB: Sure. Yeah, yeah.

JR: When it became apparent we weren't going to be able to purchase it, then all the people who had donated any funds to us, we contacted them and wrote them letters and asked permission to transfer those funds to what we call the Heritage Committee. That's what we've used to fund these oral histories. So any of those monies that we raised in these various ways, we kept really careful records, and we got permission from everyone except one person who wanted their money back. (Lauren laughs) Everybody else said, "Go for it." Thankfully Tomm Brady came along and saved the mill so we have used the funds for this Heritage Committee. In the meantime, we used the funds to buy materials to try to protect the mill. We'll show you some pictures about those projects.

LB: Yeah. Um-hmm.

TP: One of the projects that Jane is saying with materials—we got permission from the Epperly family to go on the premises. We were very careful not to do anything that—and honored the fact that we were not the owners even though we felt we had so much love for the facility. We got permission to winterize the mill by putting heavy duty plastics over—because all the windows had long since been broken out. We did that very carefully because the mill, especially on the upper two floors was in poor condition, and we had to be careful for the steps. We had a good turnout, and we continued doing that for several years.

JR: Here are some pictures of that. And write-ups from the newspaper.



Photographs and descriptions of the 1993 winterization project at the mill.

LB: Oh okay. So how long did it take to do that? To winterize the mill?

JR: It would take a whole Saturday morning.

LB: Um-hmm. Those are great. [referring to photos of volunteers at the mill] So how many years did you work on doing these fundraisers before you decided to not purchase the mill anymore?

TP: I think one of the determining factors was we decided to meet with the husband of one of the daughters of the owner of the mill. He was a prominent attorney in Nashville, and we wanted to know what options we had for purchasing. Would it be a totally cash requirement? If so, how much would it be? Would it be beneficial to that family to have a charitable write-off and donate it partially or in entirety the mill to the community? The result of that visit and discussions with also attorney Frank Fly, who was very helpful—I believe he's still at work—attorney in Murfreesboro—just led us to the fact that the funds required were just more than we could possibly do. So we would apply our energies and what funds we had to preserving stories about the mill like we have

or photos or past events so that whatever happened to the mill, at least it would be preserved in some manner.

JR: We were still working to stabilize it. I mean, we still had permission from the family to stabilize it, but it got worse and worse. So it got so that we didn't really feel comfortable being in there. Luckily most of the plastic lasted pretty well. Thea was instrumental in getting all these materials that we need and permissions to do this kind of stuff. Thea [pronounced Thee-ah] slash Thea [pronounced Thay-ah] (all laugh) is the person that you need to go and send and talk to people because she just can get all these things accomplished. That was most helpful.

LB: So what kind of condition was the mill in? Was it starting to sag and start to go into the river a little at that point?

TP: It wasn't going into the river. It was the opposite direction is where the main problem was. I can show you [points to photograph]. The river is in back here, but where this little office building part of the building is, it had fallen—I want to say anywhere between five to eight feet. It was breaking off, and the undergirdings weren't sound. So that was a concern. We initially thought maybe the river was going to be a problem as in Rutherford County where the—

JR: Brown's Mill.

TP: Brown's Mill was in the process of being renovated and imploded, so to speak, and fell before it could be preserved. Thanks to Tomm and his work with engineers—he had a clear understanding of what was involved. He was not able to save the little office. That had to be removed with the undergirding—major beams are replaced and making a sound start for his renovation.

JR: If you look in that survey that the MTSU Historic Preservation did, they have drawings that show the weaknesses and where things needed to be done. They're really detailed and very clear about what was—and they did that survey like in [19]94 or [19]95 or something. So anything they said, it just got worse, but it's very detailed.

TP: In fact—I just thought of this—we had a company give us a bid on some of the basic things they could do for us if we were able to raise that much money just to get that part done.

JR: So we were willing to stabilize it even when we didn't own it.

LB: Yes. So you worked really hard to get it to where possibly someone could buy it like Tomm Brady did and do the full restoration. So what does the mill mean to you two and to the community?

TP: I guess I'm the newbie. I've only been here twenty-two years. The mill obviously is connected with gone-by days that were really essential here. Grinding your corn meal just for your basic foods. There were so many times when the mill was a meeting place, connecting place. It's even more recently—meaning in the [19]70s—was an arts and crafts place. It was almost like a health foods store space for different products that were bought and sold. Beyond that, just its location and its place in history. Its power is credited for bringing the first electricity to the area even before Rutherford County had electricity. As basic as it was, it was really very important. Its location goes back to Native Americans meeting over a thousand years ago. It goes to World War II, you know, young men learning how to prepare themselves for war by doing maneuvers in the area. It's so all-encompassing. Oh, the Trail of Tears was something that happened just along [unclear] in front of the mill was that—and now it's getting—Dave Macon Days. Mr. Macon was from the area, and his history is part of the mill's history too. Those are just a few things that come to mind. Can you think of something?

JR: It's just a good resource that you don't want to lose. It's valuable to a lot of people. It's a window into a different way of life.

LB: So I know that now a lot of weddings go on at the mill. Have you ever been to a wedding there? [Jane nods] Yeah. (laughs)

JR: I have not only been to a wedding, I have helped prepare a wedding. So yes. It's unique. It's very picturesque. It's very nice. If you're trying to put the wedding on, it's unique.

LB: So do you think that weddings going on there helps people to want to preserve it as well?

TP: I would think not just weddings, but there have been class reunions where especially several of the older classes who as teenagers, the mill was part of their life. Also, early on after Tomm was an owner, a video company shot some Christian song videos there at the site. I think part of that is the peace that the location offers. It's just very picturesque and peaceful.

JR: Nora Robinson is the sort of events coordinator for Tomm Brady. Her phrase about the weddings is that she enjoys doing it and thinks it's very important because it's an important time in a person's life, so they're not going to forget

about it. So it will continue on because then they can bring their children and grandchildren and show them, "Here's where we got married."

LB: Um-hmm. Yeah. I agree. (all laugh)

TP: Plus you're going to invite people that normally would not come to this place. Once they've seen it, the hope is that they'll want to come back.

JR: It's a good place to have a party. We had a party there, and exactly what Thea said has happened. The people who had never been out here—it's amazing the people who live in Murfreesboro and stuff who think they're falling off the edge of the earth to come east. (Lauren laughs) They have come back, and they tell us that they have enjoyed it and so that was very gratifying.

TP: Part of preservation also for our group and for me has been recycling because we're environmentalists—most all of us are I think you could say. Also, politically, our being in Cannon County, which is a very modest economic community where folks are very fortunate if they get a college education. Oftentimes they end up in a factory job before they get that far, and they travel to the factory job. There are many things that they do without because the funding isn't readily available, but this is a treasure that can help them be proud of where they live. Also, it's an economic boost too now that Tomm's taken it over.

LB: So have both of you lived here in this area your whole lives, or did you move here later?

JR: I've lived here since 1973. My husband took a job at MTSU. He teaches school psychology there, and so that's why we came. So like Thea, we are newbies. We're actually in Rutherford County. That's part of the challenge of being this 501c3 or community organization is that we span two counties, so when you get to be talking to somebody or another, then you have two county governments to be dealing with.

LB: So would you go to the mill in the [19]70s when you lived here?

JR: I did. I did. Obviously, I didn't go often enough because they didn't have enough business to keep going, but I did go.

LB: Um-hmm. So what was it like for you then when you went there in the [19]70s?

JR: I went there for some corn meal, and I also went because I was a quilter at the time, and I liked seeing the arts and crafts things that they had there. I wasn't as good a customer then as I am now. (all laugh) I'm a better customer now.

LB: Yes. Do you go there for breakfast on Saturdays?

JR: Sometimes. I also go because they—I just went because they sell jellies and things also, and I'm going to be visiting my brother next month. He said, "Don't come without some of that cherry preserves." (all laugh) So I had to go down and stock up.

LB: So do you think that the mill can at some point get back to where it's functional and people are working there and things, or do you think that it'll stay more as like a monument or something like that?

TP: That's almost totally in part to what the state of Tennessee is willing to do and the Army Corps of Engineers. A couple springtimes ago, I helped Tomm put together probably twenty, thirty people—either politicians or department heads of environment and tourism and also agricultural heads of the ag offices. Also the forestry all converged to find a solution for getting the water to run. That operation was controlled by the dam that—it's correctly called a weir—that needed repairing. If indeed, like we had hoped, it could be grandfathered in that the repairs be made back to what it had been, that seemed affordable, but it's a lot of permitting and regulation approvals before it could be done. Instead, what the environmental departments in Tennessee state had said was they wanted it to be the best of what it needs to be. That was in excess of a two million dollar investment to make that happen. At that time, that certainly put it out of any possibility. We had hoped with a quarry just a few miles away with all the rock that would be needed to make some of the big repairs, that it would just be a shoe-in, but with the requirements that the state put forward, just to start with the engineer schematics, made it undoable right then.

I think Tomm's dream would be that it would do what it was supposed to do even if it's only opening the waterway on the other side of Murfreesboro Road to—so that the water could flow through and run the dynamo that gets all the machinery going if it happened only on Saturday—four times a month. Without checking that we're not destroying any kind of water life or affected it negatively, no one was willing to say, "Yes. I think we could." So I don't think he'll give up on his pursuit, but right now, it's just the matter of using an electric motor to get his organic wheat flour and corn meal done.

LB: Okay. All right. Do you still do fundraisers today? Do you still try to raise money for like these kinds of projects? Do you mostly work with the funds you already have? (all laugh)

TP: Well, no. It's gone in a little bit different direction, especially now because we have an owner who we need to verify whatever we'd like to do. In 2007 I guess

this program actually started by the Lion's Club to design a Christmas ornament. So the first year they did—there in Woodbury—they did the courthouse. The second year, I encouraged the fellow that I knew who's running that committee to do the Readyville Mill just as an awareness thing because I wanted people to know it's alive and we need to appreciate it. So they did sell them that year, and then PARQ purchased additional ornaments, which the mill will sell without any reference to Christmastime, just that it's the mill. You know, that's an affordable gift for someone to pick up at the mill, and then those funds help. What else would we have done?



Article about Lion's Club Readyville Mill Christmas ornaments from December 2008.

We've really taken, like Jane said earlier, taken the money and directed it into our Heritage Committee. Early on, before we were even an official Heritage Committee we did things like an activity book. [looks at activity book on table] Oh, I guess it says "Heritage Project," so we were official. Okay. With questions and answers for kids—just simple ways for them to know about this piece of history that was right in the neighborhood. I'm not sure what else we've done. Other activities that we've—

JR: We had a barbeque fundraiser dinner when we were raising funds. This is what these pictures are [points to photos on table]. We had a scavenger hunt, and that's what these pictures are.



Photographs of scavenger hunt to raise funds for the Readyville Mill.

TP: We've done other projects just to promote awareness about the mill and—
Make a Difference Day projects. For example, the Readyville Mill is named after
Mr.—

LB: Charles Ready?

TP: Charles Ready. The cemetery's small, but really special. It's just within blocks
of the mill. So we've done a cleanup there. Make a Difference Day I think that
was one of the products of that cleanup, and we have done it more than one year
just so people could be aware of what was right here in their community.

JR: The Arts Center in Woodbury has been very kind in the past. In their gift
shop, they would sell—we had postcards. The artist that gave us permission to
reproduce their paintings and drawings and things, we made note cards and
postcards and framed some prints. The Arts Center was kind enough to sell
those for us. So that was a sort of small but steady fundraising thing.

LB: So besides the Arts Center, have you brought in other community
organizations and worked with them on projects and things?

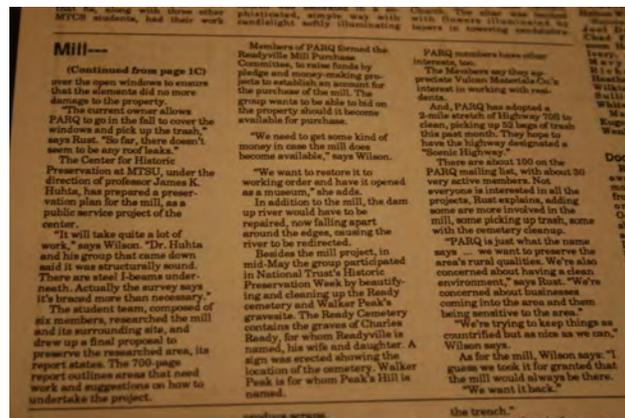
TP: Only to the extent that the Lion's Club was willing to let us be a part of their
activities. They ran that several years. So we were a part of year two, which was
a good thing.

JR: Not in reference to the mill, but in reference to other activities that we—when we finish talking about the mill that we'd like to tell you about—the organization. Then we worked with other organizations.

LB: Okay. (clock goes off) So with the mill was it easy to get people together to try to work on it? Or did you have to try to work really hard for that? Did people care as much as they do back then? I mean, do they care as much as they do now as they did back then?

TP: I think we were fortunate that one of the initial key people, Teresa Wilson Tate, was a fifth grade schoolteacher in the area. She could promote things with her daughter and her daughter's friends. Our members of our group—whoever they would know that knew our love for the mill would join us too. So that is to the extent that we raised awareness to help us.

JR: There were local people who grew up here. The first time that we put plastic over the windows and stuff, we had thirty some people that came out and helped. We're going to give you this to—that you can look at, but there's a write-up from one of the early events. [hands Lauren the article] So here it is. (all laugh)



Article in *The Daily News Journal*, a newspaper based in Murfreesboro, TN, from June 27, 1993.

LB: I'll definitely take that. So that's good. You have had a lot of community involvement throughout the whole thing helping you along the way.

TP: We want to make people aware because in your day-to-day life, oftentimes the things closest to you are the things that you aren't really observant of. This has been such a success story in so many different ways that I hope that the community, whether it's the Cannon County community or the Rutherford County, which of course is so much larger—thirteen thousand compared to a quarter million I think—that each person that for whatever reason touches and learns about the mill hopefully will have a positive experience and just take it further.

Part of that of course is what we're involved with with the oral histories. That's where we thought we would really be letting that information get out. I don't remember the first step that made that happen, but I think you will maybe. How we connected with Dr. Williams.

JR: No, but first we did with Evan Hatch from the Arts Center.

TP: Oh that's right. Okay. We met with him—that's right. We met with him in hopes of being just trained to be the oral history people, you know, to do the interviews. Jane and I went and had a session and learned which piece of equipment was most affordable and still user-friendly in our cases for sure.

JR: He did four interviews for us, and we've been very grateful because some of these interviews—the people have passed on. They take their stories with them if you don't record them. Well, Teresa Wilson Tate has this saying about people say you can't take it with you, but you can because when the (clock goes off) people pass on, they do take their stories with them if they're not written down or recorded in some way. We were fortunate that Thea actually contacted Evan, and he did four for us. Then he got busy doing things. So MTSU started the Albert Gore Center, and we went in and talked to Dr. Williams. He said, "Oh. I can help you." So he did. He did four for us, and those have been amazing too. Now we have you and Jaryn [Jaryn Abdallah, the other oral historian on this project] doing them. So it's a process.

LB: Yeah. Okay Jane. So you were just telling me you used to do school tours at the mill?

JR: When the Arts Center got to be so popular, they'd run plays for schoolchildren during the year, so grades have to get organized and rent a bus to come to the Arts Center. They rent the bus for the whole day, but the play is only part of the day, so we hooked up with them and got permission from the Epperly family to include the mill. So we were like a part of the day. We would talk about the mill and its importance, and then we would do a little tour of the village of Readyville and show them where the Ready cemetery is and The Corners that Colonel Ready built—the historic home. It was a good way to have time for

elementary school children to become aware of it because they would come from different counties and different locales that wouldn't have any idea that it was there.

LB: So do schoolchildren still go there for tours? Do you know if they do?

JR: No. They don't now.

TP: I think my hope and the group's probably would be also that doing things for the elementary school level kids in the community—and the Arts Center she was talking about was eight different counties at different times were involved in bussing kids in. The hope would be that through funding and public school funding that sometimes is available for some of these things that this could continue even with Tomm's ownership because one of his goals he said was to make sure that all those that could know about the mill and its history would know. To give it to children would make it even more likely carrying on. So I personally hope that will be something we can incorporate in it. Of course, takes some agreements with the local school board and all the things you have to go through to make it easy to happen, but I hope it does.

LB: So when did you all become a 501c3, and what did you have to go through to do that?

TP: Early on we felt that that was a must-do. Even though it seemed to be involved at the time, and groups that have had that experience since, I think we really did it quite easily. It allows those who would like to contribute to our projects to have a tax write-off. It encourages those that aren't sure who we are—it assures them that we are not a fly-by-night—that we are someone that has established and has done all the proper state and federal things to make our group truly functional. So that happened in 1992 that we first met, and then a couple years later I believe we became official.

JR: It gives you credibility. It was a two-year process. Thea did most of the work. We had to keep, and luckily since we're sort of hoarders, we had all the documents. I mean, every little meeting notice that we ever put up and every little write up in the paper and stuff. We had kept those. So Thea did most of the work, and we put it together and turned it in. It was about a two-year process.

TP: Thanks to Jane's ability to keep track of things like when the federal government wants a non-profit tax return even though we didn't have much in the way of funds to report, it still was part of our requirement just to keep our status. She followed that through and continues to make it happen, which is great.

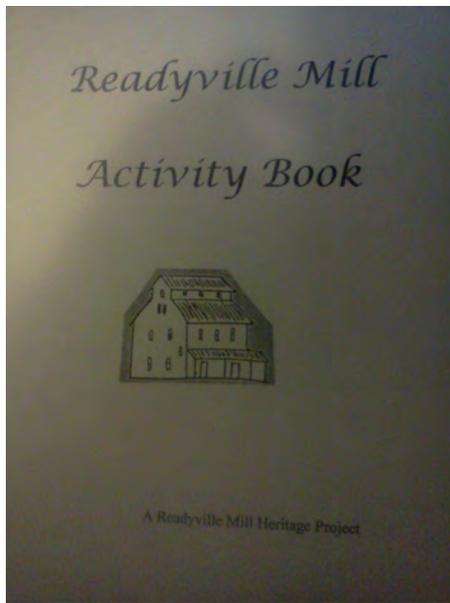
JR: Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good because I was just filing those forms. In the beginning, we filed them, and they were needed. Then they said they didn't need them, but since I had learned how to do them, I was just filing them every year. Then they decided—this is all federal—then they decided that to keep your status, you did need to have filed them. So a lot of organizations were caught because they had been told they didn't need to, and they didn't. We had, so we slid on through and everything was fine.

TP: Yeah. It was great. Something that you and I haven't even talked about mentioning, which is the real asset of the Rust family.

JR: We have experiences of dealing with organizations and things, and so I knew that a 501c3 would be valuable to have. I had some experience doing bookkeeping and so I knew that filing these things would be sort of good. It turned out—I mean, who knew that the one sheet of paper was going to be so valuable? Because to go back and redo it would be just such a pain. So that worked out well for us.

TP: We've had an assortment of things that we've chosen to do over our existence. That has come about just with networking, with quarterly meetings that we've had. We can both tell you about some of the things that we had gotten involved with. One of them Jane can describe was the result of a hurricane.

JR: Oh. Hurricane Gustav was the year after Hurricane Katrina, and people in this area were very involved in helping with those efforts. You may not remember, but they evacuated people out of New Orleans when Hurricane Gustav was headed that way. So five hundred people ended up camping in the MTSU Rec Center [Recreation Center on campus]. I mean, there they are all day long, and there was nothing for the kids to do. I mean, the university had a lot of things, but PARQ put together activity packets for thirty some kids, and I took them in. They were so happy to get them because by the time we got them together, the kids had been there like three days. They'd used up all the programs that the university had, so they were really happy. So that was one of the things that we did was we put together these activity packets for the children.



Activity book for children created by the members of PARQ.

TP: The follow up about hurricanes was an awareness of weather. We realized that there were folks in our community that probably couldn't afford a weather radio that would give them an opportunity to do what was necessary and safe. So Jane got in touch with the weather radio company and worked out a deal so that we could get very fair pricing that we could afford to cover most of that expense and just ask the recipient if they could to contribute a small amount so they would have a weather radio for their family. I don't remember the exact count of what we did, but it was—

JR: More than a hundred.

TP: More than a hundred, which was really great.

LB: That is great.

JR: We worked with the Upper Cumberland Community—help me. Upper Cumberland—

TP: Community Resource—

JR: [writes out letters of organization] C-H-A. Community—

TP: Upper Cumberland—

JR: Isn't it C—

TP: H-A. I'm not sure what all that's going to be.

JR: Upper Cumberland something Organization (all laugh). [The organization is the Upper Cumberland Human Resources Agency—UCHRA, based in Woodbury, Tennessee.] They were so kind. Larry—

TP: Davis.

JR: Davis was so kind to be our distributor because we needed some way to sort of screen people. This is a state assistance organization, so they knew of people. We also advertised in the Cannon County *Courier* so that people could contact us about that. We wanted to make our funds go as far as we could, and so we felt like people who could truly afford them should go to Kroger and buy them themselves and leave us with the funds. We got a grant from Middle Tennessee Electric Co-op to help fund that. [Jane would like to note the grant PARQ received from Middle Tennessee Natural Gas and also the agency called Greenhouse Ministries in Murfreesboro, Tennessee that helped to distribute the weather radios.] That was good. That was a good program.

LB: Yeah. Definitely.

TP: I'm trying to think what else.

LB: Oh yeah. What did you get your one thousand dollar award for?

JR: Thea—she should have four degrees in some kind of recycling, litter, biological something or another for all the seminars and all the meetings and things that she has gone to. (all laugh) She should have credentials, you know, listed down with pins and banners and things. One of the things that we did was Adopt-A-Highway, and we joined in that program—this is a long answer to your question—we participated in that program for thirteen years. Part of that is funded by the—

TP: The Keep America Beautiful Litter Grant state program.

JR: They pay for the bags and the—

TP: Our little wear—

JR: Oh. Shirt—no. Vest.

TP: Our glow-in-the-dark vests.

JR: See these? [points to photograph]



PARTICIPATES IN ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM
May 22. PARO (Preserve the Area's Rural Quality)
Tony Halterlein, Renee Halterlein, Thea Prince,
Joan Jackson, Maurice Brunelle, Wanda Reed, Garl
Reed, Dennis Glaser, Jane Rust, and Jim Rust pick
up trash along a 2-mile stretch of Highway 705.
Participants of the program must be at least 12 years of
age, wear a vest explaining the safety rules, and pick up tr
ash during a year. For more information about PARO, c
all 800-563-5824.

Photograph and description of the Adopt-A-Highway program.

LB: Oh okay. Yeah.

TP: Our protective things. They also encourage groups like ours across the state to do worthwhile activities.

JR: We got a brochure from them, and at that time, our neighbor, Berry Ann Youree, everyday she would ride with her husband—she lives across the road. She would with her husband to the top of the hill, and she'd get out. He was going to feed his cows. She would get out, and she would pick up the trash on the way back. My husband on weekends would pick up the litter just from this area to the four-lane highway. So I wrote that up. They were running a competition, a contest about how local people help beautify. So I wrote it up about Berry Ann and my husband picking up this litter, and we won a thousand dollar prize.

LB: Wow.

JR: So off we went—

TP: To a nice hotel in Nashville and publicly received the award.



Jane Rust receiving the award for PARQ's efforts in controlling litter.

JR: Had a luncheon and stuff. So we took that thousand dollars, and I did research at the MTSU library about what is most effective in stopping litter. The two things that were most effective was to have a sign that says, "Please don't litter." You needed to be very careful how you worded it so that you weren't aggressive. It was better to be cute—not too cute, sort of cute. Then also education. So a friend made us—because he is in the sign business—he made us a "Do Not Litter" sign that was right up at the corner of the four-lane highway. Since that was free, we took the thousand dollars and we hired a teacher, and she came up with a curriculum that we did with elementary school children. Thea with all of her recycle contacts and stuff—we put together a packet. We did every schoolchild at West Side School in Cannon County and Kittrell Elementary School, which is the local Rutherford school. Jane Sanborn was the teacher we hired, and she did programs. Then we also handed out these activity packets. We had contests for the best anti-litter motto, and we had refrigerator magnets made out of it and stuff.

TP: I was trying to remember how the magnets came in on that, but that's what. They were cute, and the kids had some neat ideas. We had them done in bright colors, and it was a neat way to—

JR: We gave you some.

LB: Yes. (all laugh)

TP: And now you—

LB: They're on my refrigerator. (all laugh) Yes. So what have you done with regards to the rock quarry and people wanting to bring another quarry into the area?

JR: The initial rock quarry that got us started is now run by Vulcan. It's in Cannon County. Initially it was run by a local private company who were not good citizens. They had a public hearing about it, and there was a lot of antagonism by local people about it. Cannon County doesn't have any zoning, so there's no way to stop it, but you could—you could approach it to make sure that the operator operated in such a way that meets the state and federal law regulations. So you have all kinds of issues. You have blasting, which almost always they meet the federal regulations because they're so loose. We had seismographs out here all the time. Not much to do, but people still have cracks in their houses and all that kind of stuff. You have water pollution from run-off, and you also have a water issue because one of the ways to keep down the air pollution is that the roads and the trucks and everything are supposed to be water all the time constantly. The trucks, when they leave, are supposed to run through a water bath so they don't track dust out. They're supposed to spray down—so you need a lot of water. Then you've got run-off pollution areas. That's pretty much a state thing. The air thing is another state thing because they're making all this limestone dust.

The air was the easiest to tackle, and so I went off to what they call "smoke school." This is a training program for mostly state officials, so they know what is truly pollution. So when you look at a dust cloud, you learn to identify whether it is under regulation or over regulation, whether they're violating. So once I had that credential, although the operator was supposed to allow me on the property, they wouldn't. They reneged on their agreement, but I could sit off property and see. It was very easy to see. They were illegal most all the time.

So eventually they went away. They broke enough regulations, and they went away. So Vulcan is a much better corporate citizen. That is not to say you want a quarry in your backyard, but they're a much better corporate citizen.

TP: To show their good intentions before they even came to the facility, they called and asked if they could meet with PARQ to discuss what our concerns were. Maybe they had heard that we were a thorn in another quarry's side. I'm glad that they did because we wanted to be clear that there are issues of life quality like breathing and clean water and also the noise levels of their blasting. The trucks—that was a issue too. The trucks used to like to come down some of the side roads near the little post office in Readyville instead of taking the correct roads to pick up their gravel and run back for another one. Time is of the essence for a driver because the more loads, the more money. So that was an issue that we had to deal with to try to improve them going through a small community

with children. Vulcan—to the best of our knowledge—has been mostly cooperative and has been a good neighbor.

JR: Now there are two more new quarries in Cannon County—one at the intersection Route 64 and the John Bragg Highway and another one all the way in town. I mean, it's obvious that the one at the intersection of 64 and John Bragg Highway is hardly going yet, but the trucks are amazing. The one in closer to town, they're just not doing it right at all.

TP: What they're doing—they're working on a state road, and they're working across the street from the Arts Center of all places to have an awful view of things. They average over a hundred trucks a day, and sometimes the dust is like you're in a morning fog. Though they do wet down roads, they don't wet—

JR: They don't run the trucks through it.

TP: No. What that has done, and not necessarily just with PARQ members, but with people interested in quality of life, has gotten people charged up to at least attend some meetings to discuss what's going on. If they can't change today's quarry, perhaps they can change what's needed for some authority or control for future quarries or entities that need to be placed in a different location in the community, not near residential homes.

JR: We participated in Make a Difference Day. It's a national—in October—I think President Reagan's daughter started it. Anyway, it's a national program that a person or a group can do something small that makes a difference. It doesn't have to be huge whatever, but every little piece that you do does make a difference. *Parade* magazine runs winners. Of course, we've never won yet, but (all laugh)—

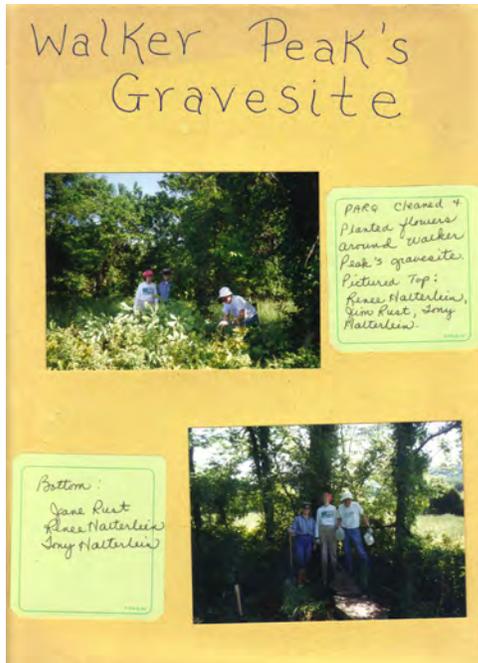
TP: We've got recognition.

JR: Yes. We get certificates.

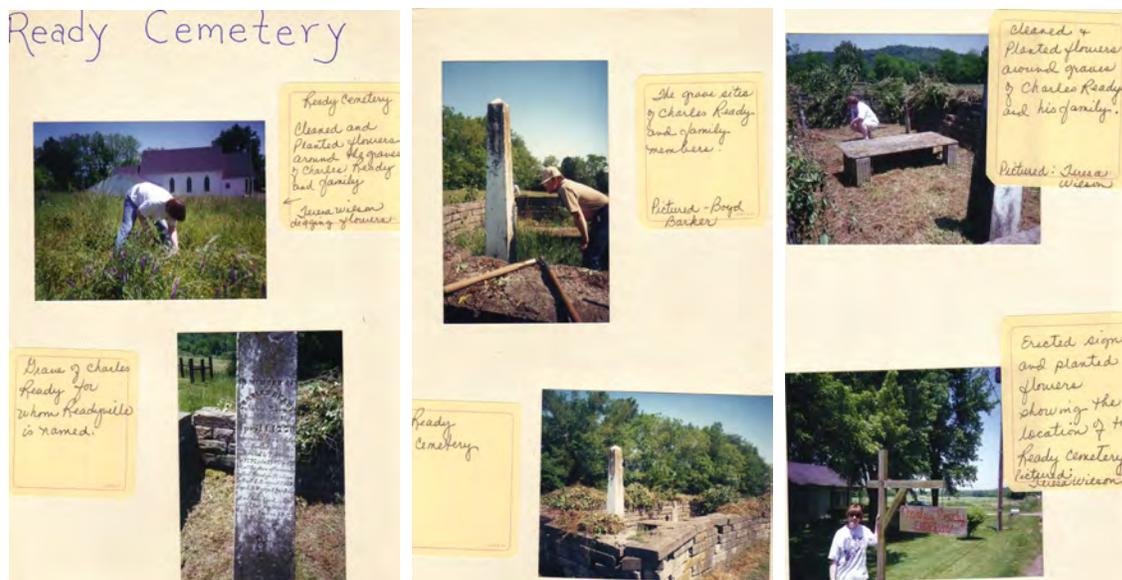
TP: Right.

JR: Well, one of the Make a Difference was like cleaning up the Walker Peak's gravesite, which is up here close by the house. Each year we try to take some type of little project that we're going to do, and that was one of them. We cleaned up the Ready cemetery—that was another one that we did. Part of those things is the repercussions have been good because we had another cemetery between here and Murfreesboro that we were slated to do, and my husband Jim mentioned it. It turned out that who he was talking to, it was their family cemetery. They went, "Wait a minute. We can do that. You don't have to do

that." So now they keep it up every year. That thing was grown up. The trees were six feet tall. Now they keep it up. It was like it had gotten beyond their consciousness. So that was wonderful.



Photographs and descriptions of the efforts to clean and preserve Walker Peak's Gravesite.



Photographs and descriptions of the efforts to clean and preserve the Ready Cemetery.

TP: Occasionally there are social things that we can get involved with too. One event that we helped work with was a bluegrass festival that we were one of the sponsors. It was really a half a dozen or more very well known performers that, through a grant, the groups were affordable. It was at the local park in

Woodbury, and we were glad to be part of that and have our name at least recognized that we were a part of the community and efforts. We may have already referred to the annual bicycle runs or events that take place. On one given event, we were the watering hole at the Cannon County/Rutherford County line.



Bluegrass Festival in 2001 partially sponsored by PARQ.



Photographs from when the Readyville Mill was the “watering hole” for a bicycle race.

We referred to the Ready cemetery. Well, I was going to tell you more about the Ready family, but then I just remembered one other program that we hadn't mentioned that we still might want to mention. [holds up pamphlet]

JR: Oh yes, that's good.

TP: Okay. Would you do that?

JR: We worked with Kroger. They're very good about when you get affiliated with them and you get on Kroger Cares. You set up a program with them, and you have a card—it's a gift card. When you renew it, everybody in your organization—when you have spent five thousand dollars, then they send you a check for four hundred dollars. It's a wonderful thing, but it's only available for churches or non-profits. So see, our 501c3 enables us to do this. That's a great thing. I mean, it's sort of like, you have to buy groceries anyway and how nice of them.

TP: It doesn't cost our organization anything.

JR: Right, and they do all the recordkeeping.

TP: We're just required to funnel our cash funds through a gift card that will help record what we spend. Then when all of our groups recordings, like she said, hit a certain amount, then we are sent a check, which we can use anyway we see fit. So that's been nice.

LB: Yeah. That's a really great program. So were there any other programs or anything like that that you've done that you were wanting to tell me about?

TP: Other than a little agreement that turned out to be very useful was I followed through on a pencil print that had been—or an ink print I guess it was—that had been done of the Readyville Mill. I had bought one when I first came to the area from the artist who I found out later was now deceased. I went to visit his widow and asked if she had anymore prints. She had a couple which I purchased, and then I asked her, "Do you think that it would be all right if we used your print to make copies to use as a fundraiser to promote our Heritage Committee?" She said she was no longer in charge of any of that—that her son who owned an interior design company in downtown Nashville was in charge of all of that. Next time he came to McMinnville [Tennessee] to see her, she would mention that. Well, I was a little apprehensive, you know. It sounded like maybe this is going past what is doable, but to our surprise, John Sharp is his name, responded to the message he had gotten saying that he thought it would indeed be wonderful—it would honor his father. So Tomm Brady had chosen that print—or the mini version of that print to label everything that he advertises or has for

sale like the little jellies and things. So whoever sees that is really connecting to the print and to the intention of the artist to promote an 1800s mill. I thought that was quite wonderful.

I think one other thing that happened that was kind of neat—I took a little picture a long time ago. I kind of drew this [points to sketch of mill on the front of a child’s activity book created by PARQ] from a little photo just to get the idea of the sizing. We used it for this little activities book, and then also the local lady that orders our Cannon County maps said that she could use some little something that would say that there was a mill. So that little sketch goes on every map of Cannon County that’s ever printed at no charge to us, and it’s still saying that the mill exists. So I thought that was kind of an awesome thing that happened.

LB: Yeah.

JR: Another thing we did was help with the cemeteries. The Cannon County—

TP: Oh, we did a project.

JR: Right.

TP: That is part of the county maps. That’s probably how that connection came to be. We did a project to identify where the cemeteries were in the county for families that might want to locate their ancestors. Those numbered sites are located on the county map and then listed on the back of the map. That was our project to try to get as many as we could I.D. for that project.

JR: We took a section of the county and volunteered to do that.

TP: Yeah.

JR: There are like seventy some family cemeteries in Cannon County, which is not a large county, and so we would physically go to where those—and some of them weren’t where they should and ought have been and some of them, you know, there were new ones that weren’t on the old maps. So we helped in updating that.

TP: They could be as small as just a family that indicated a space on their farm where they would be buried or their children or—and two, three generations of family just was there. Because it was a cemetery became a holy place where people couldn’t—just like you read about or hear about the Native American cemeteries, you can’t just dig them up and remove them or do anything to them.

They belong to that holy space. So it was really kind of neat to find out how many and what size and how old. So that was great.

I think the only other thing that I was going to mention was that Mr. Ready who started a lot of activities in our little community, has a great-great-great grandson—I don't know how many greats we need—but a fellow from Alabama who is related came up over a year ago with his two brothers to try to connect to his ancestors. To connect to the Ready cemetery, which is close by and see what its condition was. To see what family was around, and to learn about the mill. He became so involved and excited about it that he has since emailed or contacted up to two thousand of those connected relatives or friends of the Ready family and has put together a family reunion, which has been over a year in the making. It's slated for August of 2012, coming up soon.

He's incorporated whatever Cannon County has to offer for people, whether it's our antique stores or our little bed and breakfasts or our Arts Center or what restaurants we have or anything you could think of that would be of interest to people coming from out of the area. Then connect with breakfast at the mill, which is, by the way, served every Saturday with organic corncakes or wheatcakes, pancakes, and usually quiche and occasionally frittatas. All very delicious and all while you're listening to live bluegrass music. So it's really great. Anyway, that will be part of this event. There will also be gatherings, mostly informal, because it's difficult to have a sit down. With a sit down you end up visiting just with a few people in one space. This way, a buffet type thing, events, and will be taking place in a couple different areas. People will get to meet and greet. To help fund this, Larry Ready is this gentleman's name, he put together a project that got to involve a lot of the local folks here that wanted to be involved—a cookbook as a fundraiser. The local folks here, we were all asked if we had a recipe that we thought would be good for this book or, in Mr. Ready's case, any of his relatives that really had—Aunt Clara Ready or, you know, family recipes that had been handed down would all be put in the book. He would use a couple of the photos of the Ready family house, and that all came to be, and it's done very well. (clock goes off) That was a wonderful project too that he brought to us.

LB: Yeah.

TP: So I'm sure he plans to do things like the family Ready mug if you want to attend and any other pictures that they've shared with each other in this process, which can only bring lots more people and awareness and a fun experience.

LB: All right. So how else do you advertise the organization?

TP: I guess we really haven't done any official marketing. We've discussed possibilities at times because we've tried to decide whether—should we be bigger at what we, you know, have a larger group to get more projects done? As far as we've gotten with this so far is just to take another look at our official bylaws and our statements of what we want to stand for. I don't know that we've really met since then to decide. Have we?

JR: We passed the bylaws. We passed the bylaws revision. We have that mission statement. (Thea sneezes) We have a website—www.parq.org. Whenever we're going to have a meeting, it's advertised in the newspapers and stuff. Like Thea said, we're a little quiet right now. When we were really pushing to purchase the mill, we were on the radio and then we pushed to be in the newspapers and stuff, but we're sort of quiet right now. We're concentrating on y'all doing these wonderful interviews for us. (all laugh)

LB: Well good.

TP: I think what we have met with some ideas about how to promote the information that you all are collecting for us on whether it be in some kind of banners or maybe videos at the mill for people that want to walk through the mill and have a self tour of sorts to have the advantage depending on their age level. We've talked about the possibility of someone in costume when groups of kids are going through—whether that would be something we would be involved with because Tomm frankly has his hands full. His assistant Nora, who is quite wonderful also is busy with just weddings and reunions. Whether something in that order since we are a neighbor with the Arts Center, who trains budding theatrical young people, maybe that's where something could come of that. In connection with the website too is the intention of linking with the Arts Center and with other entities of interest—the Chamber of Commerce and such—so that they'll see us and an check on us.

LB: Um-hmm. All right. Was there anything else you were wanting to add about the mill or what you do or anything like that?

TP: All I can think of is a thank you for the opportunity with MTSU because this takes it to an international level. If someone wants to follow through on old mills or things in Middle Tennessee or interesting folks who have been involved with this facility, that's going to be available. Hopefully they'll use their summer vacations sometime to come see us.

LB: Yeah. Definitely.

JR: We thank you very much.

LB: Well good. Well, thank you for this opportunity. I just have one more question. Do you consent to donate this interview to the public domain so we can share it with others?

TP: Well, as I've just told you, that's certainly been our intention all along that this should be valued, cherished by more than just us.

JR: Yes.

LB: Yes? All right. All right. Well, thank you.