

**CLYDE THOMPSON**

**Interview 10c**

**October 25 & 26, 1984, Diboll, Texas**

**Megan Lambert, Interviewer (Also present: Ossie Thompson)**

**ABSTRACT:** Longtime Temple employee and Diboll mayor Clyde Thompson (1899-1987), along with his wife, Ossie, discuss a wide range of issues and people he encountered during his long career. Issues mentioned include company housing, labor, the Great Depression, ethnic groups, racial segregation, forest management, logging camps, reforestation, insurance, and politics. He also mentions T.L.L. Temple, Arthur Temple Jr., Arthur Temple, Sr., Buddy Temple, Lillian Knox, and Dave Kenley.

**Megan Lambert:** October 26, 1984. Being interviewed at the T.L.L. Temple Memorial Library by Megan Lambert. Good, well, I believe we're all set. I have listened to the tape, the tape that you gave us earlier, and there's a great deal on it but I know that you've got a great deal else in your memory that you might be able to share with us. Our intention is to write a...

**Ossie Thompson:** Let me ask ya. Uh, how, how long would it take to play that, so we know what we have said?

**ML:** It's a half an hour on each side.

**Clyde Thompson:** She... she don't mean that; she means the other tape. Don't she?

**ML:** Oh, you want to play the other tape.

**OT:** I was thinking it probably would help.

**ML:** Would y'all like to do that?

**CT:** ...Yea...

**OT:** ...It's been such a long...(speaking at the same time as Clyde)

**Tape Stops**

**ML:** Let's give it a try and see how you sound. Would you like to say your name and your birth date, and we'll just use that for a test?

**CT:** Tell me, tell me when you're ready?

**ML:** Ready.

**CT:** My name is Clyde Thompson. I was born November the 13<sup>th</sup>, 1899.

**ML:** Now, you start right off... the business about when you first came to Diboll.

**CT:** I came to Diboll on October the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1916. (long pause) Uh, it'd be better if you'd ask me questions, I believe.

**ML:** Oh, I'd be glad to. Can you tell me what your earliest memory of Diboll is?

**CT:** I was – simply a sawmill and they, only thing they manufactured was, uh, boards, which is one-inch lumber in dimension. And, uh, which is two-inch and, uh, a few timbers. And fence lath. The rest, uh, the rest of the (word?) logs was burned to make steam to run the mills. It's quite different from, uh, the big operation (pause) now, 'course, where nothing is wasted.

**ML:** How many people would you say lived in Diboll at that time? That would have been in 1915?

**CT:** In 1916. (thinking) Be my guess, (pause) 250.

**ML:** 250. And did almost all of those people work for Temple?

**CT:** Yes. That was the only payroll there; was Temple at that time.

**ML:** Was it still called the Southern Pine Lumber Company at that time?

**CT:** Yes, ma'am, t'was.

**ML:** How long did it continue being called that?

**CT:** (pause) I don't remember the 'xact year, of course, but, as I recall, it was after they merged with the Temple Lumber Company at Pineland and Hemphill. But I think it was after Mr. Arthur Temple Sr., Jr., I mean, came down here; which was somewhere around 1950.

**ML:** Well, in 1916, when you first came here, did you come to Diboll for the purpose of working here?

**CT:** Yes, I did. Uh, I had finished high school at Huntington and a business course; took what they called stenographic work, and, uh, a Mr. Welch here, whose wife was a third cousin, got the job for me. And I came down here. And, uh, that's what I did, was stenographic work.

**ML:** How did you hear about the job?

**CT:** Mr. Welch called me. He...he knew that I had, uh, just finished a business course and, uh, he knew I just had a small, two small jobs, in Huntington. He got the job for me.

**ML:** I had heard that one of the original offices of the Southern Pine Lumber Company was in Texarkana. Is that true?

**CT:** Yes, ma'am. That was the general office in the sales office. Uh, we sent everything up there. Hence, all the invoices was figured here and then sent to Texarkana, and they refigured 'em and typed 'em and sent 'em out. This was strictly just the mill office.

**ML:** Why was, why was it located in Texarkana?

**CT:** I've always been told, uh, that Temple, Mr. Temple, I mean Mr. T.L.L. Temple, when I say that, did it because of the convenience of getting mail in an' out. There were just... Diboll, then, just had the one railroad, and the mail was pretty slow getting in and out.

**ML:** I see. Well, that sounds sensible. How long, uh, was that office maintained before they moved it, moved the office down in Texas.

**CT:** As well as I remember, it was about 1950.

**ML:** '50 I see. So it was after the present Mr. Arthur Temple took over? And he was...

**CT:** ...That's right.

**ML:** I'm very interested in the kinds of decisions that Mr. Arthur Temple made that seemed to have had such a successful result for the company. Would you like to comment on that at all?

**CT:** Well, it, he's, has just changed the whole complex of everything. It's not in no comparison between the operation now and what it was when he became (pause) the head of it or general manager down here. His father, who succeeded his grandfather as president, was not, um, given to expand. Uh, he was, just, stayed status quo. Uh, Mr. Arthur Sr., Jr. was entirely different. He expanded the operations to what it is today.

**ML:** Did he mostly expand through finding new markets, or did he, uh, change the management? What was his main contribution?

**CT:** Adding oil manufacturing facilities like the fiber board plant is an illustration and, uh, and that was the big thing. And, then he acquired other plants and different plants like gypsum plants and things like that. He just expanded. Uh, just greatly. There's no comparison to what it was after he came, uh, in authority, than it was before.

**ML:** I see. Is he the one who is also responsible for seeing to it that all products of the trees were used? That nothing was wasted?

**CT:** That's right.

**ML:** He kinda made a unified manufacturing process out of it.

**CT:** Yes, ma'am!

**ML:** Uh, I suppose he employed scientists, many chemists and so forth to, uh, tell him what needed to be done?

**CT:** Well, he had foresters and, yea, he did. He, he had, of course, advice from different people that he hired.

**ML:** Well, he sure seems to have done a good job! (pause) Uh, I'm also interested in why there may have been no history written earlier of, of Diboll? Seems like the people I've met are very history-oriented. Do you have any ideas on that?

**CT:** No-o, I, I really don't. There's been talk of doing it several times, but, uh, it just never did materialize.

**ML:** Well, I have a couple of just real picky, little, technical details to ask you. Uh, I think I have an idea why the logs were floatede in ponds before they were used, but would you care to tell me about that whole floating process?

**CT:** Yep, there was two reasons. First reason is a place to store the logs. They had two ponds and, uh, that was the first reason. The second reason was to preserve the logs.

**ML:** So, pine has, uh, the characteristic that if you store it in water, that preserves it better than...

**CT:** ...That's right...

**ML:** ...On land...

**CT:** ...Keeps moisture.

**ML:** I've noticed that myself. We, we dug out an old spring at our place down in Woodville, and there was a plank of pine that had been buried in that spring, for about thirty years; and it looked like it'd been cut, the tree yesterday. Really wonderful! Uh, I also heard that someone in Diboll had made a film of mules loading logs like the way you described. Do you know about this film?

**CT:** Uh, the only ones that I know of was ones that Shirley Daniel made?

**ML:** Shirley Daniel. How would I get in touch with her?

**CT:** I've got, uh, I imagine, about four hundred sheets like you have here that I'll be glad to – I've got 'em out – uh, the reason Mr. Arthur sent 'em to me to put, on the back

of 'em the names of the ones that's in the pictures. And I've put all that I, uh, knew, and, uh, Kenneth Nelson put all he knew; and, now, it's in the sales department, and they're putting 'em in, and I have one or two others I'm going to circulate 'em to. We're trying to get every one of them identified.

**ML:** That's wonderful! I'm so glad to know about that! Possibly, um, those photographs might, uh, be used as part of our historical research.

**CT:** No question about that. That sure will be.

**ML:** Yes, that's wonderful. (pause) Tell me, now, a little bit more about, uh, Mr. David Kenley, the buyer for the land. I've interviewed Mrs. Sidney Kenley and heard a little bit about their lives from her; but I'd appreciate hearing your point of view as department manager?

**CT:** Uh, Mr. Kenley was, carried the title of just civil engineer, but he had charge of the lands and the timber land department; and purchasing of – uh- timber. And he's responsible for buying all the timber way up in Cherokee and Houston counties. And, uh, I recall that he used to bring me, uh, memorandums for me to prepare deeds for people that he purchased land (for?). And he would take it back and they would sign the deeds; and, on one occasion, he didn't – remember that he did not have any, any, paper; and he brought me the description the field notes on a white pine board. And another time, he brought it on a grocery sack!! I 'member those two instances. (pause) I also recall that when he would purchase somebody, they would 'course put it on the books; and then, when we get the deeds and all, they would – uh,uh – put it into the records and so forth. I recall that he had over a hundred at one time on the books where the purchase is made. He was one of the hardest working men I've ever known! The log train going to the, they had a camp over in San Augustine County and White City; and then, after he bought this timber up in, uh, Anderson and Houston Counties, and ran the railroad up there. And he would leave on that train going to White City around 3:00 in the morning; and he'd go, and he'd work all day and came back on that, on that train – get back in a second trip; and get back in here somewhere around 7 or 8:00. He'd phone me and I'd come to the office. We-he, he'd dictate about half the night (chuckle). And then he'd go back again the next day. He was one of the hardest working men I have ever known! And he is so--greatly responsible for the size of the company-timber wise!

**ML:** Do you know if he had any dealings with the Diboll family, who sold the original...

**CT:** ...No...

**ML:** ...Land?

**CT:** I'm sure he did not.

**ML:** That was too early, probably.

**CT:** Well, that's right. That was all Mr. T.L.L. Temple and, uh, I know that Mr. Kenley may have met some of the Dibolls, as I have. But I don't think he ever had any. Well, I know he didn't, because, as I understood it, Mr. T.L.L. Temple purchased the entire holdings off the Diboll family here.

**ML:** I see. And he purchased it himself?

**CT:** Yes.

**ML:** Uh-huh. So it wasn't through a buyer. Okay, I met the Dibolls last--, some of the Dibolls, last weekend at the Diboll Day and heard a little bit about that from them; but I forgot to ask them if they had known Mr. Kenley. Or if their family had known Mr. Kenley. Well I'm also interested in finding out if you know anything about a supposed strike that took place about 1915. We heard a story that there had been a strike. Did you hear about that?

**CT:** Never heard of it and I don't believe it happened. (stated emphatically)

**ML:** That's what everyone says after I try to find out. (thinking)

**CT:** Now, since I was here, a time or two, the unions have tried to organize, at least, I recall, at least twice. But in the vote, the, uh, people, uh, the employees voted to stay with the company-not to have a union. And one of the union high or union 'ficial, who is a very close friend of mine, told me that the reason they didn't pursue it anymore than they do; that they really couldn't do any more for the employees than the company was doing and they knew it!

**ML:** Well, they're sensible. Which union was this that was, uh, trying to organize?

**CT:** Well, I think it was after the AF&L and CIO merged but that I'm not certain; is one of those two, or the merger, after the merger. Now, I...I don't know. I can't remember that.

**ML:** About what year would that have been? - When they tried to organize.

**CT:** The first time was (pause), I'd say in the 20's; and the second time in the 30's.

**ML:** Were these people coming from outside of Diboll?...

**CT:** ...Yes!!...

**ML:** ...To organize? Did they come from other parts of the south or from other parts of the United States or what?

**CT:** I'm under the impression that they, that..., it was the people, it was, uh, some of the union officials that lived in Houston, 'though I'm not sure about that.

**ML:** Well, the impression that I get from talking to almost everybody so far is that there were really good relationships between the people in the town, the workers and the management of the company. Was that your impression from having been a manager?

**CT:** Oh, yes!! No questions about that!! Well, in fact, the unions, man, they tried hard! They uh, tried hard that last time especially. I remember they had things like watermelon feasts to get the people out and all like that, and talk to 'em. And, uh, they were voted down.

**ML:** Well, that says it all, doesn't it...

**CT:** ...Yea...

**ML:** ...Right there. Says it all. (pause) Uh, tell me about the company's policies, uh, toward what might be thought of as welfare; helping out the town, subsidizing the town and that kind of thing. Seems like they've done a lot for the town.

**CT:** Yes, they have. But I have never handled any of that and I'm...I'm not familiar with – in just a general way. I couldn't go in technicalities on it all. I never handled it.

**ML:** Well, (pause) I'll check with somebody else on that who would be a good person to talk to about that?

**CT:** Well, in the past, I would believe Rhoda Faye Chandler handled it. Uh, mostly, but I don't, to tell you the truth. I don't know who handles it now! But I'm under the impression it comes under Mr. Alan Miller's Department.

**ML:** Well, I'll talk to him about it.

**CT:** And, uh, Mrs. Dorsett, Linda Dorsett would be a good one to talk to. She's his, I guess, assistant.

**ML:** She's written lately and she seems like she, uh, knows what she's doing. Uh, I probably should talk to them – about the business policies, too. Like hiring and firing. Would that be the best thing?

**CT:** Well, uh, I would think Vernon Burkhalter, whose director of personnel would be the best in that respect.

**ML:** Would you like to comment just, uh, briefly on that since you were part of management yourself?

**CT:** Well, there's not really anything I could comment that'd be worthwhile. Uh, I always thought the company, 'course, treated all the employees just excellent and, uh, I really, the only ones I really had anything to do with hiring was my personal, my secretary after I was, after I got in a position where I was given a secretary.

**ML:** Let me ask you one more thing about the relationship between Temple to Diboll. You were, in a, in a position to see how the town was growing (pause) for many years. And, uh, Diboll has sometimes been contrasted with other timber towns that turned into ghost towns later. Uh, what, in your opinion, would be the fate of Diboll today if it had not had a close relationship with Temple Industries?

**CT:** Well, uh, that's hard to answer; but the reason that there will always be a Diboll is because it's got so much timber and land. Land and timber, you see. They, they grow more than they actually cut.

**ML:** Yes. Doesn't that policy go back to Mr. T.L.L. Temple? Reforestation policies?

**CT:** Well, I couldn't answer that; I think Mr., I...I would think Mr. D.C. Kenley was responsible for selling 'em on the idea; 'though I don't know that.

**OT:** Laura Bedwin, I.D. (words?), we lived in Huntsville and I.D. was mama's first cousin...

**ML:** ...When you say I.D.?

**OT:** ...I.D. Fairchild...

**ML:** ...Fairchild.

**OT:** He was on at, I.D. came and spent, uh, a night, two nights with us... he was in Huntsville here in connection with the (legislature?); and that's what he talked, what he'd been in Austin. And he said, well, we are really gonna fix Diboll up. And I.D. was then interested, uh, and I don't know, of course, I was just a little girl but, uh, I.D. ...as I've always understood, I.D. (was) the one that brought it before the, of course, I expected it, he talked to 'em here too; (Always) do.

**ML:** So the idea of reforestation...

**OT:** ...I think...

**ML:** ...Basically...

**OT:** I think that I.D. had a lot to do with it. He was in the, what'd ya call it – legislature?

**CT:** Yea, he was a representative, state representative.

**ML:** He was a state representative.

**OT:** He was a smart, brilliant man.

**ML:** (words?)

**CT:** See, he was, I guess, born in Burke, (wife also speaking here), and so he'd associated all his life, you know.

**ML:** Uh...

**OT:** The land he was born on had belonged to, uh, my great-grandfather, all this land. Way on up past there.

**ML:** What was your great-grandfather's name?

**OT:** What is it?

**ML:** What was your great-grandfather's name?

**OT:** Oh, (thinking), Oh

**CT:** ...Smith, Smith

**ML:** Smith

**CT:** Was it Hiram?

**OT:** Oh, oh, let's see. There's so many grandpa Smiths. Uh...

**ML:** It'll come to you.

**OT:** Huh?

**ML:** It'll come to you

**OT:** Ye-a he was a, my grandmother was the baby child of that family. He used to take her when she was a little pretty thing (three words?). That's why she died in childbirth. (pause) He was a father and a mother to his children.

**ML:** That's a hard job.

**OT:** He never married a second time, they tell me. Uh, she married.

**ML:** Well, let's talk a little bit about The Depression and the effects of The Depression on the town of Diboll and on Temple Industries itself. Can we talk about that a little bit?

**CT:** Well, of course, we felt The Depression here. But I've always thought that Diboll, uh, was second in, uh, in being hurt less than any place. Our logging camp at Fastrill in

Cherokee County was; they didn't really even know we had a depression! I've always considered that they got along better than anybody; and there was never any curtailment at all in working hours. And now at times, I remember, at least twice. Our wages were cut, and theirs would be too. But, uh, that, was just a temporary thing. But I think that Diboll and Fastrill got along better than any place I know of. Just comes down to the real truth of it, I, we didn't hardly realize The Depression. Just individually.

**ML:** That's an amazing thing!

**OT:** Uh, they didn't fire anybody; uh, they might cut 'em ten cents.

**ML:** I see.

**OT:** But, as far as I can remember, they never did allow anybody to get-

**ML:** Isn't that wonderful!

**OT:** Oh, yea!!

**ML:** Well, sure gotta thank them for that then.

**OT:** Well, uh, Mr. Walker, uh, he was here too during The Depression; he was, he had like a 20's- oh, yea, starting in the 30's.

**ML:** Well, was Fastrill the only camp they had at that time? Was White City still open at that time?

**CT:** No, n—o. White City was moved to Fastrill. And, uh, yes, that was the only one. Back in the earlier days, they had two camps at one time. For instance, they had one out here what we call Gilbert. Uh, it was out here on Angelina River in uh, Trinity County and, uh, the one in White City; but the White City one was moved to uh, Fastrill; and then they closed this one out, out here.

**ML:** Tell me a little bit about these boxcar towns that people lived in. I've seen some pictures where the boxcars are still on the rails and some pictures where they're not on the rails.

**CT:** Yea, they, in the logging camps, until they went to Fastrill, they built houses. But before then, in all the logging camps, they lived in boxcars. And, uh, when at one time, they sent me out to the camp out here at Camp Gilbert; and I lived in a boxcar. They couldn't get anybody to take that job. I went out to run that office 'til they could get somebody. And I lived in a boxcar. But everybody lived in boxcars. And, uh, the rails was of course, to move 'em. When they'd move, they'd hook the rails back up. They would let 'em stay on the rails, and, but, they would cut loose from 'em, you know, from a camp; and when they got ready to move 'em, they'd hook back up.

**ML:** I think that was such a wonderful idea! Whose idea was that?- in the first place.

**CT:** Well, I have no idea. It was there when I came. I don't know whether it was Mr. T.L.L. Temple or Mr. Gilbert's. I don't know.

**ML:** But you think it was an idea that was born here in East Texas rather than imported from someplace else?

**CT:** No, I don't know that! The other, the other companies may have done the same thing. (pause) Uh, I don't know that.

**OT:** Well, I heard, uh, instead of building a house, they'd moved the camp. (pause) Who was the one who (three words?)

**CT:** Mrs. Breazeale?

**OT:** Yea, Mrs. Breazeale said that her husband worked there, and, uh, she said that she's cooked a meal in a boxcar being moved down the highway!

**ML:** Uh!

**OT:** Uh, while it was being moved.

**ML:** Really!

**OT:** They just picked up, uh, set it up where they wanted to, 'stead of building houses. And then, it was cheaper.

**ML:** It was being moved by rail?

**OT:** No, moving down the highway.

**CT:** Oh, no, honey, by rail!

**OT:** Oh, was it?

**CT:** Yea.

**OT:** Oh, well. I just forgot. I never did see...

**CT:** You see, they had wheels just like regular boxcars.

**OT:** Well, see, they used to use boxcars, I mean, what are those... Uncle Isaiah was killed on?

**ML:** Handcars? Those things where they push 'em.

**OT:** Yea, uh, no, no. This was motor, you know, and they- I can't think of...

**CT:** Are you trying to think of handcar?

**OT:** Yes, something like that. That's what Uncle Isaiah was killed on.

**CT:** You see, I didn't...

**OT:** ...But Mrs. Breazeale...

### **End of Side One**

**OT:** ...(to the work). Why they just (three words?). He said the smoke would be coming out where she cooked, I guess, it had just (white stuff).

**ML:** Just like gypsies. It's a great idea! I love it!!

**CT:** Oh, yea, these boxcars were divided into, uh, cooking areas, and eating areas, and sleeping areas, see.

**ML:** Uh-huh, sensible way to make use of all those trees way back in there; without having to build roads. (pause) I want to ask you also about this policy that Mrs. Knox seemed to have regarding Juneteenth. That just sounds incredible at that time; that she had such an attitude, the idea, of hiring a white band for the black people on Juneteenth!

**CT:** Well, that was the only thing that was different from what the other companies did. You take this company here, would always, we knew we got off Christmas Day and Juneteenth. Uh, the black people just took it! And, uh, after I came here, Mr. Watson Walker along the first of June, he'd tell me to – he'd call me and tell me to see Taylor Powell; and have two, three, or four – whatever number he wanted – of beef butchered, uh, and to see Florence Walker, that was the barbequing man, he was a colored man; came down from Texarkana with Mr. T.L.L. Temple and, uh, they'd barbeque; like they'd start on the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup>. They'd barbeque that slowly, all that, of course, it took them half a day to get it fixed up! But they'd barbeque it slowly all night. And, then, the next day, it'd be free, you know, to the, to the Black people. But, um, I think almost all the companies did that. The only thing, Mrs. Knox just was so, oh, 'flavorant' with hers. She just, -getting that white band out of Beaumont just went all over the country!

**ML:** I'm sure it did. Well, when they used to barbecue here in Diboll, where-what part of town did they do it in?

**CT:** At that time, we called over where, well, the ea-west side of town, now gots those houses and all like that; but that's what they call the quarters. That's where all the black people, uh, lived.

**ML:** Yes, I...

**OT:** ...Across the tracks.

**CT:** That's where they'd barbeque it-over there.

**ML:** Uh-huh, when it was all the expense of the company?

**CT:** Yes.

**OT:** Well, how did they barbeque it, the company's barbeque? Was it barbequed over in quarters?

**CT:** Yes!

**OT:** Well, I thought it was over here, uh...

**CT:** Well, you're not talking about, we're talking about Juneteenth! You're right now, they'd barbeque like the Fourth of July lots of times, for whites but now we're talking about Juneteenth. It was always...

**OT:** Well, they barbequed over in the quarters (practiced) 'cause Papa always went over and bought a certain nigger mans, that was so good. You know, I was thinking back the other day. We were so careful that we didn't eat with 'em, call 'em niggers, and, uh, eat with 'em; and when they came in, they came in the back door, and, you know, all those kinds of things. But, uh, yet, when we wanted something that they cooked over there, you didn't mind going in there and getting it and eating it. Papa always, when he was around; he always said he believed in, uh, really treating 'em right. And...

**ML:** About what year did those things start to change around here?

**OT:** You mean-

**ML:** That attitude-

**OT:** Treating the Negroes-

**ML:** Yea, equal, and people being more comfortable-

**OT:** Well, I guess it started just before- but the handwriting was on the wall. Uh, I guess, I think it must have started a little bit before integration...

**CT:** That's right...

**OT:** ...Became popular. But, you know, the handwriting was there. And they were beginning to- I said, I was glad we don't have to see 'em pass our house with old shoes on and old clothes. You know, used to- they had such an odor and Mama had a woman working for her that was oh, she was taught by- who was this woman y'all were talking about? That owned the mill over there?

**ML:** Mrs. Knox?

**CT:** Mrs. Knox.

**OT:** Mrs. Knox. She was trained there, mother worked for Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Knox treated her people good, she worked 'em, but she taught 'em. And she'd get in there and teach 'em beauty and how to cook. And she told mama, she said, "Mrs. Green, it's not that uh, the negro race, has an odor different from the whites, it's just that they have no way of taking care of their lives. Big thing – this (word?) and it was, I'm sure! They just didn't have, uh, facilities.

**ML:** Well, about, about how many black workers were there here? Say about the time of the Depression.

**CT:** There's about fifty percent.

**ML:** About fifty percent. Has that been true most of the time?

**CT:** Yes.

**ML:** Uh-huh. Is it still?...

**CT:** Now, now, since we have the Latin Americans, uh, they're in the majority. We're in the minority now. In-on the works and school, and in the town!

**ML:** Did you say the Latin Americans are in the majority?

**CT:** No, no, uh, the Latin Americans plus the blacks are in the majority. We're the minorities. Now, this barbequing at the company on Juneteenth that they furnish free to the black people, we, we could go over and buy it just like Ossie telling about what her father did; they'd sell it to us. They didn't give it to us they'd sell it to us.

**OT:** O-oh, that was a great day here in Diboll. They came from Shreveport; they came from Houston. They come in here. (pause) You see, there was no buses then. They come in on these trains... and then on the buses; you know, oh, they just, they'd just come walking...

**ML:** So it was a real special deal...

**OT:** ...O-oh, yes!

**ML:** ...There.

**CT:** Juneteenth was a big day!

**OT:** See, the company made so much to do on it. The company always had a hog. Always.

**ML:** Yea. (chuckle) Well, that sure is the impression I get from every single person I've talked to, including black people. There's a man out in California, who is a black man, and he contacted us and said he had some things to say! And we got in touch with him. He sent us a tape of his memories of Diboll; and said the same thing.

**OT:** Do you remember who it, which one?

**ML:** Yea, his name is Paul Fred.

**CT:** What?

**ML:** Paul Fred.

**CT:** Yea, I remember Fred.

**OT:** I heard something about it. I guess I heard.

**ML:** Well, let's go on a little bit. Are y'all wearing out yet?

**CT:** No.

**ML:** This been going on a pretty long time so anytime you want to stop me...

**CT:** Well, I've got to, uh, telephone in about fifteen minutes.

**ML:** Okay.

**CT:** Just, just...

**ML:** We'll keep going and then...

**CT:** ...Yea, yea...

**ML:** ...You stop me.

**CT:** Won't take but a minute to do that.

**ML:** Okay, let's go on and talk about the work that you did. I know you talked about it a little on that earlier tape, but I wonder if you would describe, in more detail, the kinds of jobs that you had to do; and what your relationship to the company was; and how it changed through the years.

**CT:** Well, when I came, I came as a stenographer, and as I said earlier, I worked for Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Kenley; and then, uh, after, uh, when Mr. Watson Walker passed away, the operation was divided between Mr. Strauss and Mr. O'Hara as already shown here. And I was made assistant and got my own secretary. Well, then, we established a kind of branch office of an insurance company here, and I handled the insurance. By the insurance, I mean the compensation of the men getting hurt. And then, of course, I also handled the company's fire insurance and things like that. And then after, later, they had me to take over all the yards and, uh, Pineland and Hemphill handling the insurance; and that was a big part of my job then. And the insurance company really kinda established a branch office here; and I drew my own drafts and things, and I'd send 'em, uh, we'd make settlement with the insured party. I'd, I'd send it direct to the industrial accident board, and they'd approve it, and I'd issue the drafts and all like that. And, then, uh, after Mr. Arthur Jr. came down, and, uh, I was made a director and vice president, you see; and then, I had, uh, still, for a while, I had the insurance. But, the, I just had a most primarily, concerned with the logging operations here and in Pineland. And, uh, Hemphill (is lost), Hemphill Mill burned twice. The first time, they rebuilt it, but the second time-did not. And that's when they moved Mr. Henry Temple into General Manager there – over here; and Mr. Edgar Prudhomme, who was the manager at Hemphill went to Pineland as manager there.

**ML:** His name was Mr. Prudhomme?

**CT:** P-R-U-D-H-O-M-M-E. E.G., E.G. Prudhomme.

**ML:** E.G. Prudhomme. Was he from Louisiana?

**CT:** Oh, I think he was originally from Texarkana. The first I knew of him, he was kind of, he worked, uh, kind of, as an office boy in Texarkana; and then they, uh, sent him down here as shipping clerk. Somebody, I guess it was Holly Warner, died. Somebody did, was shipping clerk and Ed came down here as shipping clerk. And then when Mr. Watson Walker one day, moved, uh, Mr. Henry Temple; he was, had originally been here as shipping clerk. And then they moved him to Pineland as General Manager, Pineland and Hemphill, and brought Mr. Prudhomme down from Texarkana as shipping clerk here. And then, later, of course, as I said, he was transferred over there as manager at Hemphill and then Pineland – Mr. Henry moved over here.

**OT:** Clyde I think Holly was living when Prudhomme was here, before he was ever sent over to work in Pineland because...

**CT:** You may be right.

**OT:** (clicking noises in background; words not understandable)

**CT:** Well, somebody...

**OT:** I (do) – Edward's (barber) in Louisiana (word?)

**CT:** Oh, no, he came to the Texarkana office over here!

**OT:** Well, he could of gone, could have had his home in Louisiana, too.

**CT:** He came here as shipping clerk, so he succeeded somebody as shipping clerk. I thought it was Holly Warner, but it may not have been. That I don't know.

**OT:** He's the one that got promoted to – I know Holly was living when I was teaching. There was a young man here (short word?), and then he was transferred away; married away from here.

**ML:** Did members of the management used to socialize with each other a lot, see each other?

**CT:** Members of the what, now?

**ML:** Members of the management, did they used to see each other a lot? Know other's families? Have parties together? And all that.

**CT:** Well, I don't know if so many parties, but, see, everybody knew everybody; and, see, it wasn't big no like it is now, and you don't hardly know your next-door neighbor now!

**ML:** Even in Diboll.

**CT:** I've been here all these years and was mayor sixteen years...

**ML:** Sixteen years!

**CT:** And I knew way yonder back near everybody, and I don't know all the girls in the office now! There's more girls in the Diboll office right now than there was employees in the mill when I came to Diboll! Of course, it's a different world. The sales office was in Texarkana. Of course, it moved here, had been. And they've got all these other affiliates, you see. This is a worldwide thing now.

**OT:** They never, there wasn't a whole lot of socializing. It was all centered around the churches; there was a Baptist and a Methodist church. On Sunday, they had, all at one house, and they'd have services on, at first, I believe, when I was a child here; we'd have one service in the morning, and then we'd all come back that afternoon for Baptist church

and that kind of thing. But the big thing of, there was no real parties and things, but Diboll was small, of course, and everything circled around the church, the society, if there was such a thing. And, uh, but when something good happened in Diboll everybody was happy.

**ML:** Yea, they knew it.

**OT:** And when there was sadness, everybody was sad. Every— it was just like a big family.

**ML:** Yea.

**OT:** I remember about the first real organized, uh, party was created when the Bartleys moved in; you remember, she started bridge. Nobody'd played bridge or anything. Uh, and, of course, my family didn't believe in playing anything with, uh...

**ML:** ...Can I put this on here?...

**OT:** ...Yea. They didn't believe in, uh, cards and things. So when she, this party that afternoon, I didn't go. But she organized and then, from that, in the next few years— sewing clubs.

**ML:** Sewing clubs.

**OT:** But I was in Houston teaching for that time, so I, uh, and now Diboll is larger (2 words?). (pause) You know, I don't think, I don't believe there is a sewing club now, but...

**ML:** There's a Pilot Club now and that sort of thing.

**OT:** Yea, that was what I was starting to say; there's the Pilot Club.

**CT:** And then, there's...

**OT:** ...The church activities still.

**CT:** Well, there's about two flower concerns.

**OT:** Well, they're consolidated.

**CT:** Huh?

**OT:** Yea.

**ML:** The Garden Club.

**OT:** The Garden Club, yea. The younger ones want (to come to the)-

**ML:** Well, what were you doing during the sixteen years that Mr. Clyde was Mayor of Diboll?

**OT:** I was in Houston.

**ML:** You were in Houston.

**OT:** I was principal of...

**ML:** ...I see...

**OT:** ...A school in Houston. My boys graduated there. One went to West Point and the other went to Texas University.

**ML:** I see. What school was that? The school that you were principal of?

**OT:** Well, I was the principal of several schools- Elementary schools. But the last one was, uh, Cleveland Elementary. And it was the oldest school in one (word?). Cleveland was on a hill; it was a beautiful old school. But, uh the, I opened up a brand new school, but when Cleveland closed, they, uh, called me in to dedicate the service there. Dedication of all of it to me. That was the last.

**ML:** Uh, well, you sure had an active family, the two of you! Spread between here and Houston! Gosh!! Uh, tell me about, speaking of education, tell me about education of children here in Diboll. When were the first schools established? And so forth.

**CT:** I don't know. They had the schools when I came here.

**ML:** They had 'em already...

**CT:** ...And the company would always supplement 'em. There wasn't enough tax money to run nine months of the year. And when the tax money run out, the company would pay 'em.

**ML:** I see.

**CT:** They always had nine months of school here. And that's held for the logging camps too.

**ML:** Really! School in the logging...

**CT:** ...They always, uh, had nine months of school.

**OT:** I taught here.

**ML:** I had heard that you had taught here, for very long?

**OT:** Uh, well, about two years, and then the mayor and they, they had already, we'd never did sign a contract 'til the first day of school. And they already asked me to take my second grade back when- I was doing an announcement for the marriage(?) after school. It was the board president came to class and told me that they had made a rule that a married woman, they would not elect a married woman to teach. And he said the reason for it was his brother had run for an office in this county for years and years and years. And he was up (pause) again. And one of the women, I don't think she ever married, I Huntington, had made that (1 word) here in Diboll. And, uh, Mr. (name) didn't want- I guess they thought we be kind of political; and he said, "but if they turned her down, that whole bunch wouldn't be back in school."

**CT:** (T...a name)'s brother.

**OT:** His brother was running for office.

**ML:** Uh-huh!

**OT:** So I didn't have a school, that year, but, in the article that these boys talked about, uh, in the first week, either the first or the second week of school, Mr. Davis was principal and he taught too. And some boy, I used to know his name, but I forgot, a sixth grader I believe it was. He(Mr. Davis) had some difficulty with him(the boy), and I think he reacted up to Mr. R.L. Davis. And so Mr. Davis jumped up out of his chair and his desk, and started down to the boy, and he jumped out the window.

**ML:** Oh, my!

**OT:** So Mr. Davis jumped out the window after him and broke his leg.

**ML:** Oh, my goodness!

**OT:** So I became, for seven months, I was, uh, not only the teacher but the principal of the elementary school. And I made me, uh, \$35 more than I would have made as the second grade teacher.

**ML:** Well, that was a lucky break.

**OT:** Yea!

**OT:** Yea, and, uh, then the next year, of course, Mr. Davis came back the last two months of school. And, uh, the next year, I was in the kitchen one day and a man from Burke came down; and he was telling me about the school out in Huntington, that he'd been out there; he wanted the school, he'd been out there, and they told him they give it to me. And I said, "Well, I don't know (pause), well, I don't even know where that place

is.” (pause) I haven’t made application, but I had a real good friend (3 words?) in a contest in Huntsville. Uh, when we got there and so he had helped me, so he had taught at this school, so he recommended me. But I didn’t—well, “I said yes, I wanted it, if they’ll give it.” He said, “So I went out there and (pause) talked to the – down- and talked to ‘em and (4 words?) gave me the school. And on the first day of school, I went out; and I bobbed my hair; and I was the first person in Diboll to bob my hair.

**ML:** Yea. (chuckle)

**OT:** So, one of these eighteen year old gals came to school and she said, “My daddy said if he’d known you was gonna bob your hair, he wouldn’t of voted for you. (giggle)

**ML:** Land sakes! (laughter)

**CT:** Had uh, full of springs.

**OT:** Yea, out from Huntington ...

**CT:** ...Yea, really about half the distance...

**OT:** ...Half, about halfway between, uh...

**CT:** ...Lufkin and Huntington.

**OT:** And they had no highways. They were just building the highways here and so forth. Most of this between, I went to Lufkin, most of this first part, at least, of highways, I’d have to stop and (5 words?) to get over it, you know. (ha) And I spent all I made that year paying for the car I had to buy. And , you know, you couldn’t go to the little stops on these highways then. You had to go around. And these traveling men would come in the office talking about that little teacher and how she speeded; you never could go over 25. (laughter)

**ML:** What year was that?

**OT:** 1923 or ’24. Well, I married in ’22; in the summer then, I taught here in Mr. Davis’ place in ’23. So that was ’24. Had a start one year; then they elected me back, and I came back and taught for a year. And then I had the ulcers. The next year I didn’t teach because I got pregnant’ then I had children; and I raising them for the next ten years and then Clyde had trouble with his eyes, and I went back to college- with a two year old baby. The job didn’t pay much, about (word?). I will just go to Houston, and the children can get a good education, and work there if they have to. So when we got down there, they had some (7 words?) into the R.O.T.C. in the Houston schools. In the first place, as, uh, I didn’t know what the office would call-, uh, a career lady. (pause) They worked hard. And fortunately, both have turned out good.

**ML:** I’m noticing you might need to make your phone call now.

**CT:** Uh, see; Uh, let me, uh...

**ML:** I have 12:37.

**CT:** Yea, see, about how much longer will it be here?

**ML:** Well, we're pretty close to the end, as a matter of fact.

### **Tape Stops**

**ML:** You ready to continue?

**CT:** Is it on now?

**ML:** Yea, it's on...

**CT:** ...Cut it off just a minute, I want to...

### **Tape Stops**

**ML:** Let's go back to the, back to the beginning a little bit. I would, I would be real happy if you would care to describe what a typical day was like in Diboll when you first got here? Starting in the morning, going to work, uh, how the day was broken up into times, and who saw who and all that business.

**CT:** Well, we would go to work at 8:00. and 'course we'd have 12:00 'til 1:00 for lunch and then we'd come, we'd go home in the afternoon at 5:00. And then have the evening meal and, which, in those days, they'd call supper. (chuckle) And, uh, then we'd generally come back to the office. And, uh, Ossie said a while ago, we'd gab and talk, but they, we did a lot of work down there at night. They just, they just didn't have actually enough office boys. And, uh, so then about the only people you'd see would be the people in the office. And then, we'd go over to the drugstore, was just, just right close to the office, just about fifty feet. And we'd go over there, and, uh, either get coffee or a cold drink at about 10 and about 3; and that would be the only time you'd have to visit people. And then of course, then a lot of people would come by the office at night just to talk. And, uh, just every, there was a lot of gossip going on. I remember we had us a saw filer here by the name of Hamp Byerly and a doctor by the name of Dr. Crab. And they would come down there most every night. I don't know, just to visit. And they'd get into arguments. One night, they got to arguing whether the world was round or flat! (laughter) And that's the darnest thing and whoever had the flat side, proved beyond any doubt that the world was (chuckle) flat. (all laugh) Just things like that, you know. And, uh, they, uh, but they wasn't too much time for socializing other than just in the office. But then, they'd play a lot of tricks on people and things like that. For instance, I had the measles, and soon as I got over 'em, Mrs., I was boarding with the Welch's; I went over to Huntington to recuperate for a few days; and Mr. Welch got

around and got about fifty cards sent to me, the measly kid in Hous-Huntington. His brother-in-law was...

**[End of tape 1 and interview on October 25, 1984. Interview continued on October 26, 1984 on tape 2]**

**CT:** every body in the office worked the same hours. I tell you, say, mill number two ran 24 hours. It had a night shift you see, after the mill number three burned, which was just before I came down here, and now mill number one ran one ten hour shift, number two ran a ten hour shift on pine and then a ten hour shift on hardwood.

**ML:** Oh, I see. On the same day?

**CT:** Yes ma'am.

**ML:** The same mill would mill both pine and hardwood the same day?

**CT:** Yes ma'am.

**ML:** Why would they do that?

**CT:** Well they just saved building a new mill.

**ML:** Uh huh.

**CT:** And then there was, ah..., beginning to phase out the hardwood operation and they finally quit entirely on hardwood.

**ML:** At the height of the hardwood operation, what would you say, what proportion of Temple's operation was hardwood?

**CT:** At that time it was about a third.

**ML:** About a third. So it never got any bigger than that?

**CT:** No. And, uh, they made beautiful hardwood flooring. We've got some hardwood flooring in our house they made. I'd love for you to see it, it's beautiful.

**ML:** Oh, what kind of wood is it?

**CT:** It's red oak.

**ML:** Oh, red oak. I'll bet that is pretty, uh, you mentioned also that uh there was at sometimes not enough labor force in the office.

**CT:** Well, uh, we just doubled up and we did the work, and that's the reason we had to back at night. Cut that off a minute.

**ML:** Now, let's see. How old were you when you got married?

**CT:** What?

**ML:** What year was it that you got married?

**CT:** I think in '22. 1922, I believe.

**ML:** Yeah, and so you where uh, you had already worked in, Diboll quite a few years before you got married.

**CT:** Yes, ah, see, I came down in '16. I worked six years. Ossie and I went together about two years.

**ML:** When you thought about having a family what were your hopes for your sons? Did you hope that they would stay here in Diboll, or go somewhere else?

**CT:** Well, I don't know that we really, I always visualized that one of them, or both of them would make a lawyer. See when I came down here I was going to work and save 99 cents out of a dollar and go to law school. See when I worked for the lawyer in Huntington in the afternoons I studied law and uh, everything that ever was anything dry black stone is. My youngest son did make a lawyer. My oldest son wanted to go to WestPoint and, I got him, uh, through this Mr. Collins, he got Mr. Martin Dies, who was our representative at that time, to give him an appointment to WestPoint, and then, but he got, his office got mixed up when, and then we took him out of A.&M. He was in A.&M. for a year and a half; we took him out and sent him over to Marion Military Institute in Marion Alabama, which is a prep school for WestPoint. We knew he was going to get the appointment. When it come around they ah, they didn't have a vacancy at WestPoint but had one in the Navy. So he accepted the Navy and then when I went with him for the examination for the Navy, the day before a boy resigned WestPoint so the congressman gave him both appointments. When we came up there this lieutenant colonel said, "Boy, this is the only time anybody has ever come up here with the world by the tail. You've got both appointments. Now which one do you really want?" And of course the boy said well I've kind of sold myself on going to the Navy, and uh, so they went to examine him and they found out he was partially color blind so they told him, said, "Well, I believe you ought to take the Army." And he said, "Well, that's what I really wanted first." So he went to WestPoint instead of Annapolis. And, uh, he was four years there, and then they had him teaching military science in Vanderbilt University awhile. He's got quite a number of years of college level education. A year and a half at A.&M., a year at Marion Military Institute, four years in the Navy, I mean the Army, and then, uh, these other teaching jobs they had him doing. He's well educated and not using a bit of it.

**ML:** Not using a bit of it. How do your boys feel about Diboll? Do they like coming back?

**CT:** Oh, yes.

**ML:** Do they have a soft spot in their hearts for it?

**CT:** Yeah, the younger boy came back and worked for the company. But there wasn't a house here in Diboll suitable and we got to looking at Crown Colony and found one location that he liked fine and they was just building it so they could change it like they wanted, so they lived in Crown Colony which I'm awfully glad they do. They have a whole lot better house then they would build here of course. A finer house, and in his profession it's better for him be to be up there. When he came to the company he was uh, in the collection department, but he was already an attorney and shortly they put him in the legal department and now he has charge of the legal department. In fact he was going to Houston today on some kind of suit and they phoned him last night not to come. It just flooded down there and he couldn't get from Houston down there in the first place. So he's just tickled to death to be in the legal department here. Of course, he was born here, as was the other boy. The other boy spends his time in foreign countries. He first stayed two or three years in Mexico, and then he went to Nepal, of all the places in the world. He even bought a house over there that one of the Rogers they called him, owned. He stayed there several years and then he came home and then stayed about a month and then went back and stayed a while longer and then, well, to make a long story short he lived a while in Greece, Spain and places like that. He just loves those foreign countries! Of all the places in the world I wouldn't want to go to Nepal. But he's had a family that lived part way up the mountain and one of the girls went to keeping house for him and then, now the fourth one is with him and I think two or three of them married and all like that. I think he gave the house to this last girl. I don't know but he don't own a home over there now. But he just loves those countries. He's now back over here trying to determine where he wants to move when he retires and uh, San Antonio is his first love, for two reasons. The first reason his daughter lives there and secondly they've got such a good hospital in the Military set up there. But San Antonio is so big and his daughter lives absolutely on the opposite side. She don't live right in San Antonio. She lives in a little adjoining town, and uh, then it's just so much traffic and all. Well, he's looking around. Right now he's down in the valley.

**ML:** Sounds like Diboll gave him a good start though.

**CT:** Oh, yes.

**ML:** How much of their schooling did they have here and how much did they have in Houston?

**CT:** They uh, I don't, a lot of things happened. One year here, the older boy, I think that's right. I don't think R.C. ever went to school here. He started in Houston, and they finished in the same school in Houston, course at different times. And then when his

marriage resulted like other people – you don't think yours is ever going to happen that way – but anyway, he and his wife separated. I won't put all the details in this, but he uh, we moved in and took the daughter. He was in the Army and they were transferring him to Germany and he didn't want to take his wife and they broke up and uh, they for some reason, the probation department interfered and took the baby and looked like they was going to place it, so we got it, and they got a divorce. She married a man that was well fixed, his family. She gave us a lot of trouble. It went all the way to the Supreme Court but we won out in the Supreme Court even, so we raised her. We got her when she was two years old so she's just like our child. And she's got a little girl that is fourteen that thinks I hung the moon and I think I hung it, so me and her get along lovely.

**ML:** Well, let me ask you about the differences you see now, now that Diboll has grown and the company has grown, between the relationships that go on between people here in town, uh, in contrast to how it was back then.

**CT:** Well, I don't really suppose there is any particular difference, just on a larger scale. That's what I would think because the company still is just wonderful to everybody. You see I retired and stayed retired about fifteen minutes and they called me back to the department and I am still working and I have an office. I go down about two afternoons a week. I uh, handle the, I always represented them in Washington and Austin for years on legislative matters pertaining to forest products, not, we didn't fool with drink by drop and all that kind of stuff. And then I handled, we have what they called P.A.C., Political Action Committee, I was related with that. I operate that.

**ML:** Tell me about that political action.

**CT:** Well, what they do, they are doing legally what they used to do illegally. What I mean by that is it used to be illegal for the company to make political contributions. Of course all companies had some way of getting around it you know, on the hush up and nobody knew it. And now it's in the open you see, and they, once a year the employees contribute to this fund. It's called the Political Action Committee. We call it here the committee for good government, and uh, they uh, the various ones ask for money you know. I get sometimes eight to ten letters a day. Everybody, seemingly, running from constable to Gravesend, wants to have a million dollars. That's just the way of the world. I wish it wasn't that way but it is. But we are doing it legally now. Course we do not contribute to everybody that asks for it, we couldn't get that much money, but we generally select who we contribute to, we have a committee and I handle the checks and all like that. It's a nice way of doing it if you're going to have it and most all big companies have these P.A.C.'s. I've got a book seven inches thick that has just the listings in Texas only.

**ML:** What sort of candidates has it generally supported? And why?

**CT:** Well, mostly the state. At one time when we started it we handled everything all over the United States. And the reason for that see we had already merged into Time and of course their nation wide and we handled Times contributions out of here too,

and uh, so uh, we spun off from Time and they organized their own. And now we primarily are Texas and Louisiana and some in Oklahoma and the ones in any state that are outstanding for forest products. Things like that, that believe in the same thing the company does. And uh, we used to spend a lot of money.

**ML:** Well, has the company ever made a statement of its beliefs about, not just forest products but, uh, oh, ethical issues in general and the American life and politics and so forth?

**CT:** Well they don't take any, they have to be pretty particular. Remember they're selling to everybody. You see, I made a speech before the Chamber of Commerce in Lufkin and I've said that the sun never sets on Diboll made products, and that's right. So they've got to be pretty particular. I don't even know who Arthur is going to vote for for president, I think I know. I think, of course, he'll vote for Mondale, but he may not. He may because Regan has the reputation, right or wrong, of being more favorable to the big companies in, for want of a better word, the rich people than has Mondale. So I really don't know. I hadn't asked him. He'd tell me if I went and asked him. I just hadn't spoken to him. I'm a life-long democrat. I've been chairman of this precinct for, I guess, fifty years, and for years I was vice-chairman of the county. You see I used to spend so much time in Austin. When they built that high-rise house that the company owns there, the apartment adjoining the capitol that they kept on having a suite reserved and I stayed in that about half the time. Of course it wasn't made for me but any of the company men that's over there used it.

**ML:** Where is this building?

**CT:** It's, uh, one block from the capitol.

**ML:** I'm from Austin, so I'm interested in what street it's on. Do you remember?

**CT:** No, I don't. But it's the tallest building close to the capitol.

**ML:** What's it called? That's OK if you don't remember.

**CT:** I don't remember but they had designed for larger, taller and the governor, attorney general and everybody hit the ceiling, so they cut off two stories. That is they didn't build two stories on the building. So it's easy if you're facing the capitol going up to the capitol it's on the left. It's that tall building on the left. It's just one block from the capitol.

**ML:** And do they still use it?

**CT:** Oh, yes.

**ML:** Carry on a lot of business there, I imagine.

**CT:** Since I don't handle the political deal over there any more, all I handle is just this P.A.C., see, Buddy Temple is over there now and so is Charles Wilson. Well Charles is actually in Washington, but he was in Austin, and uh, and after they had Charles and Buddy over there, I quite handling the stuff for the legislature. And all we ever handled was just something we was interested in. We didn't butt into everything over there, that's the reason we had such good luck. We just uh, and I was a registered lobbyist for years.

**ML:** So it was mostly just having to do with the lumber industry?

**CT:** That's all.

**ML:** As you can tell one of main interests is, I've just found out a lot of things about how well this company was thought of and how successful it has been in many areas, and uh, I'm interested in the fact the values that apparently the company had were very similar to the values and beliefs of the people who lived here in Diboll and that's one reason they worked well together.

**CT:** That's right.

**ML:** Do you get that feeling?

**CT:** I do, and uh, there, well, when they were merged with Time, of course they were nation wide. But even without that, like I say they sell all over the world now. You see we've got this paper mill down at Evadale. We've got the gypsum plant in Dallas and one in Mississippi, some other plant over there. The company itself is big even without Time. Of course they've spun off from Time now.

**ML:** What kind of considerations went into the decision to merge with Time and then later to spin off from it?

**CT:** Well, uh, I was on the Board of Directors till we went with Time. Time approached us and their reason for approaching us primarily, I always thought they wanted somebody to run their plants. They owned the paper mill at Evadale, and uh, there when you think of Time, you actually think of magazines and newspapers, but they're big in a lot of things. They own twenty percent of one of the movies. I don't know whether it's M.G.M. or some of them. They're mixed up in little of everything. But they didn't have any expertise, like anybody in their office up there that uh, was uh, familiar with this paper mill and all like that, and I think that was the prime reason for approaching us. I was in on those negotiations and uh, but now the dissolution, I wasn't in on that see that was just recently. When we went with Time we dissolved the Board of Temple-Eastex and now they've got a new board now, Temple Inland, but I'm not on that board and I really don't know the details of why they spun off. I don't know.

**ML:** Is Temple Eastex no longer in existence or are they two different things now, Temple Inland and Temple Eastex?

**CT:** There is two different things. Joe Denman is head of Temple-Eastex, and uh, well, the man that moved here from Austin is head of Temple Inland. I can't think of his name right now but I'll put it in there. He's new here. Oh, Clifford Crum, he's head of Temple Inland. My end of it comes under Temple Eastex.

**ML:** Is there anything that you would have done differently if you had a chance to do it over again? I mean in terms of working here in Diboll and so forth. Or have you been mostly contented?

**CT:** Well, I've done so well here. I couldn't have done better with the education I've had anywhere else. You see, I just have a high school education and uh, except I always wanted to be a lawyer. But I never did save that ninety nine cents out of the first dollar. So I just kept getting involved you know that I'm just still here. And uh, nowadays nobody could get up where I was, a vice-president, without more education. Nowadays they don't employ people they expect to go up that don't have degrees you know. They're full of Aggies. Course I'm divided between Aggie and University because one son R.C. my youngest son, the one that is a lawyer; he went seven years to Texas, four years for his degree and then three years for law. And Donald went a year and a half at A&M. And then I served on the board of A&M. I served six years as a member of the Board Directors at A.&M. and we divided up the schools and I chose to look after Prairie View cause I felt like the ones who was on the board, and they all felt like it, that I was more familiar with black people than any of them. And I looked after Prairie View primarily and my second was Irving which we finally gave to Texas University. But Irving was an A&M installation. An uh, I had uh; I did a lot of good for colored people over there. For instance I expect I got twenty five or thirty black people from here scholarships over there, various things, you know, and uh we've got a lot of them going to Prairie View as a result of me being a member of that board over there. I enjoyed that immensely. And uh, Mr. Temple asked me not to take a reappointment for six years. I had to devote so much time to it and uh, he asked me not to let, the governor was reappointing me. Well it wasn't reappointing me, he was appointing me again. Doc Driscoll was appointed but John Connelly was going to reappoint me and Temple told both of us "No!" huh!

**ML:** Not letting you go again. Tell me about differences you notice in the land around here. I know that so much of this land has been logged and logged again, but has it had some effect on the way the land looks to you?

**CT:** Has it had an effect on what?

**ML:** Had any effect on the way the land looks to you. How did it look around here when you first got here?

**CT:** Well, no, because – of course there wasn't the land they've cleared for houses and all like that, all this here east here, that's different – but the rest of it you see they farmed their land just like people farming cotton or corn. You see they used to take a certain percent just to mature trees and leave the others, and that's the reason there will always be a Diboll. And uh, it don't look a great deal of difference. I was in the woods so much

you know, I spent so many years in the woods. I had a very interesting life at that time cause I was handling affairs in Austin and all that. I remember one time, I had to go in the woods for something or other, and I went in my company car as far as I could get on account of the road, caught an empty truck going in, rode on out there, borrowed the wood foreman's horse, rode about an hour to some stuff I wanted to see, came back on a load of logs to my car, came back and got the company plane and flew to Austin that evening.

**M:** All in one day! (laughter) That's good.

**CT:** I've had quite an interesting life. I have had!

**ML:** Well, what do you think is about the most important thing that someone who is trying to understand this town and the company and the business of forest products industry would need to know about it?

**CT:** What angle do you want to approach it to?

**ML:** From the point of view of what was the true history of this area and how was Diboll different from other towns in East Texas because it had this relationship with Temple. How the community was different really.

**CT:** Well, I think the only way I can answer that is that it was the Temples that made the difference. That's what I would think. Mr. T.L.L. Temple, the founder, he did the things for people all the time. He charged – the company owned all the houses, nobody owned a house – he charged very little rent and uh, he built them and those who wanted cows he'd build them a cow pen and he would loan them the money to buy cows and let them pay back whatever they could a month and then he always kept a fine male down here to raise fine calves and things like that. He just always looked after and Mr. Arthur Sr., course he'd been brought up under that, and then Arthur Jr. is the one that started selling the houses and he did away with – the store here was what they call the commissary, that's that big office building over there that's got Southern Pine Lumber Company on it – and Arthur didn't think that the company ought to sell to it's employees. He didn't think it was right. He didn't think it oughta be, so they leased out the store building first to start with and uh, they uh...

**ML:** Was that about 1950? 1948 or something?

**CT:** Well, ah, well, I don't know how long Arthur ran it after he came down here. I think he must of come down in '50 and they kept the store awhile but then they leased out, then they just did away with the store entirely. He just didn't like the practice of the company selling to its employees, and then that's when these other stores went in.

**ML:** Tell me about some of these subsidiary companies that uh, you see, you see the buildings around here, in and around Temple. What kind of a relationship do these companies have to Temple Industries?

**CT:** There's only one building you see that has a relation to Temple is the Temple Associates up here. Now they're not in any way connected with Borden, or they're not connected with Demco or like that. I believe Buddy Temple maybe has stock in Demco and then I know the company offered to give Borden that land for them putting in that plant here and Borden rejected it. "No we won't buy it. We don't want to have no obligation to anybody." And uh, those things is separate entirely.

**ML:** What does Temple Associates do?

**CT:** They're general contractors. They build, they do all kind of big buildings and now they've got a big office in Houston now, and they've moved Bill Oates boy, Richard Oates, has moved down there. He's moved down to Houston to look after that end of it.

**ML:** I wanted to ask you a couple of things about Hoover, Roosevelt and all that during the Depression, and uh, what people thought of all that, that was happening on a national sense.

**CT:** Well of course I can't answer what the people thought, but I do know this that as a general thing people loved Roosevelt and the reverse for Hoover. You take ... my individual thinking is that president, our present president, is the sorriest one we've had since Herbert Hoover. I think Herbert Hoover is the sorriest one since I've been old enough to know we've had a president. The present president is next to him. But I don't know what, I don't know how the people generally reacted to Hoover, but right around here it was all Democrats then and they were not in love with Hoover like they were with Franklin Roosevelt.

**ML:** Did they like his programs like the CCC and WPA?

**CT:** Oh, yeah.

**ML:** Were there a lot of people from here who worked on those programs?

**CT:** Oh, goodness yes! We've got roads out on our lands that they built. Oval bridge out there at Freeport (?) they built back in those days. (Mrs. T. inaudible comments... But you know I heard...)

**ML:** Well, were there very many adult men around here who needed a job? It seems to me you said earlier that not too many people lost their jobs here.

**CT:** No, they, uh,

**OT:** No, they didn't make a lot of money, but they kept their self respect.

**CT:** Most of them was the young boys that worked during the summer. I don't know of anybody that quit the company to go and work for them.

**OT:** You know they had a plan here, you work today and if you needed your money you could come and buy... (inaudible) at the store ... and a lot of them did ... and I say it was kinda like when Mr. Walker died ... and she said ... "I always felt like I never worried about where the money was coming from" she said "I always thought Mr. Walker would take care of it." Of course they had some hard times, I guess, long about then ... they just didn't have much to do with. (Parts of Mrs. T's statements largely inaudible)

**CT:** One of the lead black men, King Dyer, when Chester came down said "There goes Diboll."

**ML:** Tell me again? I missed a part of that.

**CT:** Says when – he watched Mr. Walker when they brought his casket down to the cemetery, he says, "There goes Diboll."

**ML:** Oh dear. Kinda brings tears to your eyes.

**CT:** Yeah.

**OT:** I guess I was the last person to talk to him ... (inaudible)

**ML:** What was – how do you spell the name of that black man who said that?

**CT:** K I N G, King. Dyer, D Y E R.

**ML:** What do you feel about social security? Is it a good thing?

**CT:** I'm a senior citizen. It sure is a good thing!

**ML:** Tell me, about how many women did the company employ in the early days?

**CT:** They did not – when I came here they did not have any women other than Mrs. (Miss) Baldwin (?) in the office, but a carpenter, a foreman, hired a woman that was the first woman that ever worked in the carpenter crew, and man, that went all over the country about a woman working!

**ML:** What year would that have been?

**CT:** Just pulling out of the hat I'd say about '20s, something like that. I'm just guessing at that. I'm talking about the first one that ever-

**ML:** What about the box factory?

**OT:** The box factory was not built 'till later. And uh, it seemed to me that it was during one of the wars that those women put on their overalls. In the '40s or something like that.

**CT:** Then, you see, when Temple White moved over here, course it was White Wood Products then, and they changed the name, then that created a place for women and then, but they were already working like in other departments around. Nothing like as many as there are now, but a good many were.

**ML:** Do the women here pretty much have the feeling that they get equal pay for equal work?

**OT:** I never hear any discussion about it. You know, I don't even know what they get. I guess they get three dollars and something, minimum wage, and then raises and that.

**CT:** No, the woman – if the man is pulling lumber off a chain at three dollars an hour a woman gets three dollars an hour. They get the same wage for the same job.

**OT:** I guess they get that wage, you know. But I never hear any discussion of that.

**ML:** I'll bet you would hear if there was a problem.

**OT:** Well, I'm at home mostly, but I used to would have, but ah ...

**ML:** Was it true back in the beginning when women first went to work for Temple, that they got equal pay for equal work?

**CT:** As far as I know. I'm, sure they did!

**OT:** I know this, that Mr. Kenley had gotten another job up here in the lumber.....and, uh, I was in Nacogdoches at that time in 1933, and the man who was in charge of getting the teachers for all over the state was a real good friend of mine. We'd known each other since I was 14 and he was 17, and uh, Vernon told me that Mr. Kenley asked one of the teachers, says well, that he sent down here, Vernon did that 'cause it was my home town – he picked out the best applicants he had and sent down here and Vernon said Mr. Kenley asked, he said, "Well, would you be willing to work and live for your board in one of the houses here?" And she said "No I can't afford that" ....(inaudible), he said "Well, we have a secretary, that's what she's doing she's not getting any pay." And so she said, "Well, I'm wasting my time" so she got up and left and went back and told Vernon and Vernon asked me, "Ossie what kind of a man is Mr. Kenley?" And I said "Just about what she says." But you know that's what –

**CT:** Well, he was close and everything like that, but he did all this other good for the company. He was very close with his own money and all. But now, about this girl that was working for nothing. I took Rhoda Fay Chandler just for experience. They all went to this business college at Lufkin, and then they gave her a job. Same way with Hazel Richards, and then Mildred Richards and maybe one or two others. I'd just say "come down there" and I'd give them letters, just give them work to do and filing, just showin'

them you know, and then everyone of them made a place for themselves. That's what they was talking about working for free.

**ML:** Well, you all, I'm just about at the end of my questions. If you all don't have anything else you need to tell me –

**CT:** I can't think of anything – it's seven minutes 'till two and I'm just –

**OT:** I think there's a point should be made and raised, that Diboll was always, course people weren't... (inaudible) place, and as I've said, if something bad happened, everybody stuck together, and if something good, everybody was happy. It was that kind of a place. And of course for a long time it was uh, people would be born here and they would stay here. But it's not like that now. The children go off and most of them do well, you know.

**ML:** You're still attached!

**CT:** Oh, my goodness! Still tied to you, huh?

**ML:** Still tied to the machine!

**CT:** Well, I sure wouldn't want to pull that machine off. Now when you get that rough draft we'll get together again.

**ML:** Yes, that'll be fine, just fine.

**OT:** And you know for a long time we didn't have electricity and then we did have the lights.

**ML:** What year would you say you got the electricity?

**OT:** Oh,

**CT:** We had electricity when – I don't remember when –

**OT:** Oh, they burned it; they wouldn't, uh when they first got it. You see rent used to, was based upon the number of electric drops you had in the house. And then when we first got drops they turned them off at ten o'clock, and uh, and I have a lamp in my room now and R.C. asked me "Mother what significance has that lamp?" And I said "That lamp was bought to born you with."

**CT:** I'll be seeing you.

**ML:** I'm coming to open the door.

**END OF INTERVIEW**