

Present: Harold Trivett, Dorothy Trivett, Tim Potter, Michael Nobel Kline

Michael Nobel Kline: Could you start off by saying, "My name is?" I'll hold it.

Harold Trivett: Okay. My name is Harold Trivett.

MNK: And could you tell me just a little bit about—Well, first of all, your date of birth is?

HT: Date of birth was May 13, 1924.

MNK: Here in Grundy?

(006)

HT: No, I was Dickenson County, Flatwood.

MNK: Could you just tell me a word about your people, where you were raised?

HT: I was raised on a farm over in Dickenson County. Rather large farm. It was 1,560 acres. And I was—Well, by the time I was five years old I was milking. So when I was six I was milking two cows, walking two miles to school, coming back, and milking them again. So—

MNK: You've been on the farm, haven't you?

(012)

HT: I was on the farm. I learned how to farm, yes.

MNK: And where did you finish school...

HT: VPI, Virginia Tech.

MNK: And after that?

HT: After that I came here. I was in a store in Haysi for three years, and from there we moved over here and built this building. Been here ever since 1950.

(017)

MNK: Could you say the name of the business?

HT: Name of the business is Arington (?sp.) Trivett or the Family Shop, ever which one you want to use. When we incorporated, we incorporated it as Arington Trivett.

MNK: And this was a business that you started...

HT: We started it with the help of my wife's father, yes.

MNK: And he'd been in the business?

HT: He'd been in the business since 1920.

MNK: Where did he start at?

(022)

HT: He started in Clinchco, Virginia, and then Haysi, Virginia. So you were initially in Haysi, and then you—

HT: Yeah, at Haysi for three years and then came over here. We saw everything moving this way, and we moved with it.

MNK: Everything floating this way, did you say?

HT: Moving this way, not floating necessarily at that time, no.

MNK: Tell me a little bit about how this country here lays. The rivers and creeks, and so on.

HT: Well—

MNK: I've never been here before, and I don't really know where I am.

(028)

HT: The—You have the steep mountains, and then you have the valleys, where the valley will be where the people live, where the roads are, and where the river is. And the water runs off rather fast here. And it just—You do follow the water or the valleys is the way that you get around. That's where the roads are.

MNK: And so what—How do the creeks and rivers lay around in through here?

HT: Just with—They lay right in the valleys, is about all I can tell you.

MNK: What are some of the creeks and rivers?

(035)

HT: Well, you have Slate Creek, which comes down from West Virginia. You have Levisa River, which comes down from the West Virginia border, you might say, and also the, towards Russell County. And—Well, that's the main ones, yeah, here in town.

MNK: So this country that they flow through is very steep?

HT: Oh, yes, it's steep, and the water runs off. When you have a rain, it runs off very fast. It doesn't necessarily hold too much.

MNK: Have these hillsides been disturbed in any sort of way?

(043)

HT: Well, we—There has been some strip mining, quite a bit of it. But I don't know if you could call that forcing the water to run off faster or anything there. I think if anything, that might have held the water a little bit, because you've got those flat... there. And you know yourself water will dam up and be little lakes form on the flat.

MNK: And timbering?

HT: I don't know much about timbering. I know that it's going on now, but it didn't used to at all. Timbering has been for the last three years, I would say, has been what it's been.

(051)

MNK: And have you noticed any difference in the flow or the color of the water with the timbering that's going on?

HT: No, sir, I haven't really. Might be—Might get muddy sometimes, a little muddier than usual, but not enough to really take notice of.

MNK: Well, let's go back to Dickenson County and Haysi and—What are some of the high water floods that you can recall from your childhood or—

HT: Well, you had—

MNK:... your father or grandfather talk about.

(058)

HT: I remember a '37 flood. And if you'll recall, that was just about wiped out Cincinnati, Ohio, at that time. That was the last one until '57, we had a flood. And from '57, we go up to '77. And '83. And that's the main ones I remember, just—That is the ones I remember, yeah.

MNK: So you remember the '37?

HT: I do remember the '37. I was twelve years old. But I remember how it came up around our house. And I remember hearing on the radio how it was ferrying down in Ohio and soon.

MNK: Can you give me some description of it? Give me all your recollections of the '37 and the '59.

(069)

HT: Well, it was just high water in '37. That's the first one. And on the farm you noticed it. You was used to high water in the spring anyway. You didn't pay too much attention to it, although that one was a little higher than usual. It did no real damage to us at all. The '57 flood, I believe it got up in the basement of this building, but no real damage. It didn't last long. The '77 flood was a different story. That got up and just about wiped the town out.

MNK: Tell me about that flood. Tell me what you were—Tell me about the week that led up to it, the weather in the week that led up to it. Do you remember? Was it raining?

(078)

HT: I don't remember that at all. It was in April. And I know it rained the day before and that night. But being rainy before that, days before that, I do not remember.

MNK: What sort of rain was it that fell?

HT: It was a hard rain. A very—You know, steady, you might say, steady rain. And we had several inches at one time. I don't know, say six, or eight, or ten, around here. I don't know what it was. But it was enough to get the water up, let's put it that way.

(083)

MNK: Buckets of it.

HT: Yes, buckets, and buckets, and tubs.

MNK: And then what do you remember after that?

HT: You mean considering floods?

MNK: Of that—Tell me everything you can remember about the '77 flood.

(087)

HT: Well, when I heard about it, the police came, and knocked on my back door and told me there was going to be a flood. That was about four-thirty or five o'clock in the morning. Well, you got up, but there was nothing happening then. There wasn't too much you could do. Then it did—You could see it was going to flood down here at the store, so we came down, and we took everything out of the basement, carried it up, and put it in the upper floor, which is the main floor downstairs now. This top story wasn't .built then. And we just sit it in the floor, all the—The office was down there at that time. We put all the office equipment and everything on the floor. And consequently, we got two feet of water in that floor, and everything was still ruined that we'd carried up. I guess it helped a little bit, the fact that we didn't have to clean up the basement as much with having the stuff out of there. But the water got up—The glass in the front door and soon held. The water was a foot and a half higher outside than it was inside, but we still got about two feet of water in the main floor down there. Wasn't anything—The house was flooded. We had about, oh, three, three and a half feet of water in our, the main floor of the house. But we happened to be there. We'd been here, and we'd gone home. And it started flooding. We carried everything we could upstairs and put up, saved what we could. I had a brick fence around the back lawn, and it knocked all that fence down. And there was about a foot and a half of mud all around the house, was all you could see. It wasn't too easy to work, and the basement was hard as a dickens to clean out. You had to take it through a window, a basement window, just buckets at a time. And it was quite a job. That's about all I can think of to say about it.

(112)

MNK: When you got up at four o'clock that morning... down to the store?

HT: 4:30, 5:00, somewhere in there, yeah.

MNK: And what was the water doing then?

HT: It was up, and you could tell it was raising. Therefore, we wasn't sure at that time it would flood. But we still, just to be on the safe side, we carried the things out of the basement, which had flooded in '57, and took them out, took them upstairs, as I said before.

(118)

MNK: And then what—Talk—When did the water start to come upstairs?

HT: Oh, about, I would say ten-thirty, eleven o'clock that way it started coming heavy. And the main high water then was about, I'm going back by memory here now, you know, about one, one-thirty, something like that.

MNK: In the afternoon?

HT: Yes.

MNK: And this was April—

HT: April 4, 1977.

MNK: But by that time you were at home?

(125)

HT: Oh, we were at home then, yeah. We'd left down there. There was nobody in town at that time. And we couldn't have done anything had we been here. I mean we couldn't—we had nowhere to put it. So—This floor you're on now was erected here in 1983 after that flood. We still got some water in the basement down there, so we just went ahead and built this top story. And I flood proofed the basement. I think it's flood proofed. I don't know. We've never had a flood since then. So I don't know.

MNK: Since '83?

HT: Yeah.

MNK: What do you think the solution to all this flooding is?

(134)

HT: Well, you're going to have a flood, you're going to have a flood. There's not any, much solution to that, except we can, as the Corps of Engineers is wanting to do, move the town out of the flood zone. We can do that. We can—They can build a floodwall if they want to, but I think the present solution that they have, the three... solution there on the moving it over to the depot area, I think that is the ideal way to do it. And you will have—You will be above the flood there, above it where the flood zone was, unless it gets higher than it did last time, which I don't believe it will. But I think the way that they are planning is the best way to go.

(146)

MNK: What do you mean, move the town?

HT: Move the business part of the town. The buildings here and the building in the main part of town here, they plan to make a mall over there, and most of us will go to the mall. The Food City will go to the mall. It will be there. And you will have parking there, and you will have most of the buildings will be there.

MNK: Then what will happen to these buildings here?

(151)

HT: They will be tom down, and a road will be, 460 will go through here. In fact, right here, if you'll look at your plans, you got a little city, looks like a city park. Those trees, and beaches, and so on. There'll be a place for bicycle riding and so on like that.

MNK: And this idea appeals to you?

HT: Yes, it does. If you had shoveled as much mud as I shoveled in '77, you would understand why it does appeal to me. There will be another flood. It comes—if you had one in '57, you had '77, you're going to have another one.

(160)

MNK: This is '97.

HT: That's right. It's close. And they think—I mean it doesn't have to be twenty years. It can come anytime. But—

MNK: You shoveled enough mud though to last you a...

HT: I shoveled enough to do me awhile, yes, I did. I sure did.

MNK: How long did it take you to...

(165)

HT: Well, you couldn't—You didn't have any water down here or electricity in the one end, the main part of town. So you couldn't do anything here. But I worked on my house, because I had ceiling heat at that time. I had my own well. So I could clean up the house. We immediately got all the carpet out, and dumped it outside, and dried the house out before it got, you know, bad. And we saved the house that way. It cost quite a bit, and it was a lot of work. But we did manage to take care of that. Down here, when we got into it, naturally everything had molded and, you know, you lost your inventory. We got back into business finally, restored everything, and got back into business in October from that. I was open some days, you know, selling, but most of the time you were, I was remodeling.

(178)

And before we leave I can show you what we did downstairs. We put in a sub hole down there. We got two electric pumps, one gasoline pump as a backup. And I've got the floor down there sloping toward the back so it will go into that, I think. We closed the windows in the basement. We closed the door. And I think we can hold the water out of the basement pretty well in the future. But now that remains to be seen when we do have a flood. I'm not looking forward to seeing it. But I've tried to be ready for it if it did come.

MNK: Sounds like it.

HT: Yeah. I sure did.

MNK: What did it end up costing you? Did you have—Were you eligible for any federal assistance?

(189)

HT: Oh, I borrowed—I had a loan up at the house which, of the home, which I've paid off. But the loan here is still running. We pay \$550 a month on it. I don't know how, but we had \$180,000 loan. I had about that much savings that I had saved up, and I put that all back in. I'd say it was, it cost us around \$350,000 for the house and the building and the...

MNK: So you're out of pocket that much?

HT: Yes. I had the loan, which we're still paying on and which will be paid, so yes. I was out \$180,000 of my own pocket, and we borrowed the rest.

MNK: And was this generally the kind of losses that businesses around town...

HT: Yes, it was. They all—

MNK: ... quarter to a half a million dollars...

(202)

HT: Well, it was accounting to the size of the business, what kind of business it was, and so on, yes. The banks were both hit. They were hurt. At that time we had a five and dime up here, Ben Franklin. It—They were pretty well protected, but they still got hurt bad. And they had a flood door and so on. And they did not have the water that some of the other buildings had. But all the buildings over in town, you can look at them now, and all those basements were flooded at that time.

MNK: Has everybody gone to the same lengths that you have to flood proof their basements?

(212)

HT: No, sir, they haven't. Jackson Hardware did. And we did. And Ben Franklin did. Cumberland Bank, which was then Cumberland Bank, it's now the building that belongs to the town, they are flood proofed, and I think that's about it.

MNK: So the rest of them are still vulnerable?

(219)

HT: Yes, they are. And that's not saying now that all of us that flood proofed are not vulnerable. We don't know yet.

MNK: ...

HT: Yeah.

MNK: Was there loss of life in the community?

(222)

HT: Oh, no. I don't think—I don't remember anyone losing a life at all. There might have been one, something, but I do not remember if there was.

MNK: So this, the water came up slow enough so that—

(225)

HT: Well, as a matter of speaking. It came fast, but it came—If you were working at it, you could handle it, yes. The water raised—When it gets up...it was running in the—I live in the Cow Town area, you know where I'm speaking of. Well, anyway, the water was running out on the road, two and a half, three feet deep in the road. So—And the houses are below the road. That's where the—That's where a lot of the houses will be removed by this new thing that the Engineering Department is working on now, the road, the Highway Department.

MNK: What will happen to your house?

(237)

HT: I would say—They are going to raise some of it, but my house was built in about three different times. I've remodeled twice. I don't think it could be raised. In fact, I'm sure it couldn't. It will have to be—I'll stay there under the road, or I will sell and move.

MNK: And under this plan do you have the choice?

HT: I have a choice, yes, which I think is very fair.

MNK: Where would you—Oh, you don't know where you'd move exactly. Is there any—

HT: No.

MNK:—new housing included in this plan?

(244)

HT: I'm sure there will be. I don't think there is now. I have no idea exactly where I would go, I really don't. We might go to my father-in-law's home, which is up Slate Creek. And that will—My wife is an only child, so that will be hers. And he's a hundred years old, so—

MNK: How's he—How's his mind?

HT: Oh, it's pretty good.

MNK: We should talk to him about some of these floods.

HT: He couldn't make it. He couldn't do that now.

MNK: No? What else can you tell us?

(255)

HT: I think we've fairly well covered the whole thing on the floods, as far as I can see. And to the best of my memory, I've given you a correct—If—One thing about it that caused my home to flood as it did and the region I live in, was the height of a bridge down at Hoot Owl Bridge, as we called it, going across the Hoot Owl. The bridge is low, and debris got in there and dammed it up, and the water was coming back up the river. It was flowing back up the river. And I think that was the main reason that we were flooded up there as bad as we were. Because there was a couple of house trailers washed down. It wasn't very long until the water started raising and coming back up the river. They got lodged in the river, in the bridge.

(269)

MNK: Did the bridge hold then?

HT: Oh, the bridge held, yes.

MNK: All through the flood?

HT: Yeah. The State Highway Department does pretty good work.

MNK: Yeah, I've heard of that happening in other floods too.

HT: Oh, yeah.

MNK: Where the bridges—



(273)

HT: Well, now, I was in the house so I saw it. The water honestly flowed up the river on that side. And it was just like, you know, it was coming down and then going back. And that was the cause of a lot of the depth of our flood there.

MNK: Who were the—Do you remember the policemen who came banging on your door?

(280)

HT: I remember them. I can see their faces, but I can't remember the names. One of them was a red-headed man, I know that, and—Davis, I believe, he was. They've been—They've left. '77 was twenty years ago. They're not with us anymore. I'm not saying they're passed on or anything, they're just not working here.

MNK: ... Well it's good that they were on the job.

HT: Oh, yeah.

MNK: Where had their information come from?...

(290)

HT: Had come from the Corps of Engineers, to my knowledge. I would say that would be who it would come from on a flood that way. Or it could have been the Weather Bureau, anything. But, you know, the Weather Bureau does know when there's going to be a flood usually. They can tell to a certain extent, same as a hurricane.

MNK: Why have you been twenty years without some—Why are these improvements coming now?

(298)

HT: Well, it's been in the making. But—Bureaucracy. I mean it takes awhile. I mean twenty years is not too long a time as some people say. But it should have been done, and there is people who's against it. People that wasn't flooded, they were, they are against it, because they say it's going to destroy the town and so on, which it, I don't think it will do. I think it will help the town. I think it will rejuvenate the town. It's my opinion.

MNK: Meaning it will destroy the old buildings or what are they—

(309)

HT: Well, it will definitely destroy the old buildings because—But they think that it will never be built back, some of them say so. I think they will be.

MNK: Have you seen other Corps projects?

HT: No, but I've read about them, I've seen them. There was one over here in West Virginia at the present time that they say they've done a beautiful job on. I don't—

(315)

MNK: Is that at Williamson?

HT: Could be Williamson, yes. And I think—I just have faith in the Corps of Engineers. I think they know what they're talking about.

MNK: Okay. Tim, what are we skipping over? Do you have any questions or is there ...

(321)

Tim Potter: ... the flood. Shoveling the mud, that's the big one. Because I'll tell you, even at my age, I was only eleven years old. I helped shovel mud three and a half foot. Or actually it was about a foot, foot and a half of mud after three damn foot of water. When a washing machine come down the river and went through our front window, we had it pretty much stopped off at the time. And then a washing machine hit the window, and it just poured in then. And there was really nothing we could do about it. We had—There's a mobile home lot just at the corner there at the mouth of Loony's (?sp.) Creek that I watched trailers lift up, float, and go down the river just as a houseboat.

(333)

I watched them even when they hit the main frame, or the main stream of the water, that they just collapse, and they would block off the bridges, and culverts, and everything else, and caused even more flooding because the bridges weren't high enough at the time to help with the water or let the water flow and let the debris flow on under them. The—But the biggest thing was the mud. The aftermath was, it was really a mess. I remember my father had to get about four foot of mud out of the road so the traffic could start. He himself took his own end-loader and helped make a path through the road or the main highway so people could pass on through, traffic, to get on. People that were trapped. Because the high water they couldn't get home that evening. They had to get home one way or another. And some of them even had even traveled through the mountains to get to their homes because the main roads were closed, they were flooded, and there was no way of passing through unless you had a boat. But that was it. It—Pretty much it.

MNK: Did people jump in and help one another after—

(355)

HT: Oh, yes. Everyone helped. One name I remember very well helping up around us was Glen Smith. He had—He was coal business. And he had the heavy equipment, and he used it to clear the, exactly what this gentleman said, cleared the roads so people could get through and so on. Because there was a lot of road, mud on the roads too. You couldn't move it. He did that. And I know that he saw the bridge—I was talking about the Hoot Owl Bridge getting dammed up, and I know he made the statement, "If I had the material, I would dynamite it so it would clear up." But there was no way of doing it then. It was too far gone. And he didn't have the, naturally the explosive to do it anyway. But he could see what the damage was. And I remember him helping very much. In fact, I believe he came up and scraped my driveway down, got the mud out of that. So, you know, you don't forget those things.

MNK: What about shoveling out the basement?

(372)

HT: Well, my son and I did most of that. He lived up Slate Creek, wasn't flooded. So he helped me with that, and we did get out of the basement. At that time I'd hired somebody to help carry it

over. And, you know, you dumped it back in the river on the river edge is the only place you could go. Where could you dump it? I don't think that was necessarily the right thing to do, but it was the only place we had. We had to get rid of it.

MNK: How did you get your well cleaned out?

(383)

HT: The well was a—A deep pump of the well. I didn't try to drink the water or anything, but it had been flooded. But we did use it to wash down and all that. But we used—We had city water for, to use. But the city water was off for awhile.

MNK: So how long does it take a well to clean out after—

(389)

HT: I don't know. I've never used it since that time, because it's got minerals and so on in it anyway. The water is very dark. Well, it's got iron in it. So I don't try to use the water. Except I do water my lawn with it this day and things like that. I use it for outside washing down, and watering the lawn, and so on.

MNK: Wow. This has been—Tim, you were talking about how people helped one another after the flood.

(401)

TP: Yeah. I mean the community. People—That's the only way people could survive during that time. Power was off. You had no water. The only way that you could, to clean up the mess is everybody to pitch in and help everyone throughout the community. If anything, for something that drastic to happen, it did bring the community in closer together and more or less a tighter bond, because everybody helped everybody. That's the only way we could do it. We just had to pull together and help everybody. One day we were working somebody's house, the next day we working in somebody else's house, and so on and so forth. And a lot of times—Or actually during that time the Mennonites come in and really helped a lot of people. Because I mean people, they had no home. Their homes were gone. And the Mennonites come in and rebuild, and built a place for them to live again, and help them rebuild their lives.

(421)

We have a lot of people coming in from away from here bringing in food and stuff, I mean, and trying to help our community. I mean it's not only just our community here our self, but people from away from here come in and helped, help us rebuild what we had. And so—

MNK: Even people who weren't affected by the flood would jump in and help?

(428)

TP: Exactly. Everybody. I mean the people that did not, didn't have any damage to their house. I went to my cousin's house who lived way up in the hill in... and that's where I took my first shower after two weeks. I mean I hadn't had a bath in that long of time because we had no water, no power. It took, I'd say at least three weeks before we got any power back for our homes where

I live at. So I mean everybody pulled with everybody. That's the only way we could survive. That's the only way we could do it.

MNK: Three weeks?

(439)

TP: Three weeks. Well, I was out of school almost over, or a month or longer during that time because of the flood.

MNK: Did the water get in the schools?

(443)

TP: Some. As far as I know, the--We had been out from school so much that year it was really incredible. We went all the way up into July before we could get out, or right at the first part, or end of June, first part of July, before we finished school that year because of the flood and everything else, for the time we had to be off.

MNK: Was the school used as an emergency housing shelter?

(452)

TP: Not to my knowledge. I don't remember anything of that such. A lot of our churches, area churches, were given a place for people to come and stay, and get food, and get meals, and stuff like that. I know the Church of Christ, they had, they actually housed the Mennonites that come into this area. A lot of our local churches really helped out, and reached out a hand, and helped us get back on our feet at that time. I mean really the community--Everybody tried to help everybody. The people, they saw what it did. I mean it--

(463)

You know, it did come quick. It was unexpected. We didn't expect to see a flood like that. I mean I remember we were getting ready to go to school that morning. Then all of a sudden they called it off because of high water. And next thing you know, we got water going through people's houses across the road. Because--Like on the other side of the road the houses were lower than the road. And they were the first ones hit. A few houses that were out on the riverbank. I mean they were already under water. We were trying to help them get their stuff out and get it to higher ground where we could, I mean try to help them save what they could save. It was just everybody's effort trying to help everybody.

MNK: Does that ring any bells for you?

(479)

HT: Oh, I can remember a lot of that. I remember the Mennonites he's talking about and the people from Utah. Who were they? They came in. Mormons came in and helped, I remember that very much. The house next to me, my neighbor's house, they were elderly people, and they couldn't do much. In fact, I believe it was awhile before they got, you know, really started working on it. And the Mennonites or the Mormons, one or the other, cleaned that house up. Took the stuff out of the basement and everything.

(tape turned off)

(491)

MNK: ... saying, "My name is."

Dorothy Trivett: Let me get my breath first! I come up those stairs, get me. I'm Dorothy Trivett. And—

MNK: Could you just say that again, what you just said?

DT: I'm Dorothy Trivett, and we've lived through the 1977 flood. And I think anyone who went through that flood and all the cleanup, doesn't want to do it again. And although everybody's entitled to their own opinion, I think most of the people who are opposed have never been there.

MNK: Can you back up to the, April. It was raining the day before, was it?

DT: I'm—

(507)

MNK: I know you have a lot of floods to try to get.... This was '77.

DT: It probably was. I'm not really positive. It could have started, you know, the night before. But it was coming down in torrents, naturally. But we really early in the morning didn't think too much about it. But then later we saw we were going to be flooded. But then it just came so quickly at home that I didn't dream it would happen. But we had come—We were down here and—

MNK: Here?

(520)

DT: At the store. And we did what we thought we could do to take care of things or as much— And we still didn't dream it would come up as high as it did. So then we went home to see what was going on there. And of course the water was coming up, and we moved cars, and we moved our lawn furniture a little bit. And it kept inching up and all. But my husband and son decided they would come—I don't remember where they were going, but they were going to do something and come back, and they wanted lunch. And we ate lunch. And I finished a little before they did, and I thought, well, I'll look and see what's happening.

(535)

And when I got up out of the chair the carpet squished. And, you know, it was just that quick. And then in a matter of minutes it was waist high. So it wasn't too much fun. And, in fact, you would see logs floating down 460. You know, the house was completely surrounded with water. And we went out in a boat.

MNK: In a boat?

DT: Yeah, um hmm.

MNK: Tell me about that.

DT: Well, the water was so swift, and it had come up so fast that we couldn't get out. And people across the street, they used a fishing rod, and they cast a line across with the rope and tied it to

our front door and then to a light pole across the street. Because the water was too swift for the boat. It was a rowboat. It wasn't a motorboat. But that was the way that we got out of the house.

MNK: So how did they get the boat over then?

(567)

DT: Well, they held on to the wire, I mean the rope that was—I believe two men in the boat that came and got us. And they held the boat with that rope. And we got—And it was a hard job getting in that boat!

MNK: What do you mean? (576)

DT: Well, the water was so high, and I was too short for my legs to get up and get over in the boat. But they finally got me in. But, you know, you just don't know. When you realize it's coming, you don't know what to do. What do you do... What do you try to save. You don't have a lot of time. But we did work in the water for awhile after we were surrounded, and we got a lot of things upstairs, which helped. And then of course that night the water went down. Oh, I guess we came home probably around one o'clock that night. But, you know, we came home to mud and all that mess. And with no electricity we really didn't know what damages we had until the next morning. So—

MNK: What did it look like the next morning?

(600)

DT: Well, I don't want to ever see it that way again. It was just wrecked, you know, the downstairs. And mud, water, still, you know, sappy drapes. We had furniture overturned.

MNK: What did it smell like?

(609)

DT: Not too good, to be honest with you. But we got up that morning, and the boys looked at the house. And we didn't know whether we had anything left down here or not, because we had never had this flood being at home. Oh, we would get a little backup water maybe in the basement, but never anything like that. So we trudged to town through the mud. You'd mire up, and your shoes would come off. And it was just a big mess. So after we saw what was down here, then we went back and—Of course we threw our windows open. The doors... to... the carpet. Got the drapes down, threw all the windows up, and let it begin airing out and drying. And then just went to work on it. Cleaning up mud. And we had—Our swimming pool was completely filled with sand. We had a nice little beach back there. But it was a traumatic experience, and I just hope that you all are going to be able to go ahead with the plan and give us some protection. I'm too old to clean it up again. But, you know, one of the problems, you had to do it yourself because everybody else was in the same boat, and you couldn't get extra help, you know, to do it. So I shoveled more mud, did more scrubbing than I've ever done in my life!

MNK: Or ever hope to do.

(651)

DT: I hope never to do it again. So we're just hoping this is going to fly, and that we will get some protection. And we need Grundy revitalized.

MNK: What do you mean?

(656)

DT: Well, we've got a lot old buildings, and I think the fact if the road comes through this way, and we get, build a new mall, I think it will help Grundy. And I think a lot of people are hesitant, I would be on some of these buildings, to go in and do the necessary repairs, you know, to really make them where I would want to put a business in.

MNK: They're hesitant because?

(670)

DT: Well, the cost. Not only the cost, but the 'when are we going to have the next big flood.' And I think we will be flooded again if, you know, something isn't done.

MNK: Why do you think these major floods... '59, '77, '83? What-Is-Are there-Do you think they're getting more frequent or...

(684)

DT: Well, of course '77 was a lot more water than anything we'd ever had. Because at home we had never actually been bothered. It got up, you know, maybe the edge of the yard. And we might get a little back water into the basement from the drains, but that was it. I don't know. Of course so many people blame it on strip mining, and I'm sure that may be a partial factor.

But at the same time, I don't think that's all of it, because you look at the other places that doesn't have strip mining, and they're flooded. And I think it's a matter that with the—

(Side Two)

DT: Of the county, the high mountains, and the low, narrow—The water, if you have a lot of rain, it just—

MNK: The high mountains and the—Say that again.

DT: Well, we're in sort of a little valley, or gorge, I guess you would call it, enclosed with the mountains. And the water just doesn't have anywhere else to go, you know, if there's a whole lot of it in hard rains. But let's just hope we can do something about it. The neighborhood that I lived in—Of course my husband and I, and one other couple, and all the old ones up there—Of course most of the other people, they don't want to really be inconvenienced with a four-lane highway, or relocating, or whatever might be involved. But they have not been through the flood yet. And they've never had the experience of being flooded, what it is to lose a lot and see retirement washing down the... And, believe me, part of it does. Anytime you have a flood, you're going to really lose a lot. And so I just hope we don't have it again.

MNK: Why did you stay after '77? I mean your husband told me the astronomical amounts of money it cost to rebuild, and put this third story on this store, and all that. Why did you stay here?

(021)

DT: Well, I guess we liked the little community. It's been a close-knit community. People are friendly. Of course my parents were living here. And I'm sure that was another. And at the time, although it cost a lot to redo, restock everything, at that time it was a good place economically for a business. But I guess at that particular time we didn't think it might ever happen again.

(030)

And then more we thought about it. And then, too, at that particular time if you had wanted to leave and sell your property, you know, it wasn't too conducive to other people buying it with it just being flooded and, you know, the way that the town looked, and everything. If I had been an outsider I would not have come in and bought. But having lived here and, I guess, with family here, was probably one of the reasons that we stayed. And now I'm too old to move! Time— If it goes, by the time it gets done, I'll be on my cane or in my wheelchair, one or the other probably!

MNK: What do you think you'll do? Are you prepared to relocate your home?

(042)

DT: Well, it depends on what happens. I don't—I understand that they are planning to raise the homes up there. And I don't really think that ours can be raised, because it was an old home to start on, and then we have kept building on and building on. And neither of us feel like it can be raised. But if not, my father's still living. And he's a little over a hundred. And I'm an only child, so I will, in time, inherit his home. So we'll either probably be there or where we presently live. But if they move everybody else up and we can't move ours up, we're going to be down in a hole, which won't be very good.

(058)

MNK: Um hmm. What were the things going through your mind when they were trying to pull you into that boat?

DT: I was trying to hold on to a tote bag. That was one thing. We had bought some bonds not very long before that we hadn't got to the safety deposit box at the bank. So I did have presence of mind, they were coupon bonds, to get—

MNK: They were what?

(064)

DT: The coupon bonds that you clip. To get those bonds—And I got some jewelry I had at home and stuck that in the bottom of a little cloth tote bag and put some dry socks on top of it. And my son was there, and he kept saying, "Mom, throw that thing away. Just don't—" And I thought, that may be everything we've got left. But I guess—Well, we were thankful that we were able to get out.

MNK: Were you frightened? Did you think—Did you feel very threatened?

(072)



DT: Well, I didn't feel too good about it. Yes, I was frightened. And you couldn't keep from being frightened. And when you would see these huge things washing down. And then we were concerned about propane gas tanks, you know, from other people's property maybe floating by and hitting us or whatever. So it was a bad experience and one that we will never, never forget. Just hope you never have, either, neither of you have to ever live through that.

MNK: Now the flood of '83 wasn't quite so severe, I guess.

(084)

DT: Oh, no. At home we had no damage. No damage then. I personally cannot remember how much, if we had damage here or not. I know that he had done a lot of work trying to prevent further flooding. But I can't keep up with all these dates. He's much better at that than I am!

MNK: Tim, is there anything else we should ask her?

TP: Nothing I can think of ....We pretty much hit it.

MNK: Great.

(tape turned off)

(094)

MNK: Would you say that again? You think—

DT: I think with—If we have another big flood, I think Grundy will be gone then. With so many older buildings, I don't think that they will take another flood and be livable. So if we can get a new mall and a new little town, I think we will be far ahead.

MNK: Have you had any hand at all in designing this mall? Or has the—Have there been a number of meetings? Did you think the community feels included in the plan?

(103)

DT: Oh, I think the community feels included. And I don't see why they shouldn't, because everything has been made public to them. We've had meetings, and nothing has been tried to be hidden. No, I personally have not-- I've gone to the meetings-, but I've not been involved. I'm an old, retired lady, and my husband and son, those, they talk to people and more about what they want. They have worked with some of the task force on it. And we've been interested in it from the very beginning. So I sit back normally and let them do the talking!

MNK: How do you envision it taking shape, the new Grundy, if that's what we can call it?

(114)

DT: Well, you know, we have depended on coal here so much in the past, and now the coal is practically gone. And we've got to look for other things. I think it's going to open up more opportunities for more businesses, for one thing. I think we can become a jumping off place for the Brinks (?sp.) Interstate Park. And hopefully that will be developed more in the future. And I think we do have some things that would attract some tourism. And I see that it's our, a good shot towards revitalizing the whole county. I hope so.

MNK: Great. Thank you.

(tape turned off)

(127)

DT: We had just bought a lot of lobster, and shrimp, and some crab, and filled the freezer. And of course with no electricity, you know what was going to happen to that. So we had, fortunately had a charcoal grill. And we really dined well until it was gone!

MNK: Ate more shrimp than you ever thought you could eat at one time.

DT: That's right. But it was good. Had to have something to keep our energy up.

(134)

MNK: Did you suffer much depression in the wake of the flood, or did you sense that there was a lot of depression in the community?

DT: There was—Yes, there was definitely depression. But I think I was half crazy at the time. And I'd stand there and scrape mud, and scrub, and then all of a sudden giggle. For some unknown reason it seemed that, you know, anything—Sometimes things just struck you funnier than ever. But, no, we were deeply depressed, deeply depressed. And—

MNK: Individually and as a town?

(143)

DT: I think so. But, you know, I guess there's always something that comes out of situations like that. And that was the way that people worked together. You know, if one could help another, they did. And it seemed to, during that, people were closer. That, you know, if you had something that you could share with someone else, you did. And they did the same for you too. It wasn't a one-way street. And like we were fortunate in the fact that when we bought the house that we live in and had remodeled that it had an old well there, which we had, he had put a pump on so that we could use it, you know, for watering plants, washing driveways, and that sort of thing. So when we got electricity back, of course we had the pump. And our heat was in the ceiling at that time, electric heat.

(163)

So we had heat, and we had water, which helped a lot about drying things out. And I know when we used the water—The water hose ended up going from one end of the neighborhood to the other end. You know people—Because otherwise we didn't have water there for awhile. You had to depend on bottled water to drink. But this was all right for washing mud.

MNK: So the hose was, you say it stretched out to the—

DT: Well, they kept putting more hose together, a couple of them together, I guess, is what you would say.

(173)

MNK: So several of the neighbors were able to use it?

DT: Yes, uh huh, all the way up. And then, you know, like here was another example, one of our neighbors whose wife was away at the time and was ill, and at that time he was elderly. And they

had a lot of these oriental rugs, which were very valuable. And people went in and helped get those up and got them on the roof of his garage. And how they did it with them getting wet, you know, that would increase the weight of the rugs. But, you know, this was the spirit. If people could help, they did. But then when it was over everybody had all they could do to get cleaned up.

MNK: And how long did it take you to get cleaned up?

(187)

DT: Oh, forever. We had just redid our kitchen and had it in for about a month. And we thought, well, you know, we'll always be here. So I sunk a lot more money in that kitchen than I should have! But fortunately it cleaned up well. If—I had bought solid cherry cabinets. And had it not been solid wood, if it had been veneer it would have just all been gone. But I was able to get those cleaned up. Most of our furniture, well the dining room furniture, we were able to save it. Sofas, chairs, carpets, mattresses, you know, a bedroom suite downstairs, a lot of things like that you couldn't do too much with. But I would say by the time that we really got it all cleaned up it was a good six months. You know, when you got—Because you could clean, and you'd scrub, and you'd think, you know, we got it this time. But then the dust kept filling out, and you'd go back, and you'd do it again and again. And of course we went in—And we had hardwood floors, but we put down whatever they call it, big boards. Well, whatever it is.

MNK: Walk boards.

(210)

DT: Well, we just covered the hardwood floors completely and then recarpeted. Because I don't think we would ever have got rid of the dust that way. And of course there was wallpaper had to be scraped off, redone, repainting. And if you had solid wood furniture, not upholstered, that was cleanable. But otherwise you just pitched it out.

TP: I'm... boy.

DT: Well, you know I thought you looked familiar.

TP: Yeah, I'm Hershal (?sp.) and Sylvia's boy. Yeah. I've been—

DT: Where is your mother?

TP: She's up in Hanover.

(222)

DT: Well, you know, I was, went down to the cemetery the other day and coming back I thought, well, you know, I wonder whatever happened to Sylvia. But I didn't know where she was. Well, it's good to see you again.

TP: Good to see you again. It's been awhile since I've been over here.

DT: Yeah.

TP: I'm married now. Got my own home started now.

DT: Congratulations.

TP: I come back after seven years of service, come back to Grundy, because this is home, and there's no place like it.

(229)

DT: No....Well, there was something, just something about—I love these people here. I know two of the law professors moved in on the street my father lives on. And they have been amazed at the people. And they just can't seem to get over the fact people are so friendly and accept them, you know, with open arms and what have you.

(237)

TP: That's why people stay, because of the community we have. I've, you know, I don't want to be sounding like I'm boasting or whatever, I have been around the world. I was in the Navy. And there's no place like Grundy, Virginia. No place. I have found no other place like it. And that's why I come back home. This is home.

DT: Well, I know Terry, when Terry went to college—

MNK: Is this your boy?

(246)

DT: Yes, uh huh. He said, "Well, this, I guess, will be the last I'll be living in Grundy." So of course he went to college and went to UK first year. And he majored in horse racing. Didn't do too well scholastically, but he did all right. So then he went to Memphis, University of Memphis. And of course I had always have been in a small town. And he thought the city was going to be just what he wanted. And then he said, "I never want to live in another city." So he came back to Grundy. And that's—He's happy here to. So—

MNK: Does he have a family?

(259)

DT: Yes, he has two sons. One is a junior in, at... Washington College in Fredericksburg. The other has just finished getting his second degree from VPI. He has a degree in biology and in chemistry and is going to school this fall to work on his master's in medical science and biochemistry. So they're grown now.

MNK: So your son, is he also in favor of this new plan?

(269)

DT: Oh, most definitely. Actually my husband and I, we're pretty well out of it, you know, business-wise now. We come down to keep our sanity. You know, you've worked all these years, and you sort of get in a rut. And I've never been much on staying home! And I just always worked. I enjoy the public I enjoy the people. A lot of people that, if I didn't come down here, I'd never probably see that I really consider friends. And I'm not—We're not down here much anymore. I'm down here maybe three or four hours a day. And Harold comes down in the morning. And if Terry's in town, why normally one or two o'clock, why he goes home. And it's just a place to go to keep your sanity. And then of course if he needs to be out of town, we sort of take over for him. But as of now we plan on being right here if we don't get washed off!