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Oak Ridge Form 5: Oral History, Deed of Gift Release for Interviewee

DEED OF GIFT RELEASE FOR INTERVIEWEE
 K-25 ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
 U.S DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

I, JANE TEASLEY (Name of interviewee) residing at 109 TUCKER RD.
 (Address of interviewee) do hereby permanently give, convey and assign to the United States Department of
 Energy (DOE) my interviews (or oral memoirs), and the recordings, tapes (audio and or video), and any
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JANE TEASLEY (Name of interviewee) for inclusion into the DOE Oral History Program.

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Teasley, Jane

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K-25 Oral History Interview

Date: 4/13/05

Interviewee: Jane Teasley

Interviewer: Bart Callan

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Name/Org: Jane Teasley ETTP/CICO Date: 4 Nov 15

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Teasley, Jane

[crew talk]

[1:01:02]

Teasley, J.: -- with a staph infection. He said, "I'll be back as soon as I get back from Atlanta and I'll be out there and I'll look after you." And we married. You believing this?

Callan, B.: Wow!

Teasley, J.: [laughing]

Callan, B.: So you recently got married?

Teasley, J.: Eight years ago.

Callan, B.: Wow.

Teasley, J.: Eight years ago. When we get to 10th anniversary, we're going to give a 50th party 'cause we'll never make 50. He says he will, but I can't. [laughter]

Callan, B.: That was quite a story! Wow! That was very sweet. Ready to go?

[crew talk]

Callan, B.: Let's go ahead and start out with the hard questions first and go ahead and state your name and spell your name for us so we have that on camera.

[1:02:01]

Teasley, J.: My name is Jane Gurney Teasley. Spelled T-E-A-S-L-E-Y.

Callan, B.: Okay. And how old are you?

Teasley, J.: I'm 86 years young.

Callan, B.: Where were you born and go ahead and expand on that if you want to.

Teasley, J.: I was born in Rochester, Minnesota when my father was doing his residency at Mayo's; in 1918.

[1:02:29]

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Callan, B.: Where were you living prior to coming to work at K-25 and prior to coming to Oak Ridge?

Teasley, J.: I was living in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. I was manager of the National Credit Corporation.

Callan, B.: Where did you attend high school and what year did you graduate?

Teasley, J.: I attended high school at Pine Bluff High School; I graduated in 1935 and went to college at Erskine in Due West, South Carolina and graduated in '39.

Callan, B.: We're going to talk a little bit about coming to K-25 and working at K-25. Why did you come to work at K-25? What attracted you? How did you hear about it?

Teasley, J.: One of my clients came by to tell me goodbye. He was also a family friend. And I said, "Where are you going?" And he told me he was coming to Knoxville, Tennessee to Oak Ridge as a matter of fact, and I said, "I don't know. I just might go with you." -- Being a smart aleck -- and he said, "Come over to my house tonight and we'll talk about it." So I did and he gave me an application, I mailed it in, his wife called me on Sunday. This was on a Friday. His wife caught me on Sunday and she said, "Kenneth and Beachy want to drive through but it's a long drive and they'd like you to go and help 'em drive." I said, "I don't know whether my mother will let me or not. I've never traveled with men across country." So I asked my mother and she says, "Well, if Bell doesn't mind, I'm sure I won't." [laughing] So that's how I got here.

[1:04:17]

Callan, B.: And how old were you at this time?

Teasley, J.: I was 27.

Callan, B.: When you first arrived here at Oak Ridge and K-25, what were your first recollections? What do you first remember when you saw this place?

Teasley, J.: Mud, dirt, and little houses sitting on stilts that looked like soap boxes.

Teasley, Jane

Callan, B.: Tell me more --

Teasley, J.: Was horrible.

Callan, B.: -- tell me more about these houses.

Teasley, J.: They were old bo -- they were prefabs sitting -- sitting up on stilts like 16 feet in the air is what it looked like. [laughing] However, and I thought, bring my family to live in this? No way! But we came to the inn, Alexander Motel and that night, we walked down to Central Cafeteria and walking back up, I looked up and the whole place was ablaze with lights. It was gorgeous! And I thought we will close our eyes in the daytime and we'll look at it at night.

[1:05:29]

Callan, B.: What years did you work at the K-25 site?

Teasley, J.: I came in October of 1944 and I worked until 1981.

Callan, B.: That's a long career! How did you commute to and from work and what was that like?

Teasley, J.: You're talking about commuting on cattle cars?

Callan, B.: Uh-huh. (affirmative)

Teasley, J.: Yeah, we -- we rode on cattle cars. And I remember one man said to me, "Are you from New York?" And I said, "No, sir." And he says, "Well, you ride the buses like it." 'Cause if I didn't shove my way, I didn't get in; I was too little. [laughing]

[1:06:21]

Callan, B.: During the years that you worked here, did you meet any of the famous scientists or notable people?

Teasley, J.: I did. They were wonderful! Dr. Willard was one of my very closest friends and I remember that one summer, he brought his family down and they entertained. His daughter did place cards and they invited the Lafferty's, the Deans (phonetic sp.), the Horton's, and Charlie, my brother, and myself. Charles was in medical school at the time and the girl had drawn the doctor and

had the stethoscope all around his neck, you know. It was fantastic.

He was not the only one. I'm trying to think of the other man's name that lived here and he -- he came out one day and it was raining. And he didn't have an umbrella, but I did, and so I said, "Would you like to use my umbrella to go to the cafeteria?" 'cause I had just come back. And he said, "I certainly would." But it was one of those that you had to press down. Okay, well, he didn't understand about that so I had to press it down for him and I thought even I can do something for him that's nice.

[1:07:40]

Callan, B.:

[laughing] If people were to inquire what was the work that was done here, how would you describe it?

Teasley, J.:

I guess it was so very secret, it would've been hard to describe the work that was done here because nobody knew what we were doing. I guessed what we were doing because it was so obvious that they were keeping you from getting to anything that was any kind of radiation. I figured we were using radium of some sort -- interesting.

[1:08:25]

We didn't have uranium that was enriched at the time that we came here because that was the purpose of the whole thing, so what they did was to use just normal uranium and you worked on that, so there wasn't very much for you to do except to practice. There were two of us that were in what they call Gravimetric where you weighed the samples and there were so few samples there that one of us would sleep on three chairs back behind one of the counters and the other would wake you up at the end of an hour. We took an hour at a time. [laughing]

Callan, B.:

Oh, wow! What kind of equipment was used in the weighing process that you're talking about?

Teasley, J.:

I worked in the laboratory and what I did was to measure the enrichment of the product that was being manufactured out in the K-25 plant. Of course, we didn't really know a whole lot about that. But we did know that you brought it in, in sample tubes, they distilled it, and then you weighed it and put it into a flask and it

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was sent then into the plating, the electroplating area, and finally to the counters where they did alpha and fission counting.

Callan, B.: Would you like a glass of water or anything?

Teasley, J.: No, I'm fine.

Callan, B.: Okay. Tell me about some of your most vivid recollections of the time that you spent working at Oak Ridge and K-25 -- some of your favorite memories.

[1:10:21]

Teasley, J.: One of my favorite memories is how we got Norman Teasley to the laboratory. I was responsible for seeing that all of the equipment was in good shape. Any of the equipment that wasn't, I had to take it to the shop and have it repaired. If the other people repaired it, many times it was not satisfactory. In fact, most times it wasn't and you couldn't tell 'em why. That was QT. So, but if Norman Teasley got it, it was always right. So I'd take it down and say, "If Teasley can't do it, leave it." Went to my boss, Frank Heard, and I said, "You know, we have one man down there that really knows what he's doing. Why don't we bring him to the lab and set up a lab for him -- a shop for him right here in the lab?" And that's what we did. And that's how he came to the laboratory.

[1:11:24]

Callan, B.: Well, it was good that you saw that in him.

What did you like most about working at K-25?

Teasley, J.: The association with the people. They were just fantastic people! And I enjoyed learning the way of the world. I -- you know, I had lived in a world of doctors, teachers, and preachers, and I really didn't know about business world, so it was really a new experience to me. Riding the buses was really exceptional. You met a lot of people. I could give you their family history and not tell you their name. Having badges, I'd never had a badge. I'd never punched a time card in my life. So it was a really new experience for me and I loved every minute of it.

The one thing I do remember is that I thought you had to wear polished shoes, and I discovered that you -- that the key note to

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being an Oak Ridger was having muddy shoes and dust on your face.

Callan, B.: [laughing] So looking back, was there anything that you didn't like about being here, working down at K-25?

[1:12:42]

Teasley, J.: I loved it. I loved it. I had always lived in a city and this was -- this was a totally new experience. It was also a totally new experience to be here where there were lakes and forests all at the same time and I really enjoyed it. I brought my family here and my brother who just recently died, said, "I wouldn't take anything for being -- having been a part of Oak Ridge." He was a medical doctor here.

Callan, B.: It's a whole new experience for me being out here, too. Being from New Mexico or not used to seeing so much green --

Teasley, J.: Right!

Callan, B.: -- when I first got off the plane and saw this grass just everywhere and it was like well, you guys must have wonderful sprinkler systems out here or something, but (indiscernible).

[1:13:32]

Teasley, J.: It sprinkled -- it sprinkled all winter. [laughter]

Callan, B.: Have you stayed in touch with the people that you worked with out at K-25?

Teasley, J.: Norman and I are in charge of all the people -- all the retirees that worked at K-25, at this point. We call about 150 of 'em twice a year, long distance or whatever it takes, whether they can come or not, we stay in touch with 'em and talk with 'em, and we had at our last meeting in March, we had over 55 and it was as nice as today. We would've had a lot if we had -- a lot more than that if we'd of had good weather.

Callan, B.: I want to back up a little bit and talk a little bit more about what it was like out here. You said you came out in 1944, correct? So the building was still under construction? I mean, do you have any recollections about Happy Valley? We've heard a little bit about this stuff but not a whole lot.

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Teasley, J.: I'd love to tell you about that.

Callan, B.: Okay.

[1:14:40]

Teasley, J.: Okay. When I came here, you were wearing shoes that were bought on coupons and they didn't have leather soles, okay. They were sort of like paper. Kenneth, the man who had brought me out here, said, "You know, Jane, if you walk across that with those shoes on, they're not going to have any shoes, so I'm going to pick you up and carry you across those rocks." And he did, to the gate where the guard was. That's one of the things that I remember particularly.

Happy Valley. We did not have our labs built at all and we worked in the Fercleve labs down in the powerhouse area when we first came. One of the things that I remember was how muddy it was when they built the second lab at Fercleve. We were carrying all our instruments and lab equipment over to the other lab. I had on a pair of \$12 suede shoes. \$12 in bought a fantastic pair of shoes. I had on galoshes, but the mud was the kind that pulled your galosh off [laughing] and I waded across in my fancy suede shoes. Believe it or not, they brushed up and looked good still. They were good ones.

[1:16:02]

The other thing I remember was that we had to check our badges as we came out of the Fercleve area. And one of the guys decided that he was going to doctor his. So he made a Hitler out of his. They pulled him off of that bus and they told him, "Get it off and don't ever put it back on because if you do, we're taking you in."

A second man got on and sat beside me and he said, "Could I borrow your badge? I'd like to take my girlfriend in to see what's out there where I work." I said, "No, you may not borrow my badge! You know that's against the rules." By the time I got to the next gate, and he lived, incidentally, in Happy Valley, by the time I got to the next gate, I had no badge. It was on my coat. I knew who the man was, I didn't know his name but I could describe him, I knew where he worked, I reported him the next morning, and he was outta there that afternoon.

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[1:17:12]

Now, talking 'bout the building of the labs, Ken Baylor and I walked the catwalks while they built our lab in K-25. We also went up and found equipment that was stored under K-25 in the bowels of it, and believe it or not, you'd look for a long time. That thing was a mile around and you didn't know where you were supposed to look. But we found all of our stuff.

Callan, B.:

Kind of give me a description of K-25 itself, for someone who's never seen it before. I mean, I've never been myself. I've seen it from a distance, but describe the place.

Teasley, J.:

It was a U. It was like 6 stories high and the operators were on the top floor. They rode on bicycles through there, from one unit to another, and it was -- the -- the -- the samples were taken from different areas in the plant as -- as they purified it. So I -- I never saw them take the samples, but I know that it was taken on the top floor with those operators up there. But the operators were there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

[1:18:40]

Callan, B.:

Were you going to talk a little bit more about Happy Valley, what that was?

Teasley, J.:

Happy -- Happy Valley -- Happy Valley was trailers and hutments. And there were -- at the time that we lived here during the construction era, we had a total population of about 60,000 people. I think about 30,000 of 'em must've lived in Happy Valley [laughing] 'cause it was a huge, huge outfit there. When you looked out from the highway, it was just a sea of trailers as far as you could see. But I never stopped in Happy Valley. We didn't get off the bus there; we just kept moving. So I can't really tell you very much about.

Now, Wheat School was also out in the Happy Valley area.

[1:19:45]

Callan, B.:

Is that the same thing as the Wheat community?

Teasley, J.:

Yes.

Callan, B.:

Okay. Tell me about it.

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Teasley, J.: The Wheat -- the Wheat school is where they trained the people when we first came to work. And they trained us in laboratory procedures and everything right there in the wheat school that was built on the opposite side of the highway from Happy Valley. It was a brick school; it was a nice school. By standards today, it would be not so nice, but by standards then, it was a good school. It was two stories, a fairly large building, had to be to accommodate training that many people.

Callan, B.: Do you know anything about the folks that were displaced to build K-25, the original people?

Teasley, J.: I knew some of the people who were displaced and their property was certainly under-valuated by -- by standards even then and they had no choice. You know, it was government needs this and we've got to have it. I wish I could remember names, but I can't. I can see faces, but I can't remember the names.

[1:21:16]

Callan, B.: This interview is going wonderful by the way, you have so many good recollections.

Teasley, J.: Thank you.

Callan, B.: (indiscernible)

Teasley, J.: I did have wonderful recollections. Housing was another thing that was a real item. The way I came in to -- to how much I -- how much I came in on salary wise was because I had to have a house. I was bringing a family with me. My father had been hospitalized, I had my mother and two brothers and a sister, all of whom were younger than I that needed to be educated and it meant that my mother and I really had to put our shoulder to the wheel to get those kids through college.

So when I came in to -- to -- I guess I was the first person that was hired into the Physical Chemistry laboratory by the SAM group. Frank Heard was interviewing me and he offered me what I thought was a rather paltry salary and my benefactors who brought me here said, "Don't take what they offer you. Tell 'em what you want." So I did. And he said, "I can't do that." Okay. So I looked at it, what he offered me, and said to myself, no, I don't think so. So I said, "Well, I -- I have to have a house, okay." So

we talked to him. Well, she'll have to make a certain amount of money before she gets a house. I said, "I have to have my furniture moved." Well, she has to make a certain amount of money before she can have her furniture moved. We were within \$5 of my original hoped-for salary. [laughing] So I took the job.

[1:23:07]

Brought my mother the following year and they gave her raises so fast that she made 15 cents more than I did before she quit, which she really gloated over. She loved that! [laughing]

Callan, B.: What did your mother do out here?

Teasley, J.: I trained her in the counting section. She did the fission and alpha counting. But I trained my own mother. In fact, I trained -- Bonnie Davis and I trained all the people who hired in to the laboratory.

Callan, B.: You must've been quite an asset to the place because most of the stories I've heard about living out here is that people started out in dormitories and were lucky to get a 1, 2-bedroom apartment and moved up over the years to get in a house.

[1:23:55]

Teasley, J.: I lived in a dormitory. When I came here, I lived in a B house because I lived with the people who'd brought me here. The fa -- as I said, the family was family friends. And so I lived with them, but a lot of their family came. The brother came, the sister came, and I thought, you know, you really don't have a right to stay in this house when they have family here, so I moved into a dormitory. Okay? I had a single room. My sister came. They put her in up on the hill with a lot -- in a dormitory that I thought had a lot of rough girls in it. She'd never lived in a rough neighborhood; she didn't know how to cope with that and she was young. So I brought her in on a cot into my single room until we could get our house.

She kept getting bites. And I said, "You know, I think that has to be bedbugs. The next time that you feel anything, tell me. Don't move and I'll turn on the light." They were crawling up the wall. That night, I walked down to the clerk at the dormitory and I said, "I'm sorry, but you'll just have to replace that thing and you'll have to get those things out of our room. I'm not going back in

there.” “We can’t do that tonight.” I said, “Then we’ll sleep in the lounge.” So Jeannie and I went to the lounge and slept that night and they replaced it. It didn’t take us long to get out of that dormitory. [laughing]

Callan, B.: I want to hear more about dormitories. What were dormitories like?

[1:25:46]

Teasley, J.: They -- they were nice buildings.

Callan, B.: Were they?

Teasley, J.: Yeah, they were. They were nice buildings. They -- they had front wing and a back wing and the furnace was in between. They looked good, they -- they were adequate; it was noisy if you were working shifts and we did work shifts. And that made it really hard ‘cause it made it, you know, on one end of the hall and yell to each other on the other end of the hall. And it was really hard to be able to sleep. But the dormitories were nice. Mine was Gadston Hall. It was right next to the west end, or Jefferson, I guess they called it Jefferson Cafeteria. So I didn’t have to go far in the rain and the mud to get something to eat.

They had cafeterias. Let’s see. We had Central Cafeteria and Jefferson Cafeteria and Louisiana Cafeteria, and Central Cafeteria up in town site. And I don’t know if there were others or not, but I know about those 4. Central was the one that had the best food. But Gadston, you -- you could live on it.

[1:27:07]

Callan, B.: What were the cafeterias like? Was it kind of a social --

Teasley, J.: Yeah.

Callan, B.: -- event to go to the cafeterias?

Teasley, J.: Well, yeah. You saw -- you saw everybody you knew and a whole lot you didn’t. Right. And you visited -- I did, I visited from table to table. And then they also had -- the main -- the main thing, I guess, for social activities was dances on the tennis courts. Can you imagine dancing on a tennis court?

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Callan, B.:

I've heard about dances on a tennis court, but I haven't gotten any details about it.

[1:27:40]

Teasley, J.:

Well, I have an idea they wore shoes out pretty fast. [laughing] I didn't go. They had -- they had a couple of murders at those dances. I didn't -- I didn't frequent many of those places. I was -- I was pretty much --. In the first place, we didn't have time. I didn't have time. By the time I did the things I needed to do and did the shopping I had to do, there -- there wasn't time for me to go socialize much. So I did my socializing with people that I was working with which was a nice bunch because I had all the bunch from SAM that came down. And they were really top people, so it was -- it was a joy to socialize with them.

Callan, B.:

I'm sorry. SAM is?

Teasley, J.:

SAM was in New York at New York -- at Columbia University.

Callan, B.:

What does it stand for? The SAM?

Teasley, J.:

I don't know.

Callan, B.:

Don't know?

[1:28:36]

Teasley, J.:

No, I don't know.

Callan, B.:

Okay.

Teasley, J.:

I never asked --

Callan, B.:

[laughing]

Teasley, J.:

-- to tell you the truth. I guess I didn't ask many questions because all I was going to be told was, "It's a war-time secret." And that was whether they knew the answer or whether it was top secret.
[laughing]

[1:28:51]

Callan, B.:

He's going to switch tapes out real quick here.

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Teasley, J.: Okay.

[End Tape 1, begin Tape 2]

Teasley, J.: -- and I don't have -- what I don't have, I guess, is the references to all of it which you have to have if you want to be in Daughters of the American Revolution or something like that. My mother said, "You know, you're entitled to be in the (indiscernible) support group." I did it for 13 years here in Oak Ridge, most rewarding thing I ever did in my life.

Callan, B.: Okay. I think we're going.

[crew talk]

Callan, B.: Okay. Let's talk about the working conditions and work environment. How did people communicate to their co-workers? What was communication like working in a secret facility and working around the issue of secrecy?

[End of Tape 1, Begin Tape 2]

[2:01:02]

Teasley, J.: There was no problem communicating within the laboratory, and you didn't discuss it outside the laboratory. Does that answer your question?

Callan, B.: Well, yes it does. Did you find it difficult to communicate to family and friends around the issue of secrecy? Did they ask you, "Well, what is going on out there?"

Teasley, J.: My family were all involved in the laboratory, so I had no problem with my family, communicating. My sister worked in the K-25 spectrometer section in the summertime and came back and worked for one year in wet chemistry so that she could go and teach chemistry. She wanted to know what to teach 'em, so she came here and worked long enough to know what to teach 'em and she taught at Hiwassee College.

[2:02:01]

My brother worked in the laboratories at X-10 and Y-12 both summers while he was going to med school. My mother worked in the laboratory, and that was the family so there was no problem communicating there at all.

My friends here were mostly people who came with me knowing -
- knowing what I was doing and telling me where to go and look
for stuff. So they knew to start with; they didn't have to ask
questions. So, no, I had no problem with that. I didn't have time
to communicate with friends back home. And -- so nobody asked
me about that and I didn't go back there for the first 5 years. After
5 years, most of the things had been declassified; they didn't have
to ask you. They'd already read it.

[2:02:59]

Callan, B.: What were the physical working conditions like at K-25?

Teasley, J.: Good. We had -- we had nice facilities, brand new facilities. Ours
-- our laboratory had to be air conditioned for the electrical
equipment that was in there, so ours was comfortable, but I
understand that in the Administration Building, there was no air
conditioning. It was fans that blew the papers all over your desk.

[2:03:42]

I have to tell you one thing funny about that, too.

Callan, B.: Please do. Please.

Teasley, J.: Dr. -- I'm trying -- let me think of his name. Can you stop your
tape long enough for me to do that? Tell the story --

Callan, B.: Without the name is --.

Teasley, J.: -- I'll tell the story.

Callan, B.: Okay.

Teasley, J.: He -- he worked with Madame Curie and he was one of the dearest
old men I've ever known. I stopped by his office one day when I
was in the Ad Building. He says, "Just a minute; just a minute -- I
have to turn my hearing aid on. I turn it off for all the old men, but
when it's a good-looking girl, I always turn my hearing aid up
again." [laughing]

Callan, B.: Yeah, any time, you know, during the questions that I'm asking, if
you think of something, if it sparks your memory about a funny

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story or something that's related to what I'm talking to, don't be afraid to jump in and mention it because it does really help.

Teasley, J.: Okay.

Callan, B.: I mean, the questions that I'm asking are designed to kind of help stimulate your memory about stories like that --

Teasley, J.: Right.

Callan, B.: -- so I appreciate that.

What about the rules out at the facility? Were there particular rules that were important to follow?

[2:04:57]

Teasley, J.: One of them was -- one of the rules to follow was clock in when you come in and clock in when you go out. I would have my mind on so many things, going in, because I was training people, I was taking care of equipment, I was ordering supplies, and so my mind was a thousand miles off from clocking in. And I remember Ken Baylor said to me one day, "You know, Jane, if you fail to clock in one more time, I'm going to terminate you." Put my hand on my hip, looked him straight in the face and said, "You wouldn't dare. You can't do without me." [laughing] And you know, I forgot and he didn't fire me. I was right.

Callan, B.: Well, good 'cause, gosh, it kind of sounds like me. I kind of always got so many things going on and so many things that need to be done, I'm kind of like the absentminded professor sometimes.

[2:05:50]

Teasley, J.: True!

Callan, B.: Little things like that, I tend to overlook. [laughing]

Teasley, J.: Let me tell you another thing about Ken Baylor while I'm thinking about it.

Callan, B.: Okay.

Teasley, Jane

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Teasley, J.:

Ken Baylor was the joker of our crowd. He was assistant in the physical chemistry lab when he first came and finally was the manager of Physical Chemistry. But he always ate lunch in the res -- lunchroom with us. And one day he had an apple that had a worm hole in it. And somebody bet him that he wouldn't eat that apple. And he said, "I'll eat the worm." And he bit the worm half in two and he ate the worm.

Callan, B.:

He should've been on Fear Factor. Seen that show?

Teasley, J.:

He shoulda -- he shoulda been on -- what -- what's the one? What's the one that is --?

Callan, B.:

It's that Fear Factor show where they eat the worms.

[2:06:52]

Teasley, J.:

Oh. I guess I've never seen that.

Callan, B.:

[laughing]

Teasley, J.:

I've never seen that one. But he was a -- he was a card. He really was a card.

I went to see him after he had his stroke and visited with him and he was so pleased. I was -- I was almost afraid to go but one of my friends lived next door and they said, "You know, he -- he really liked you. Why don't you go over there and visit with him?" I wasn't sure that I really should; I was just a worker, you know? But I did. I went over and he was delighted.

Another thing -- another thing Frank Herd left here, went to New York. He decided that he had to have a carpet on his floor like Sylvan Cromer did when he went to New York and he went in and told them either or and so they told him or -- and he left. Okay?

[2:07:41]

In the meantime, he went back and taught at -- I believe, at the University of Iowa and finally out to Oregon. He and his wife in the meantime had divorced and he remarried. But I was so grateful to Frank Herd and Don Hall for the many kindnesses they had shown to me and my family that I sat down and wrote him a letter to tell him how thankful I was for what he had done. He sent me a picture of him with his wife and his little 5-year-old son.

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Looked enough like him I would've known whose child he was if I had seen him in the dark.

[2:08:24]

Callan, B.: What about your other co-workers? What were they like? Did everyone pull their weight around the place?

Teasley, J.: They did. They did. Everybody pulled their weight. They -- they were really great.

Callan, B.: What kind of health facilities were available to you at Oak Ridge and K-25?

Teasley, J.: We had an excellent dispensary with well-trained doctors. We had, in there, a laboratory that did all the urinalysis blood work. We had an eye doctor and they fitted you with glasses, and everybody, incidentally, had to wear safety glasses. They were horrible, they were heavy. But they did protect our eyes.

Callan, B.: How often did you have to wear safety glasses?

Teasley, J.: All the time when you were in the lab. Norm will tell you a story about that when he comes in.

Callan, B.: Okay. Were you given a physical prior to starting work --

Teasley, J.: Indeed.

Callan, B.: -- (indiscernible) check?

Teasley, J.: Indeed! That's right. You certainly were. You had your health check before they ever clear -- ran your clearance. They wanted to be sure you were healthy before they spent their money running a clearance on you. And it took several months for them to run a clearance, too, incidentally. It would be 2 or 3 months before you would be cleared.

[2:09:54]

Callan, B.: When they obtained your clearance, were you aware that background checks were being conducted on you?

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Teasley, J.: Yes, and I knew who -- who they were taking them to. Norman knew, too. They -- his father wondered what he had done wrong. [laughing]

Callan, B.: Okay.

Teasley, J.: I'll tell ya -- I have to tell ya another story.

Callan, B.: Yes, please.

Teasley, J.: Frank Herd was very careful with his money. He was the one that was head of the -- first, he was head of the Physical Chemistry and finally he was head of the entire laboratory. But he was very careful with his money. He came back one day and he was standing beside my machine where I was doing electroplating. And he said, and I was washing my cells and I left the water running, and he said, "Did you realize you left the water running?" And I said, "Yes, sir." "Do you realize that costs money?" And I said, "Yes, sir." I said, "Would you prefer paying for the water or my time?" And he said, "Case made." [laughing]

[2:10:54]

Callan, B.: Good point! Yeah, I can see that. [laughing]

Okay. Let's talk about your recollections that you had during the Manhattan Project. What was your understanding of the function of the K-25 facility during World War II? At that time, what was your understanding?

Teasley, J.: I knew that we were doing something that was to fight a war. I had no idea except that I knew it had radiation. I knew there was radiation. And like I said, I thought it was radium. Okay? 'Cause I didn't know anything about uranium. In fact, not many people knew much about uranium at that time, did they? Anyway, I knew that -- I knew that it was important enough that we ran 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, come hell or high water.

[2:11:58]

They would ask you if you wanted to work overtime. You were limited -- usually, they gave you at least one day off a week, but they would ask you if you wanted to work overtime and my answer was always, "If you can't find somebody else to do it, I will do it, but no, I don't wanna work overtime." [laughing] By

the time I had worked 6 days, I was ready to quit, but I did work overtime when I needed to.

I enjoyed working, it was fun, it was exciting. I did -- I also did microchemistry where I sat in an air conditioned place with the -- in the dark with the thing going back -- the balance going back and forth, reading the balance thing. I worked with little crucibles that were about the size of a thimble. I was the only one who ever did that. I don't know what the problem was. I don't know why they had me back there. All I know is that I was the one that was back there for a long time.

But the day -- the day that we finally did know what had happened, we all felt rewarded for the time that we had spent, the hours that we had put in, and we're innocent, we'd felt.

Callan, B.: And I wanted to have you expand upon that. It was really my whole next line of questioning, too. What was your reaction to August 6, 1945? What was it like on that day?

[2:13:37]

Teasley, J.: It was a celebration. It was -- I think everybody drew a sigh of relief and -- and had a -- an expression of pure gratitude that we had actually done what we came to do. But it was excitement here in Oak Ridge. The streets were wild with people just celebrating.

Callan, B.: I'm sorry. The reason why I was laughing earlier when you were talking about the comment you made about what was more important, would you rather pay me for my money or my time, just sounds like something Jennifer would say to me. [laughter]

[2:14:24]

Teasley, J.: Jennifer and I -- Jennifer and I have a real comradie. No kidding.

Callan, B.: [laughing]

What was your reaction to the news of the bomb dropping on 1945? How did you react to that personally?

Teasley, J.: I hate to say that I was terribly glad. I was sad that it had to be, but I had lost one of my best friends to those Japs and I couldn't wait for 'em to get 'em back. He had been a best friend since we were children and we had -- we had spent many long hours together and

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it broke my heart to see that boy killed because he was right in the prime of life. So, yes, I guess I rejoiced even in the sadness of knowing that other people had to suffer.

Callan, B.:

After the Manhattan Project, how do you think that history will view the Manhattan Project and its outcome?

[2:15:37]

Teasley, J.:

That it was a revelation; they didn't know they could do it. They - - you know, this -- think of the things that have happened since then, the developments, we would not have had the Space Age if it had not been for the Manhattan Project. So we have had -- we have had many improvements in life and many discoveries in life since then because of the Manhattan Project, so it will -- it will be viewed as a real step forward into the future.

Callan, B.:

As far as the role of K-25 after the Manhattan Project, are you familiar with the expansion program? How did the role of K-25 change and its mission change after the Manhattan Project? How did the work change?

Teasley, J.:

They continued to refine the uranium and build buildings that were bigger, better, more efficient. I was in and out of those buildings doing research on it and -- and working with -- in -- well, it was wet chemistry in the research lab.

[2:16:57]

But we -- we continued -- and -- and not only we continued to grow, but Paducah and Portsmouth also continued to grow. I guess -- I guess that I really don't know why it continued to grow and how it continued to grow, but I know that it did continue to grow.

Callan, B.:

Do you recall any interesting stories about K-25 or any occurrences happening there during the Cold War period after the Manhattan Project era?

Teasley, J.:

I left the laboratory and went into computer work so I really didn't follow an awful lot, but this -- I know that they brought in the centrifuge laboratory after I left there, which was another big development because it was a much more efficient way of separation than we had, had in the plants. But I was not involved

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in that except to see that computations were made in -- in the computer world.

Callan, B.: You commented a little bit about the Space Age and whatnot, but do you have any other thoughts on how the activities accomplished at K-25 revolutionized the world?

[2:18:39]

Teasley, J.: I guess, offhand, I don't think of something. I'm sure that it did, but I -- but I don't offhand think of it.

Callan, B.: Okay. I'm going to get a little more specific into the jobs that you did at K-25. And you've given me some descriptions. What kind of jobs did you work while working at K-25?

[2:19:07]

Teasley, J.: I worked every single thing that you could think of. [laughing]

Callan, B.: Okay.

Teasley, J.: I did -- I did -- I did gravimetric procedures; I did electro -- electroplating; I did counting which was the fission counting, alpha counting, beta counting; I took care of all the supplies; I developed the uranium accountability system that they used for AEC.

And they came in -- I wondered if I'd done something wrong, but they liked what I was doing; they came down and followed what I had done which was a real feather in my cap. I worked in the research laboratory. And that's another story.

Dr. Herd called me to his office one day and he said, "Jane, I'd like to know what you think about the supervision that I have over in the lab." I said, "Do you want me to tell you what I really think or do you want me to tell you what you want to hear?" He said, "I asked you what you really think." And I said, "Then I'm going to tell you. I think they're a bunch of chickens." I said, "You walk through that laboratory, they tremble like aspen leaves." I said, "As far as I'm concerned, you're just like the rest of the people." He said, "I have what I need over there; I need you in research." And he transferred me.

[2:20:35]

I went to work under Bob Lafferty who was another close friend. And I did research on why the -- the barrier was plugging. And that's as much as I can tell you about that. But I did a study on that that was presented to an international audience. He tried to get me to present it and I said, "I wouldn't dare 'cause if I get up there and they ask me a question I can't answer, I can't stand it." [laughing] So Bob -- I -- I wrote the paper and Bob presented it. But I got to be there to listen to it.

[2:21:10]

Callan, B.: But to me, it sounds like you've made some phenomenal contributions to --.

Teasley, J.: I had fun doing it. It was -- it was a real life.

Callan, B.: Let's see. Tell me what was your most challenging assignment as an individual or a group that you had to deal with.

Teasley, J.: Dealing with that barrier and operating polarographs because I didn't know anything about polarographs when I started. I read the books, I took 'em on vacation with me, and I finally called a man who had been there originally.

[2:21:44]

His name was Ed Marshall. Ed and Nita worked in Lab D and I had known both of them, but he had gone to AEC. So I called him and I said, "Ed, do you think Nita would let me come over and you talk to me a couple of nights about pola -- pola -- polography?" And he said, "Sure. I'm sure she would." I went over there for two nights and he lectured me as hard as he could go. But I was determined I was going to have it from the top man and he was top man in that. He died about 6 months ago and I was one of the ones that went to the funeral.

Callan, B.: Just out of curiosity, what is a polarograph or polography?

Teasley, J.: Okay, it's -- you -- you plate out on mercury, a mercury cathode, you plate out the stuff, uranium, or the impurities, whichever, whatever you're doing. But you're doing it on a dropping mercury cathode. I had never seen one so it was a new experience for me totally.

[2:22:56]

And incidentally, while I was there, the -- I was the one who had a hood in my laboratory and some of the people didn't. And so they would use my hood to -- to purify ~~their~~ things. But the water supply was very spasmodic and so I had to watch theirs to be sure that their -- that their bulb was filling so that it would condense down. Okay? One day, it was -- it was an ether bath, I think, and this girl had come in and was doing her -- whatever she was doing in there and I had watched it and it was okay. But finally, it was not. And I didn't know it. And I was standing there, fortunately with my back to it. I had just turned out of the hood and that thing exploded and caught on fire. It was -- the fire was between me and the door, the glass blew everywhere, it blew across the lab, and landed into a hardwood pap -- what do you call a pap -- what do you call the paper things that you put paper things on two write -- what do you call that? A boar -- anyhow, it was a board that we wrote on.

Callan, B.:

A chalkboard or?

Teasley, J.:

A what?

Callan, B.:

Like a chalkboard or?

Teasley, J.:

No. A board that you put paper on to write. Has a clip at the top.

Callan, B.:

Oh, clipboard.

Teasley, J.:

Clamp -- thank you.

Callan, B.:

Okay.

[2:24:33]

Teasley, J.:

Okay. She put it on a clipboard but it -- it punctured that, drove glass into that hardwood board across the laboratory. It rented the shades at the far end of the lab that must've been at least 12 to 14 feet, and there I was with that fire between me and the door. Fortunately, one of the technology people had called me and asked me if he could come and work in the lab that day and he was in there with me. He came over and took me and sat me down on steps that I had to climb and I looked down and there was a puddle of blood under both elbows and he said, "I'm calling the ambulance to get you." They got the fire out. He had -- we had a

fire extinguisher and called an ambulance. I said, "I can walk. I'm okay."

I walked to the cafeteria with my arms bleeding and my -- and my back bleeding and they tried to give me a shot for -- for shock. And I said, "I'm not in shock. I'm okay." Well, it took me about 30 minutes to figure out that I was in shock and I started -- they put me in bed, they washed me and put me in bed and they came in to check on me and finally I was going, and they didn't ask me that time; they came and gave me the shot. [laughing]

But they sent me to the hospital and I remember Dr. Bigelow, who incidentally has just died, said to me, "You're the best patient I've ever seen." They gave me another shot just before I went to the hospital, okay? But I rode in the ambulance and he dug that glass out of me from all of the light bulbs, the fluorescent light bulbs that had been blown apart and blown into my body.

[2:26:33]

He said, "You're the best patient I've ever seen." I said, "You would be, too. I'm numb."

Callan, B.:

Wow! That's quite a story. So were there any other incidents like that that happened at the lab?

Teasley, J.:

I'm sure there were, but that was the only one I was involved in, so I don't know about the others.

Callan, B.:

Okay. What would you say is your most significant accomplishment of your career as either an individual or as a group?

[2:27:02]

Teasley, J.:

My most significant accomplishment was marrying Norman Teasley.

Callan, B.:

Okay.

Teasley, J.:

I never dreamed that I'd ever -- it never occurred to me. We had been friends over the years and when he lost his wife, well, he was devastated. And when he came to see me, he sat at the foot of my bed to tell me how sad he was and shed the tears. And I thought

this man really needs somebody to listen. And I've been listening ever since.

Callan, B.: And so you guys have been just sort of friends and co-workers?

Teasley, J.: Yeah. Yeah, I worked with him for about 7 years and we were friends. If I had a job -- even after I left there, if I had a job that I couldn't get done somewhere else, I'd call and say, "Norm, I have a problem. I can't get anybody to fix this. Could you fix it for me?" "Sure, no problem. Bring it over." Wouldn't ever take anything, so what'd I do? I'd go buy his wife a plant, take it over to her house. Okay? I met her but I did not know her. And the only time that we ever saw each other, if we met on the streets, we chatted. But otherwise, we just lost connection.

[2:28:21]

Callan, B.: Okay. He's going to flip out tapes real quick.

[End Tape 2, begin Tape 3]

Callan, B.: Where are we at here? Was the facility still under construction --

Teasley, J.: Oh, yes.

Callan, B.: -- when you came down?

[End Tape 2, Begin Tape 3]

[3:00:23]

Teasley, J.: Oh, yes. It sure was.

Callan, B.: Okay, let me see if he's -- we got about 10 more seconds.

Teasley, J.: Yeah, walked the catwalks while they built it. In fact, we only had one laboratory at Fercleve when I first came.

Callan, B.: Okay. Let me re-ask that question again.

Teasley, J.: Okay.

Callan, B.: Just tell me a little bit about, I guess, what the facility was like during the construction.

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Teasley, J.:

Okay. The K-25 laboratory was not built at all; they were -- it was under construction when we came. The plant -- the plant was built -- I'm -- I'm sure they were still doing some building on it, but essentially, they had the plant -- the -- the one mile, K-25, built. But the laboratory was not built. Even the -- even the Fercleve laboratory was not completed. When we moved in, they had the power house in that area for K-25 and they had one laboratory and one other building. They built a second laboratory. That's when I lost my shoe, okay? And so they had two laboratories, finally, down there.

[3:01:44]

But yes, Ken Baylor and I walked the catwalks while they were building the -- K-25 and all they had was the basement when they -- when I got here. So the walls went up after I came. We worked in the Fercleve laboratory for -- I don't remember. It seems to me about, maybe, like 3 months while they put up the walls.

Callan, B.:

Was it interesting to see people to put something that large together so quickly? What was that like? How'd they do it?

[3:02:19]

Teasley, J.:

It almost blew my mind. It almost blew my mind -- that they could get that much done in so short a time. And do you know -- you do realize that Oak Ridge was not even on the map. When you went to a bus station and you asked to get a tr -- a ticket to Oak Ridge, there was no place Oak Ridge. You bought a ticket to Knoxville and you got a special bus to come out to Oak Ridge. They took a different path every time to make sure you didn't know how to get back out here. Okay?

The -- one of them, we had -- what do you call it when it's -- when you go down onto a thing that floats and up?

Callan, B.:

A barge?

Teasley, J.:

It wasn't a barge. It was -- but it was a thing that took you across a waterway --.

Callan, B.:

Ferry?

Teasley, J.:

It wasn't a ferry. It -- it just floated. A po -- it was sort of like a pontoon bridge.

Teasley, Jane

Callan, B.:

Okay.

Teasley, J.:

Okay? And they would take you across that thing, but they -- they never took you one way and took you back the same way. You went back a different way -- every time. Okay. They had special buses they ran out from the K-25, Y-12, X-10 employment offices. And incidentally, all the employment offices tried to steal the people from the other employment offices. I guess that would be par for the course, right?

[3:04:01]

But yes, it was amazing to see what happened. It was amazing to see what was left when they finally did it all and what was -- where they stored the stuff because they didn't know what to do with the stuff. This was all brand new. They didn't know what to do with it -- they stored it in barrels and we had barrel after barrel of discharge. You know? And that's what they spent millions of dollars cleaning up since.

It was just amazing to see -- it was amazing to see a town go up like that. They were still building houses when I came here -- building them like crazy. They had built the permanent ones, I -- I assume -- I don't know if they had built all of them, but they had built most of the permanent ones that we called the cemestos. But the prefabs, they were still putting up when I came here.

Callan, B.:

You mentioned that you were able to get pretty adequate housing right away. What different types of housing were out there?

Teasley, J.:

Well, they had, in the cemestos, which was only for monthly people and I was not hired in monthly; I should've been, but I was hired in weekly. The monthly people had what they called "A" houses that were 2 bedrooms with a small living room and a very small kitchen. They had furnaces. They had the "B" house that had a big living/dining room and some built-in cabinets in the walls in there, 2 bedrooms, a small kitchen, a furnace. They -- they -- instead of building them like a normal place, a long sidewalk or something, they -- my understanding is that they took the houses and dropped the things down onto the thing and whichever way they landed, that was the way they were built because they didn't want it to look like a regular town if it -- if a plane flew over. And so your back door might be your front door

or visa versa. Or it may have been turned any side (indiscernible), who knows.

[3:06:15]

They also -- they called one of them an A house. The "B" house was the 2-bedroom, had the big living room and that's what we have now. We have bricked ours. Okay. They had a "C" house that had 3 bedrooms and a living room and kitchen. They had a "D" house that was 3 bedrooms with 2 baths or a bath and a big closet, a big living room, a dining room, and a kitchen, and that was what I lived in when I first came here. And then they had one that was called an "F" house, I believe, that the living/dining/kitchen was arranged differently than the "D" one and it looked bigger and was more adequate for entertaining. And that was what the top dogs had, okay.

They had, for the -- for the other people, we had duplexes, well, they also -- they also had in the cemestos, they had apartments. They had 4-unit apartment buildings. The two middle units had two bedrooms upstairs, the living room and kitchen downstairs, a furnace room in between the two down there that furnished the heat for all 4 units, and in the ends, they had one-story -- instead of two-story -- on either end that was one bedroom and the living room and kitchen.

[3:07:57]

Unless you were married, you didn't get 'em, and unless you were married, you also didn't get a house. That's why I had to make special arrangements because I was not married, but I had a family and so I still qualified to get the house. Then for ours where they had cem -- duplex homes, and I had a 3-bedroom, living room, kitchen, the kitchen was about the size of a closet, they furnished your lights, all your electricity, they furnished an electric stove, an electric refrigerator and you didn't bring many groceries in at a time 'cause there wasn't a place to put 'em.

They had a warm morning heater in there. I couldn't get it out fast enough. Nobody could bank the thing except me to keep it from having an escaped gas and it all congregated in my room and I'd lose my breath, practically. So I -- I -- I was the one who banked the fire every night. They gave you coal that had clinkers in it and it reminded me of what one of my cousins said -- said, "Poal must think birt will durn." [laughing] The -- the clinkers were bad

'cause you couldn't those out. You really had to work to get those out. So I finally had them -- had them come get my warm morning heater and I put in electric heaters.

[3:09:50]

Which was really good; stack heaters; I had a 4-unit one and a 3-unit one; kept the house really comfortable.

The other end was 2 bedrooms and the living room and kitchen, there were flattops in between those, just scattered among 'em. And the flattops didn't look like much, but I guess they really did very well because they had a lot of storage in 'em which our units did not have. Our closets did not have doors, so we hung sheets to make closet doors.

I was trying to think what else -- what other housing they had. They had different kinds. They had T-3s and T-2s and I really don't know how much difference there was because I wasn't in those.

Callan, B.: Okay. Good. No, your recollection is phenomenal. I've asked that question and haven't gotten that much information out of five interviews.

Teasley, J.: Good!

Callan, B.: [laughing]

Teasley, J.: Good.

Callan, B.: Amazing! As far as the work environment goes, were there unions out there? Did you see any conflicts occurring between management, workers, and the unions? Anything like that?

[3:11:16]

Teasley, J.: Did I ever! Did I ever! Did I cross the picket line? Yes, I did. Yeah, it's -- it's scary. The -- the --

Callan, B.: (indiscernible)

Teasley, J.: -- the craftsmen were organized, but the laboratories were not. And they tried to or -- organize the laboratories. We didn't want 'em organized. I didn't. You know, I -- I was not interested in

having -- I could figure I could fend for myself a whole lot better than they could fend for me. 'Cause I -- the people -- the people who were in charge were my best friends. They would just -- they were just absolutely phenomenal in helping me do exactly what I needed to do and every one of 'em were the same way; I never worked with one that wasn't.

I remember one boss that I had [laughing], Dr. Katz said to me one day, he interviewed his people every 6 months at least, okay, which was really good, I mean, to sit down and chat with you. And he said to me, "You know, Miss Jane, you're the greatest developer of men I've ever known." And for a minute, I was almost insulted and then I remembered, I had taken one man that they thought that they were gonna have to fire because he couldn't get along with people and I made him livable. I took another one that was impossible; I made him livable. But I wasn't scared to tell 'em where to go. And I remember that one of 'em brought his dirty dishes over and sat down on my side for me to clean up. I wasn't cleaning his dishes; I wasn't there to be his servant. I'm sorry. And I said, "When you get ready to wash these dishes, tell me and I'll move away from the sink." Not many people would've done that. But I wasn't afraid. I wasn't afraid.

[3:13:19]

Callan, B.:

Let's talk about women at the facility. Certainly, you're one that fended for yourself and one that served a very important role at K-25. But what sort of roles did women at K-25 typically serve and how were they usually treated?

Teasley, J.:

I guess all of 'em were treated okay, but most of 'em did not fend for themselves. They accepted wherever somebody put 'em and I just couldn't sit there and do one thing day after day after day. I said, "You know, I've learned how to do all these things. I could teach -- I could teach an ignorant person how to do this. I need something that'll challenge me." And this is why I kept moving from one place to another.

[3:14:14]

But most of 'em were satisfied to stay at one place as long as they had a good paycheck. They never complained. You didn't hear 'em complain. They were -- they were treated as well as could be expected.

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Gotta go back and tell you another one.

Callan, B.:

Please.

Teasley, J.:

One of -- one of the supervisors, when I was in the Physical Chemistry lab, had me in and told me that my attitude was very bad. And I said, "Really?" He said, "Yes." He said, "I don't have problems with my other people." I said -- he said, "I've taught school; I know how to deal with people." And I said, "Yes, sir. What grade did you teach?" He said, "I taught 6th grade." I said, "You're not dealing with 6th graders; you're dealing with adults." Well, six months later, he called me back in and he told me how much my attitude had improved. And I said, "Yes, sir. Your supervision has, too." [laughter]

[3:15:25]

Callan, B.:

Oh, no! [laughter] Oh, no!

What about dress codes? Were there special dress codes for women or was the dress code pretty strict?

Teasley, J.:

No. They weren't -- they -- they did wear -- well, no they didn't. I take it back. I started to say they wore safety shoes. Some of them wore safety shoes because they were cheap; they can buy 'em. And they were leather, which you couldn't buy for a long time. They were rationed. Okay, but no, they could wear anything they wanted to. My mother and I both wore white uniforms and white shoes -- when we could get 'em. But we wore white uniforms. I ruined all my good clothes when I came here because I wore my good clothes out there and I got cleaning solution on 'em and made holes and all in my good clothes. And when she came, she said, "I'm wearing white uniforms out there." And I said, "I believe I will, too." So that's what we did.

[3:16:25]

Callan, B.:

So as far as different job roles, I mean, you had a pretty important job role. What sort of jobs did women usually do out there for the most part, that you can recall?

Teasley, J.:

Where I was, most -- most of 'em were either office workers or laboratory workers. Where -- where in the laboratory, they were working on machines of some sort. In the -- in the Spectrometer section, they worked on machines. In our section, there were --

there were a lot of different operations, but they were working as librarians, as secretaries, as -- they -- they even had women that went around and checked the equipment where they -- where they had to verify that equipment was there, checking the numbers. They even had women doing that. Men did it, too.

But women held almost as many of the jobs as -- as the men did. As you know, a lot of the men had been drafted and so women had to take over wherever it was needed. But they had women out in the plants, even.

[3:17:46]

Callan, B.: Well, I heard they'd been out in the plants. I didn't hear that they did a lot of leak testing.

Teasley, J.: They did. They did leak testing, they -- and they did a lot of the reading -- the readings on the machines out there. They had people working in the computer groups where they were figuring gradients and whatever -- gradients being the -- the amount of -- of purity of the product. So they had -- they had people working in all sorts of things. I don't know that they knew what they were doing. If they -- if they were doing the calculations for 'em.

Callan, B.: Would you say that the overall population of the workforce, the facility, was it more women than men? Or was it kind of pretty even?

Teasley, J.: It was probably fairly even but there might've been more women. Now that I think about it -- I hadn't thought about it -- but yeah, I guess there were. I guess there were more women than there were men.

[3:18:53]

Callan, B.: What about minorities out at the facility? Were there any minority workers?

Teasley, J.: Yeah, there were. They -- they lived in a section out there on -- at the time -- I believe they called it Gamble Valley.

Callan, B.: Gavel Valley.

Teasley, J.: Gamble. G-A-M-B-L-E. Gamble Valley. I think that's right.

[3:19:24]

We had some highly-educated blacks that worked out there sweeping floors. The White's were some of them. There were a whole bunch of them -- of the people that were White's. Charlie White, see if I can think of the other names. Oh, there's one that's still living here. In fact, I think there are still two that are living here. One -- one of them, the daughter, I can think of what the one's name was.

Callan, B.: You have to think of these names 'cause I have to interview them.

Teasley, J.: Okay.

Callan, B.: We have not been able to locate any African-Americans --

Teasley, J.: Oh, really?

Callan, B.: -- who worked at the facility because this is --.

Teasley, J.: Okay.

Callan, B.: This would just be like the greatest gift in the world. [laughing]

Teasley, J.: Oh, wonderful! I'd love to. This man -- this man he and his wife even cleaned our church for us. And his daughter teaches flute in the music school here. This shows you what kind of people they are. Okay. I need my husband. He needs to jar my memory because one of 'em -- one of 'em was a White that worked over at X-10 and until this day when he worked with Charles in the Medical -- my brother worked in the Medical when he first came here before he did his private practice. And that -- that guy still comes up and hugs me and kisses me when he sees me because the Gurneys were that near to him. And I have given him a lot of my crystal because he was collecting crystal and I said, "I've got a whole bunch at home that I'm not using. I'll bring it to you." So it's probably in his attic right now.

[3:21:06]

But yeah, the three White's were highly-educated blacks.

Callan, B.: And they were just doing janitorial work?

Teasley, Jane

Teasley, J.: They were doing janitorial and they finally -- they finally took this man that was working in the health facility and made him the manager of a tool facility, which was really good -- gave him a better job.

Callan, B.: But he (indiscernible) --

Teasley, J.: But they were -- they were --.

Callan, B.: -- (indiscernible) background.

[3:21:30]

Teasley, J.: Oh, yeah! He was -- he was educated. All three of 'em were educated blacks.

Callan, B.: So typically, they were treated a little bit differently out there and I'm curious. It was part of an era.

Teasley, J.: Yeah. You didn't see them with good jobs for a long time. They do have 'em now. They do have 'em now. Really good jobs. A lot of 'em -- a lot of them -- some of them are in top management now.

Callan, B.: How long was Gamble Valley around? I haven't heard anything about Gamble Valley.

Teasley, J.: They don't call it Gamble Valley now, but the blacks have a section that's their own now.

Callan, B.: Let's just wait because we --.

[crew talk]

Teasley, J.: Okay.

Callan, B.: Okay. Go ahead and talk about Gamble Valley.

[3:22:15]

Teasley, J.: Okay. They have a section of their own and we -- and for a long time, they lived in hutments and stuff and it was horrible down there 'cause the hutments really -- you could throw cats through the cracks in 'em. It was hard to get 'em warm. They finally built them houses and we wondered if they would look like anything

because they had certainly not taken care of the other. And they didn't in other sections where they had come from. But do you know that when they got those good houses, they did take care of it? My maid took flowers from my house and set 'em out in her -- her place until she had a garden that would've been a credit to Biltmore Estates. I mean, I -- I'd drive by there and take a look at it every year to see how it was looking [laughing], but it was beautiful. But they really worked at having nice ones.

And I remember that one of the girls that worked with me, her name was Marie Anthony and she's dead now and so is her husband, but both of them had good jobs out there. And she got an organ and she told me how much she paid for it and she gotten a good buy on it. And I said, "Can I come to your house and look on it and to play on it, just see if I want one, too." "Yeah." So I went over there and I played on her organ and I went over and I made the same deal with the people. I knew what she had made and I got it down to their -- to my price. [laughing] My organ is still at my house. I don't know what happened to hers. [laughing]

[3:23:52]

Callan, B.: Let's see. I'm sorry. I don't recall. Did you have children out here?

Teasley, J.: I had my sister and my brother.

Callan, B.: Right.

Teasley, J.: My -- my older brother was already in med school so he came here and visited, but he didn't ever live here. But my younger brother and my sister came here and lived with me; and my mother.

[3:24:17]

Callan, B.: What was life like for your younger brother and sister? What did they do while you were working?

Teasley, J.: Put -- I put 'em to work. I got 'em jobs every summer and Jeannie -- they were both in school. Jeannie was in college and she finished college and then came back here and worked. But I got 'em jobs for the summer, every summer. They didn't have -- I gave them no free time.

Teasley, Jane

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Callan, B.: Did you feel overall it was a pretty normal type family life? You know, going around the issue of secrecy and working at the facility? I mean, was it pretty normal for them being out here?

Teasley, J.: Yeah, no problem. No problem because it was not -- at our house -- at our house, everybody was working in a laboratory. So there was no problem there. You didn't have to ask a question; you knew what people were doing, pretty much. [laughing]

[3:25:09]

Callan, B.: Okay.

Teasley, J.: And we didn't really discuss work a whole lot. That was not -- that was not what you discussed. You discussed what were you going to do with your time when you weren't working. [laughing]

Callan, B.: Right. Okay. Let's switch out tapes right now 'cause we're going to go into final questions.

[End Tape 3, begin Tape 4]

[4:00:15]

Callan, B.: -- the last critical questions with you just because you have so many interesting stories. I don't want to be wearing you out.

Teasley, J.: I'm having fun!

Callan, B.: Okay. Good. I wanted to talk a little bit next about life at Oak Ridge and don't start responding for another 10 seconds. We gotta clip the color bars onto the beginning of the tape.

But you kind of sparked my interest. You were talking earlier about the dormitories and how you were worried that it was kind of a rough place and then you were also talking about the tennis court dances and how a couple people had gotten murdered out there and --

Teasley, J.: Right.

Callan, B.: -- the stories I've gotten before about living in Oak Ridge and this and that is that, you know, everybody was pretty much the same and everybody was happy and we all just go to dances and, you know, have a grand old time. When you said that, it kind of made

me thought, well, there's something a little bit different going on. I mean, were there different social castes within the secret city?

[4:01:19]

Teasley, J.:

I guess that I was brought up in a very gentle home, and so to me, a lot of the people who probably were considered okay were -- corny -- un-classy. They used bad language. They -- they didn't hesitate to discuss things that I didn't think were discussable. I just wasn't brought up in that. I was brought up with a refined mother and a refined father and I didn't understand about it. Neither did my siblings. So we -- we did -- we did have to sort of limit our vista, right?

[4:02:12]

There -- there were a lot of girls up on the hill that -- there were some nice ones, too, but there were a lot of 'em that were really rough girls. They had come from rough life and had good jobs and they were pleased. And they developed -- they developed into great people. A lot of those people developed into great people, but they had not come from -- from the walk of life that we had. And it made it a little difficult. But I was afraid for Jeannie because she was not one to branch out as much as I was anyway.

There was not -- I didn't socialize with the people in the dormitory. I don't remember socializing with those people. I socialized with the people I worked with.

Callan, B.:

Tell me more about what it was like living in the secret city and living behind the chain link fences --

Teasley, J.:

It was wonderful! It was wonderful! You couldn't have company unless you invited 'em. You know, you knew -- you knew exactly what time they were going to be there. You knew 'cause you had to go get 'em, okay? You had to leave 'em a pass at the gate and they probably didn't know how to get there so you just really had to -- but we didn't even have a car. We didn't even bring our car with us 'cause you couldn't get tires, you couldn't get gas. But one of our friends did have a car. So my mother and -- and this man missed the bus, well, he'd get his car, he'd take her to work, drop her off at the lab, and he'd come over to the power house. We were fortunate to have friends who did have a car.

But you could get a bus almost anywhere. It just took you a long time to get there. They had 3, let's see. They had Jefferson Terminal and Central Terminal. I guess -- I guess that was all. And they ran buses out to East Village from Central Terminal and Jefferson ran the buses out to the plant. All the other buses ran from Central Terminal. Cost you -- I guess we got 4 -- 4 tokens for a quarter when we first came. Well, maybe 5 and then it was 4. I remember they went down one. Cost a little bit more.

[4:04:44]

The X-10 people rode free. Their bus -- their bus to work was free. They just came through and picked 'em up. But K-25 and Y-12ers had to pay to go to work.

Callan, B.:

Was there several different layers of security and did you have to re-badge just inside the K-25 facility, or did you have to wear your badge around town, too?

Teasley, J.:

You did not have to wear your badge in town, I don't believe. I don't remember wearing a badge in town. But you did have to wear it at K-25 and there were -- there were grades of badges out there. And unless you had, I believe it was an "R" badge, you could not get into the barrier plant. So I had to have an "R" badge because I had to go to the barrier plant. Norman went to the barrier plant, too. I'm sure. In fact, he was all over.

[4:05:38]

But you couldn't go into another plant with your badge for K-25. If you were going to go, you had to get a visitor's badge to go into the other plants.

Callan, B.:

I've just heard some obscure things that I've heard in previous interviews that I want to ask you about. Change houses. Do you remember change houses?

Teasley, J.:

I remember them having them, but I was never ever around one.

Callan, B.:

Okay. What about during World War II? Was there rationing that occurred within Oak Ridge and what was that like?

Teasley, J.:

You better believe it. You better believe it. You stood in line. You stood in line for everything. You stood in line for cigarettes, you stood in line for hose, whether you wanted them or not, you

stood in line and you gave 'em to somebody else. Okay? But you always got in line if there was a line there.

[4:06:38]

You couldn't get meat except certain days. You had to have stamps to be able to get meat. And we had a friend who had a car who drove to Lenoir City, who had a friend who was a butcher. So we always had meat at our house. But that was more than most people could say 'cause you couldn't get it; they'd run out before they got 'round to all the stamps. You couldn't get sugar. You could get just so much sugar, so you had to ration it out. Seems to me that -- seems to me that even butter and lard -- that we had a problem with. But normally the -- the cereals and things like this, you could get those. That was okay. But the other things were rationed that you had to have stamps for.

Callan, B.: I don't know if you drink or not or if you ever drank, but I've heard some interesting bootlegging stories. I don't know.

Teasley, J.: I've heard some interesting ones, too, that they -- that they even put people in the trunk of the car. [laughing] Bootlegged 'em in. Now, that was bootlegging people, not just -- not just booze, but yeah, they did. They -- they brought in booze, buried it under things, brought it in.

[4:08:10]

Callan, B.: Okay.

Teasley, J.: There weren't that many cars so we didn't get that much booze, either.

Callan, B.: [laughing] Anything else special or unusual that you'd like to discuss regarding K-25 or Oak Ridge?

Teasley, J.: I can tell you that on midnights, where you ate was from a little truck outside. They brought bologna sandwiches and milk. I don't know what else they had. I had bologna sandwiches and milk. [laughing]

[4:08:37]

Callan, B.: And they brought that out to the facility?

Teasley, Jane

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Teasley, J.: They brought it out to the facility. I don't know where the truck came from; I don't know whether it was on site or whether it came from off site. All I know is that at midnight, on midnights, well, that's what you ate.

Callan, B.: Okay. I just have a few final sort of broad perspective wrap-up type questions. Describe what you think future generations should remember about K-25. What should they know?

Teasley, J.: Well, I think one thing is, probably, you'd never have another building that was a mile around built in a U shape that people rode bicycles to work on. Okay? That always impressed people when they came here and looked out over K-25.

And the other thing is to remember the extent of how big this thing was. I mean, this was -- this was a phenomenal area with 60,000 people and how many plants. You know, everybody worked. They had to. They had to have everybody on board. But I have no idea how many acres it is, but they had -- they had confiscated thousands of acres and they still have a lot -- the -- the -- the government still owns a lot of the land. They have sold off a lot and they've leased a lot.

[4:10:16]

But I think the thing they need to remember is that if it hadn't been for that, we probably would've been shot down by the Japs. We might all have been Japs by now. Right?

Callan, B.: That is -- who can say, but I know that, you know, what happened here did change things --

Teasley, J.: It sure did! It sure did.

It changed east Tennessee. Between -- between TVA and -- and this facility, it changed all of the -- of the demographics of east Tennessee.

Callan, B.: And how was that?

Teasley, J.: It -- it made jobs that they never had before. It made salaries that they'd never seen before. It made housing that they'd never seen before. It made parks they'd never seen before. It developed -- it developed the whole east Tennessee segment.

Teasley, Jane

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[4:11:11]

Callan, B.: It also brought in people from many other regions of the --.

Teasley, J.: That also broadened their perspective. It sure did, you're right.

Callan, B.: Was there ever any tensions? I've been throwing out random questions, not thinking about it. Was there ever any tension that occurred between Yankees or Northerners, or people that came from outside and --?

Teasley, J.: There sure was! Let me tell you about that. I couldn't -- I could understand them. Sometimes I had to ask 'em to repeat, but most of the time, I could understand them, okay? But they couldn't understand anything I said. And I said, "You know, I used to think that Northerners were smarter than Southerners, but now I know better 'cause I understand everything you say and you don't understand anything I say." And you know, they never did misunderstand me again. [laughing] I was born up North. Maybe that's why I could understand them. Who knows? But I only lived up there a year.

[4:12:14]

Callan, B.: Let's see. And this is a good one for you. If you were writing a story about Oak Ridge and K-25, what topics would you cover? Key topics.

Teasley, J.: Key topics? Well, I would -- I would cover -- I would cover how hidden the place was, how secure the place was --.

Callan, B.: Hold on. We've got another truck or jet or tremendous (indiscernible) roll.

Teasley, J.: It's a jet.

Callan, B.: Okay. I'm going to start you over again.

Teasley, J.: Okay. If I were doing it, I would write how hidden the place was; how -- how big the place was when it first started, the size of K-25; I would talk about the people they brought; and what -- what -- what -- how accomplished those people were because those people they brought down were terrific! The ones they brought. They'd -- see -- they'd been working at Columbia University for a long -- a

good piece. I don't know how long. But the people they brought down were great people to work with.

[4:13:56]

Callan, B.:

Is there anything else that you could think of that you would like to discuss or say or expand upon before we wrap up the interview because that's all my questions today.

Teasley, J.:

I think I've done it all.

Callan, B.:

[laughing] Okay. And I thank you very much for this interview. It's been absolutely wonderful! Before I let you go, we need to figure out what the names were of those African-American folks.

[End of interview]