

**ELIZABETH SCOTT**  
**Scott's Hot Tamales**  
**Metcalf, MS**

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Date: June 30, 2005  
Location: Scott's Home - Metcalf, MS  
Interviewer: Amy Evans  
Length: 30 minutes, 13 seconds  
Project: MS Delta Hot Tamale Trail

*NOTE: Various sounds occur throughout this interview. Rather than mention them individually and interrupt the flow of the conversation, they are noted here: seven female members of Mrs. Scott's family can be heard making tamales (rolling, using the grinder, scraping trays, et cetera), and the window air conditioning unit can be heard in the background. When the occurring sounds are an obvious interruption to the interview, they are noted in the transcript.*

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**[Begin Elizabeth Scott]**

0:00:00.0

**Amy Evans:** This is Amy Evans on Thursday, June thirtieth, 2005 and I'm in Metcalf, Mississippi, with Elizabeth Scott at her home. And it's a tamale-making day here [the Scott family makes tamales in a special kitchen adjacent to Mrs. Scott's residence]. And they have the Scott's Tamale Stand in Greenville. Mrs. Scott would you mind saying your name, and also if you don't mind sharing your birth date for the record, so we can have it?

0:00:35.5

**Elizabeth Scott:** Elizabeth W. Scott; my birthday is July 11, 1923.

0:00:44.2

**AE:** You have a birthday coming up.

0:00:45.7

**ES:** Right, next month.

0:00:45.8

**AE:** All right. Happy almost-birthday.

0:00:48.8

**ES:** The eleventh of next month, I'll be eighty-two years old.

0:00:52.5

**AE:** Well happy birthday to you. Are you from the Delta originally?

0:00:55.6

**ES:** Yeah, I was born in Benoit, Mississippi.

0:00:59.9

**AE:** Okay, just up the road a little bit?

0:01:00.2

**ES:** Beg your pardon?

0:01:02.5

**AE:** That's just up the road a little bit, correct?

0:01:02.9

**ES:** Yes, it's up the road. And I moved here in 1950 in Metcalf. And I've been here ever since. We started the business--my husband got the recipe in Texas and we started. But the recipe we had we just had to continue adding ingredients until we got it where it is now today.

0:01:27.9

**AE:** Yeah, changing it and making it your own.

0:01:30.0

**ES:** Change and make it today's. So we've been in business ever since we moved here--and started the business in Greenville, and we've been there ever since. And we make them here in Metcalf.

0:01:42.9

**AE:** Did your husband get the recipe after y'all had already been married?

0:01:47.5

**ES:** Yeah, we married in [nineteen] forty-one. He got the recipe in [nineteen] forty-five.

0:01:51.5

**AE:** And was he in the--what military service was he in?

0:01:53.8

**ES:** In the Army.

0:01:55.1

**AE:** And he was stationed in San Antonio, is that right?

0:01:57.4

**ES:** Yeah. Well, he was stationed in San Antonio when he got the recipe, but he was moving around in different areas. He went overseas and everything.

0:02:05.5

**AE:** So what made him even want a tamale recipe, do you remember?

0:02:08.7

**ES:** Because I loved them and bought--he had to buy so many. And I was pregnant, so he said it would be best to make them than continue to buy them. So that's where we started off making hot tamales then.

0:02:23.5

**AE:** And so had you grown up eating hot tamales in Benoit?

0:02:26.3

**ES:** No, I started eating hot tamales after I got married in [nineteen] forty-one. And then when he got out of the service in [nineteen] forty-five, and we started with the recipe and started making them.

0:02:39.2

**AE:** So the first hot tamale you had was in Texas then?

0:02:42.8

**ES:** Yeah.

0:02:43.0

**AE:** Really?

0:02:43.5

**ES:** Uh-hmm.

0:02:45.7

**AE:** So had--did you--were you aware of hot tamales in the Delta at all before?

0:02:49.9

**ES:** Yeah, I knew about the hot tamales because there was a couple of people in Greenville that used to sell them and we used to go to the movie in Greenville and get the hot tamales. I would eat hot tamales during the movie, and we'd get hot tamales to take home.

0:03:03.6

**AE:** Do you remember where in Greenville those stands were back in that time?

0:03:08.6

**ES:** Well, at that time it was on North Street in Greenville.

0:03:15.8

**AE:** Would you happen to remember the names of the places at all?

0:03:18.9

**ES:** No, because it was a man named Charlie, but all--all the people what I knew them has done passed on.



0:03:27.7

**AE:** Okay. And were they all African Americans who served them back then?

0:03:30.9

**ES:** Yeah, they was African Americans.

0:03:33.3

**AE:** And you--do you remember how much they cost back then?

0:03:36.4

**ES:** Well, back then they wasn't but twenty-cents a dozen. [*Laughs*] So they--you know they improved a lot since then. But that's the way it was back then; it was back in the [nineteen] forties.

0:03:48.1

**AE:** So were the tamales that you had in Texas--how were they different, if at all?

0:03:51.5

**ES:** Well in Texas they was--they was okay, but you didn't see no meat in them. You just seen the meal and a red streak down the center of them. So but they--the flavor was good. But they wasn't like the--the ones we make now.

0:04:06.6

**AE:** Were they pork tamales out there?

0:04:11.1

**ES:** Well I don't know what kind--they didn't have no meat them; it was just a red streak down this--. [*Laughs*] But it didn't look like none--taste like no meat, so I don't know. I guess they just seasoned some kind of sauce in it.

0:04:24.0

**AE:** So what did your husband have to do to get his hands on a recipe?

0:04:28.4

**ES:** Well he bought it from a man, but I didn't know what his name was 'cause I had done come back home during the time he got the recipe. And so he brought it, and we sit down and tried it out, and then we continued to add ingredients and fixing it up. So it didn't taste like the Mexican hot tamales.

0:04:50.8

**AE:** Is the man that he bought the recipe from--was he Mexican?

0:04:53.7

**ES:** Yeah, he was a Mexican.

0:04:55.2

**AE:** Okay; do you have any idea how much he paid for the recipe, or would you be willing to share?

0:04:57.7

**ES:** No, I don't because I wasn't--you know I didn't ask all those questions. I was just happy to get the recipe to start to making the hot tamales.

0:05:07.2

**AE:** So when you--you got the recipe and--and do you remember the first time that you tried to cook them?

0:05:11.0

**ES:** The first time we tried to make them it was taking us from twelve o'clock that day until four o'clock the next morning, and we didn't make a dozen. [*Laughs*]

0:05:23.4

**AE:** No? [*Laughs*]

[*Laughter throughout room*]

0:05:27.0

**ES:** So it's taken us a long time, but we worked with it and worked with it until we got the--like we wanted it.

0:05:34.3

**AE:** And you're--?

0:05:35.6

**ES:** And so now the children has continued it on. I done retired from it.

0:05:39.3

**AE:** Well when you--when you perfected the recipe and learned how to make them and got all that straight, and you were making them to satisfy your craving that you were talking about, then was it soon after that you decided that it could be a business?

0:05:51.3

**ES:** Yeah. Yeah, when he was--he started to sell them in Benoit [Mississippi] and Scott [Mississippi]. And Lamont [Mississippi]--around in the area in Bolivar County.

0:06:02.4

**AE:** Uh-hmm. And what is your husband's name?

0:06:02.7

**ES:** Aaron Scott.

0:06:04.5

**AE:** Aaron Scott. And so would he have like a--a truck that he would take around to all these places and just set on--?

0:06:12.1

**ES:** Well, he had a station wagon and a cart, like that over there [points to an old wooden push-cat in the corner of the room]. That's one of the first carts; we're still using it.

0:06:20.9

**AE:** Oh, okay. Really?

0:06:22.3

**ES:** Uh-hmm. And so after then, he had carts with--with wheels on it. And then we decided to buy a place--a stand; so that's where we at now--with a stand. But we moved from Nelson Street to Martin Luther King Drive.

0:06:39.3

**AE:** Okay. How long ago did you move?

0:06:42.0

**ES:** Well it--I don't recall how long it's been since--but it--I think we've been--how long we've been over--? [Asks her daughters, who are in the room with us, making tamales.]

**Background:** About six years or seven.

0:06:57.0

**AE:** Six years they're saying, yeah.

0:06:59.9

**ES:** Well, six years at that place, but before then we was on Nelson Street.

0:07:04.8

**AE:** Was the actual stand the same and you just moved it, or did you build a new one?

0:07:08.1

**ES:** Just moved it to another location.

0:07:11.1

**AE:** Uh-hmm. And what--what has it been like selling hot tamales in *this* town specifically because there are an awful lot of hot tamales in Greenville?

0:07:19.9

**ES:** Yeah, I know. But I guess everybody got a different taste. The ones that like ours buy ours and the ones that like the others buy the others, so it's no different, you know.

0:07:31.4

**AE:** When you and your husband had the stand, were y'all there every night or just on weekends or how did that work?

0:07:37.8

**ES:** Well at that time it was seven days a week we was up there. But since it's been there they decided to change the hours, and they still--be seven days a week.



0:07:55.4

**AE:** And when you and your husband came back here and had the stand, was that all y'all were doing or was that just supplementing other income?

0:08:02.2

**ES:** No, he was a carpenter. He worked for Greenville Lumber Company. And myself and the children carried the business on and all, until he got of [retirement] age, and then he decided to stop and help. So he helped a while until he passed.

0:08:16.7

**AE:** And what year did he pass?

0:08:19.2

**ES:** In nineteen--oooh.

**Background:** Eight-seven.

**ES:** Eighty-seven.

0:08:23.6

**AE:** Eighty-seven, okay. And how many children do you have--Loretta [who is sitting next to the interviewer, rolling tamales] and who else?

0:08:28.9

**ES:** Well, I have nine children.

0:08:33.2

**AE:** Okay.

0:08:35.2

**ES:** And all of them in--working in the business but three.

0:08:40.3

**AE:** Three of them are working in the tamale business?

0:08:43.1

**ES:** All of them--the six is working in the business, and the other three is not.

0:08:47.1

**AE:** Okay, I see--I see. So they just grew up knowing everything about hot tamales?

0:08:52.2

**ES:** Grew up with--with making hot tamales. They would go to school. When they'd come from school, I'd have the ingredients, and they'd pitch in and help me finish them.

0:09:00.6

**AE:** Have you always had a lot of people helping you or has this--because the family's grown--?

0:09:05.6

**ES:** My family and my daughter-in-law and the children—well, they all--the family, the children. Well, I got a couple granddaughters that help.

0:09:14.5

**AE:** Yeah?

0:09:16.5

**ES:** Uh-hmm.

0:09:17.2

**AE:** We have--we had seven people in here a minute ago helping. And everybody has their job.

0:09:23.2

**ES:** Uh-hmm, well my oldest son helps.

0:09:26.4

**AE:** Yeah? Can you talk a little bit about maybe--has the--the process of making them changed over the years for you personally? Like before you were doing everything or certain things and now everybody is kind of--?

0:09:42.4

**ES:** Well, since they all got grown and grown up they--they works, and I stay in the front [in the part of the house where she lives]. They stay back here carrying the work on; they sells them and everything.

0:09:54.0

**AE:** When did you retire from it?

0:09:56.8

**ES:** About four years ago.

0:09:58.4

**AE:** Do you miss it at all?

0:10:00.6

**ES:** No, I don't miss it. **[Laughs]** No, I don't miss it.

0:10:06.8

**AE:** **[Laughs]** You're still around it all the time.

0:10:07.2

**ES:** Yeah, I'm still around it, and I fix them lunch and things and--while they work.

0:10:13.6

**AE:** What do you fix for lunch, if I may ask. Or what do you like to cook?

0:10:17.4

**ES:** Vegetables and meat--chicken, peas, beans--all of that. Different greens. Just, you know, regular dinner sometimes.

0:10:30.1

**AE:** Do you still like eating tamales?

0:10:32.4

**ES:** Well I start back to eating them every once in a while, but I got—after everything I found out I'm a diabetic, and I can't have all those spices and things. But I eat some every once in a while. But while I was eating them, I got my full of them. **[Laughs]**

0:10:49.7

**AE:** Yeah, I believe it. [*Laughs*] Have you tasted around any other places in Greenville or any other places in the Delta that have hot tamales?

0:10:55.7

**ES:** No, I haven't.

0:10:56.8

**AE:** No?

0:10:58.1

**ES:** Um-umm.

0:10:57.4

**AE:** Just ate your own all these years, huh?

0:11:00.0

**ES:** Uh-hmm, because I mostly be, you know, at home all the time. I wouldn't be out around the other places.

0:11:08.5

**AE:** Well, a lot of--the history that--that is kind of the general consensus of how hot tamales got to the Delta, I'm finding out is not really always the case. Because a lot of people talk about some migrant labor came in--in the [nineteen] twenties and 'thirties for a big cotton harvest, and a lot of Mexican laborers came in and brought tamale recipes with them then. And then the African American community in the Delta has maintained that tamale making tradition, but here--.

0:11:36.9

**ES:** They all taste different.

0:11:38.0

**AE:** They're all different, and I'm finding out that people have gotten recipes from California and Arkansas and all over, so it's a lot more varied than I ever imagined. And I understand that there's--that you make these with beef brisket.

0:11:54.9



**ES:** Right, beef brisket.

0:11:57.7

**AE:** Has it always been?

0:11:58.4

**ES:** And we use corn shucks.

0:12:00.5

**AE:** Yes. And it's a very labor-intensive process with the corn shucks with somebody trimming them and cleaning them over there and--?

0:12:08.4

**ES:** Right. And some washing them and that's the way we always did.

0:12:13.4

**AE:** Uh-hmm. Can I ask where you get your corn shucks?

0:12:17.0

**ES:** Get some from Texas and some from Mississippi, the low part of Mississippi.

0:12:26.0

**AE:** And do you have people who put in orders--special orders for really--?

0:12:34.3

**ES:** Yeah, we have--they had quite a few. Practically every day, you know, somebody will order for takeout.

0:12:42.9

**AE:** Yeah. So they can call in and get a big order rather than just come to the stand?

0:12:47.6

**ES:** Yeah. Yeah, well, some come pick it up, and then some they deliver, and that's the way it goes. It's enough to keep them busy.

0:12:57.8

**AE:** I see. [*Laughs*] And how much do you charge for a dozen tamales today?

0:13:02.8

**ES:** Six dollars.

0:13:07.0

**AE:** That still seems awful cheap. For all this labor.

0:13:08.7

**ES:** Yeah, it is. Yeah, they [are] cheap for all the work you put in. But see, people don't know how much work you put in.

0:13:15.1

**AE:** I know it.

0:13:16.2

**ES:** And they think they [her children] don't work or do nothing. Everybody says, "Oh you work?"

0:13:23.5

**AE:** Yeah.

0:13:23.1

**ES:** So it's a lot of work in it.

0:13:26.7

**AE:** And I understand that Wednesdays and Thursdays and sometimes Mondays, they--that there's tamale making going on?

0:13:32.2

**ES:** They—yeah. They be working. But so far it's nice. Since we got the recipe and started in business we've got some trophies and different things for, you know--for the hot tamales and things--competition. So it's real nice. We got the People's Choice Award.

0:13:52.7

**AE:** In Greenville?

0:13:52.7

**ES:** In Greenville. [At the World Championship Hot Tamale Contest, which happens every summer.]

0:13:54.0

**AE:** Wow, wonderful.

0:13:54.9

**ES:** Uh-hm.

0:13:55.4

**AE:** And then so you've entered in competitions and stuff in the area?

0:13:59.2

**ES:** Yeah, yeah, in the area.

0:14:01.0

**AE:** Okay. And there's a tamale contest coming up next month in Greenville, I understand.

[World Championship Hot Tamale Contest]

0:14:05.4

**ES:** Right.

0:14:05.5

**AE:** Have you done that before?

0:14:07.5

**ES:** Uh-hm, yeah. That's the one we made the People's Choice Award on--the hot tamales.

0:14:13.2

**AE:** Okay, okay.

0:14:14.5

**ES:** Uh-hmm.

0:14:14.1

**AE:** Did you get some idea from the people what it is they like about the tamales?

0:14:19.1

**ES:** Well, everybody said they liked the hot tamales, and so I guess everybody voted that they was the best so--during that time, three times [we won].

0:14:31.0

**AE:** [*Laughs*] That's a real good record.

0:14:32.7

**ES:** They had trophies and things for it, you know--for the hot tamales.

0:14:38.8

**AE:** And do you hear about these folks who make turkey tamales and chicken tamales and all that?

0:14:43.2

**ES:** Yeah, we have made—since we've been making hot tamales, people request for chicken hot tamales. And when we first started to make them back in the fif--in the [nineteen] forties, it's some people required to make some deer hot tamales.

0:15:00.4

**AE:** Okay.

0:15:01.0

**ES:** So we've made--they have fixed them--whatever kind they wanted, that's what we would use to make them--make them for them--for them, but we didn't make them, you know, to sell to nobody else.

0:15:12.6

**AE:** Did you ever taste any of those as you made them?



0:15:15.1

**ES:** Yeah, they taste almost the same. It's just different meat in them.

0:15:19.7

**AE:** Yeah, it's all about the spice really, right?

0:15:22.4

**ES:** The spice--the spice, yeah.

0:15:25.1

**AE:** And when you--when you cook the tamales do you simmer them or steam them or--because I--everybody does them different. I wonder--?

0:15:31.4

**ES:** No, you just cook them so many hours, you know. You cook them so many hours and that's it.

0:15:40.7

**AE:** [*Laughs*]

0:15:41.5

**ES:** And put the juice on them, and they ready.

0:15:45.9

**AE:** Uh-hmm. Well did you ever--?

0:15:48.1

**ES:** But the hardest job is making them. [*Laughs*]

0:15:49.2

**AE:** Oh, yeah. No, I--I definitely know that. I'm really admiring your process here. How long have you had a machine--this extruder machine?

0:16:01.5

**ES:** Well we got the machine in [nineteen] seventy and had one since then, but before then we used a spatula to spread the meal and a fork for the meat. That's the way we had to put the meal-- spread the meal. And then someone would put the meat on them, and then they rolled them. So that's the way we started off making them. So after then we got the machine.

0:16:25.6

**AE:** Did you ever think you'd be making this many hot tamales?

0:16:27.6

**ES:** No, I didn't. When we first started, I didn't think, you know, it would continue on. So it's up to them to keep it going.

0:16:42.6

**AE:** Yeah. How many tamales--would you have any idea how many tamales you may have made and served over the years? [*Laughs*]

0:16:48.6

**ES:** No, I don't. We have made a many one of them! [*Laughs*] So I couldn't, you know, answer—tell you how many we've made.

0:16:55.8

**AE:** And does everybody in here know the recipe pretty intimately, or is it something that you and your daughters kind of hang on to?

0:17:05.3

**ES:** No, well they--they've got it pretty good.

0:17:08.9

**AE:** Yeah?

0:17:08.8

**ES:** Uh-hmm. When one be out the other one take over; it's always someone to take over when they be doing the meats. And they young, so. It all come out the same.

0:17:25.3

**AE:** Yeah?

0:17:24.3

**ES:** Uh-hm.

0:17:26.1

**AE:** So do you hope that these women here will keep making tamales for generations to come?

0:17:33.3

**ES:** Well it's left up with them, you know about that. Maybe they grandchildren will take it over. Right now the children got it but maybe after they stop maybe the grandchildren will keep it going on.

0:17:49.1

**AE:** Do you--

0:17:51.0

**ES:** Hopefully. [*Laughs*]

0:17:51.6

**AE:** Go ahead.

0:17:53.8

**ES:** Because see, most of the young children now don't want to do hard work like older ones did.

0:18:01.9

**AE:** Yeah. And it is really labor intensive. Well do you have any ideas about hot tamales in the Delta? Just how long they've been around or where they came from or any of that?

0:18:15.3

**ES:** No. I--I don't know because back in the--in the [nineteen] forties, that's when I found out about the hot tamales and decided to come into Greenville. They ate them in Greenville, but they didn't have any where I was located at. And so I don't know how long they had been making them.

0:18:48.1

**AE:** Have you ever heard of people frying hot tamales?

0:18:50.7

**ES:** Yeah, they fry some every once in a while.

0:18:54.0

**AE:** Oh, yeah, these?

0:18:55.3

**ES:** Yes, they fry them.

0:18:55.2

**AE:** Okay. For fun or do y'all ever sell them like that?

0:18:57.8

**ES:** Hmm?

0:18:59.9

**AE:** Do they fry them just to eat them, or do y'all sell them like that, too?

0:19:01.4

**ES:** No, just to eat them. They [are] trying them out.

0:19:05.6

**AE:** Yeah?

0:19:06.0

**ES:** Uh-hmm, they be trying out different things. They make hot tamale casserole, dishes and--.

0:19:13.3

**AE:** Has anybody ever offered to buy your recipe or to open another Scott's Tamale Stand or anything?

0:19:20.5

**ES:** Well it's quite a few people who bought recipes, but they did nothing with it. After they found out it was hard work, they dropped it.



0:19:28.4

**AE:** Oh, really. So you've sold the recipe before to people?

0:19:30.6

**ES:** Yeah.

0:19:32.7

**AE:** And they find out what it takes [to make them]! [*Laughs*]

0:19:34.2

**ES:** [*Laughs*] They find out what it takes to make them, and they don't--they did nothing with it.

0:19:40.3

**AE:** Yeah, well this is an impressive operation you have here, definitely. And it's--it's amazing that there's that much history in this one room of hot tamale making. It's really something special.

0:19:55.7

**ES:** Yeah. [*Laughs*]

0:19:59.4

**AE:** Well I don't think I have any more questions for you, unless you can think of something I didn't ask or something you'd like to add?

0:20:06.1

**ES:** No, I don't have anything else I know of.

0:20:12.1

**AE:** Okay, then.

0:20:12.8

**ES:** But maybe one day the business will get--be larger than it is now.

0:20:16.9

**AE:** Yeah. You'd like to see that happen?

0:20:18.4

**ES:** Yeah, I'd like to see that happen.

0:20:21.3

**AE:** Like a big manufacturing operation and you can wholesale to stores and stuff?

0:20:23.2

**ES:** No, just a larger place--a larger place than this.

0:20:26.2

**AE:** To make them in?

0:20:27.7

**ES:** Uh-hmm.

0:20:28.8

**AE:** Okay. What--is there something that you need that you don't have here that you--that would make it easier?

0:20:32.7

**ES:** No, just more room.

0:20:37.2

**AE:** Yeah.

0:20:39.5

**ES:** Uh-hmm.

0:20:42.1

**AE:** All right. Well it's been lovely visiting with you. Thank you so much.

0:20:44.5

**ES:** Uh-hm, nice talking with you.

\*\*\*\*\*

0:20:50.4

**AE:** This is Amy Evans and I'm back with Mrs. Elizabeth Scott, and I was just enjoying some hot tamales that they all made here, and we got to talking about the flood of [nineteen] twenty-seven. And Mrs. Scott, can you tell me how old you were then and what you remember from it?

0:21:08.1

**ES:** Well, at the time, my mother was living at Glen Allen [Mississippi]. And I was in Benoit [Mississippi] but I was visiting her, and she was cooking for a white man with a two-story house. And in [nineteen] twenty-seven when the levee broke, I was there with them. And he had all the people in the house--what was in the water; they would bring them out the water and that was on Lake Washington. And that was the onliest part between the railroad and Lake Washington was from under water. And that's where all the people lived in his jammed house and jammed to storage the people until after the Flood. And so I was in there with him. And his children was in Memphis [Tennessee] and the flood caught them and caught me with them because I was living with my grandmother in Benoit. And that was on Lake Washington during the [nineteen] twenty-seven flood.

0:22:11.0

**AE:** So do you remember how long it took for everything to get back to normal?

0:22:14.1

**ES:** Well, I don't remember how--you know how every--when the water went down because I was small. I know that everybody was there, and when the water went down everybody went different directions. And it was a real experience. I can remember children was having whooping cough and things, and they didn't have no doctor and all those people. And it was an age-able lady; I think she was around sixty-seven or eighty years old, but she got some frogs and made a big pot of [*Laughs*] frog stew and put red pepper in it, and that's what she gave the children and the adults what had the whooping cough to cure them. And some of the people--one man say he wasn't going to let his children drink this off of the frog. So he lost two children. And then he brought the other four there to join in with the others and we all--I never did have the whooping cough because--

0:23:19.2

**AE:** So it worked?

0:23:20.4

**ES:** It worked.

0:23:21.4

**AE:** Huh.

0:23:23.1

**ES:** And that was an experience, you know. In '27 those doctors and all those people and the children and things was sick and had the whooping cough. And they cured them with toad--frogs. [*Laughs*]

[*Hard laughter throughout entire room*]

0:23:36.3

**AE:** [*Laughing*] Okay. [*Laughs*] I don't know--after laughing if I can ask you the next question I want to ask you. Do you remember being scared during that time?

0:23:57.9

**ES:** Yeah, I was scared because all the people that--and they had dogs and things out and it was a dog that got in behind--behind--the girl was older than her brother and her little sister, and the dog got in behind us. It was mad. And we runned up on the porch and got in the screen and the--

my dress got caught in the door and my mother--and the dog was trying to get in the screen at us, and my mother shot the dog and killed it. And when they had found the dog they say the dog was mad; he was foaming all at the mouth and everything. So that was the frightening something happened to me during the time of the Flood.

0:24:43.7

**AE:** Were there a lot of just loose animals running around and things that--that got lost?

0:24:47.2

**ES:** Well the railroad was out, and they was on the railroad track--the dogs and things was up in, you know, out the water.

0:24:57.1

**AE:** Uh-hmm. They went to high ground.

0:24:57.2

**ES:** Uh-hmm. And that was the onliest high spot it was. And so they had told us to stay in, but the girl was going to take us outside to play, and the mad dog got at us.



0:25:11.2

**AE:** And your momma shot it? [*Laughs*]

0:25:11.8

**ES:** And my mother killed it. [*Laughs*]

0:25:14.4

**AE:** Well, so after that, since that was such an--an incredible event when the Flood happened, did people talk about it for just years and years after that?

0:25:23.4

**ES:** Well they still talk about it. They have it in the paper, you know, about some things happened during the Flood and things. And--and in Greenville, all the people was on top of levee. In Greenville that's where they were at.

0:25:38.4

**AE:** Well, the levee broke just north of Greenville, right?

0:25:39.9

**ES:** Yeah, it did up there. It was up there at Scott's back on--on the levee up there.

0:25:46.2

**AE:** Did you know anybody who stayed down close to where it broke at that time?

0:25:51.6

**ES:** No, I didn't because I was little and--and we lived in Benoit during that time. I wasn't at Scott; later on we moved to Scott's so--and that's why I grew up at Scott's.

0:26:05.2

**AE:** So how did the whole town of Benoit fair after the--the flood? Was there a lot of loss of buildings and businesses and things up that way?

0:26:12.8

**ES:** No, it wasn't--the people just cleaned the houses--mud and things out of their house and moved back in it, you know.

0:26:21.5

**AE:** Uh-hmm.

0:26:22.4

**ES:** So it wasn't too much around.

0:26:26.5

**AE:** Did you teach your children about the Flood when they were coming up and tell them that you came through it?

0:26:32.3

**ES:** Yeah, I would tell them--I would tell them about, you know, the Flood how it was and things and all that. And then they had--would have it in the history, you know, in school. So. And every--practically every year they have something in the newspaper about the 1927 Flood.

0:26:54.4

**AE:** Uh-hmm, and there was a book--excuse me--a big book that was written not that long ago on the Flood that everybody talks about. Yeah. *Rising Tide* [John M. Barry, author].

0:27:03.2

**ES:** Uh-hmm, but it was some water. The trees and things looked like little bushes, the top of them. The tall trees like cypress trees and all that. The water was just that deep.

0:27:19.0

**AE:** Uh-hmm. Did you--before the flood, do you remember going down to the river and fishing with anybody or going--?

0:27:24.4

**ES:** No, I never did go down fishing with nobody.

0:27:31.1

**AE:** Did you--I mean, I know you were young but before the Flood, do you have a recollection of what the river meant to you?

0:27:38.7

**ES:** No, at that time I hadn't seen the river. I hadn't been close to it because the river was miles from where we was.

0:27:49.7

**AE:** But did you grow up being aware of it being a big thoroughfare and powerful force of Mother Nature--Nature and all that?

0:27:57.6

**ES:** Yeah, uh-hmm. But actually, I grew up on Delta & Pine Land Company at Scott's [Scott, Mississippi].

0:28:05.5

**AE:** Uh-hm, okay.

0:28:09.3

**ES:** That was a big experience. They still experiencing different things--selling seeds and [inaudible] and everything up there. Yeah, so that's where I grew up at.

0:28:22.2

**AE:** Did you always want to stay in the Delta when your--when you and your husband moved back here from Texas?

0:28:25.7

**ES:** No, we hadn't planned on living here but my grandmother who had raised me was sick and so she would get better and then she'd get it, so he say he didn't want to leave from around her until after. So after she passed, we bought and moved here. And that was in 1950; so we've been here ever since.

0:28:50.7

**AE:** At the same location?

0:28:52.0

**ES:** At the same--the same house.

0:28:53.4

**AE:** Really?

0:28:54.1

**ES:** Since 1950.

0:28:56.9

**AE:** My goodness.

0:28:56.7

**ES:** [*Laughs*] It's a pretty old house.

0:28:57.2

**AE:** If these walls could talk, huh? [*Laughs. Laughter throughout room*] Well another tamale question comes to mind, talking about Greenville. Do you--surely you're familiar with Doe's Eat Place restaurant on Nelson Street?

0:29:14.2

**ES:** Uh-um.

0:29:13.3

**AE:** Are you?

0:29:14.1

**ES:** No, I don't have any familiar with it. Well, I didn't too much--the children would always--I would transfer the hot tamales back and forth to the stand. But just being up there, I never stayed up there--be around.

0:29:28.7

**AE:** Because that's an Italian family that has had that place since the [nineteen] forties, and they make hot tamales there.

0:29:34.3

**ES:** Who?

0:29:36.8

**AE:** The Signa family at Doe's.

0:29:38.6



**ES:** Oh, Doe's?

0:29:39.6

**AE:** Uh-hmm.

0:29:40.7

**ES:** Yeah, Doe's been there for years, you know. And after my mother moved to Greenville, she moved on the street where he makes the hot tamales [Nelson Street]. It was--she was in the block where he--his place is at.

0:29:55.9

**AE:** Really?

0:29:55.5

**ES:** Uh-hmm.

0:29:55.9

**AE:** Have you ever had one of their hot tamales?

0:29:57.8

**ES:** No, I have never had any of them.

0:30:01.9

**AE:** I think yours are better, between you and me.

0:30:04.8

**ES:** That's what everybody says. *[Laughs]*

0:30:09.1

**AE:** *[Laughs]* All right, then. Well that's a good note to end on. Thank you, ma'am, again.

0:30:10.4

**ES:** Uh-hmm. You're welcome. *[Laughs]*

0:30:13.9

Interview of: Elizabeth Scott  
Interviewer: Amy Evans  
Interview Date: June 30, 2005

September 9, 2005

**[End Elizabeth Scott]**