

JOHN WHITE

Interview 149a

July 16, 1999 at the Temple Archives, Diboll, Texas

Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer

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ABSTRACT: In this interview with Jonathan Gerland, former Fastrill and Diboll resident John White reminisces about living at the Southern Pine Lumber Company Fastrill logging camp, moving to Diboll, and working for Dred Devereaux. He also mentions the Redgate logging community, Alcedo, and White City. Mr. White recalls his time in the Air Force and his jobs in Lufkin at Texas Foundry and Southwest Color.

Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG): This is Jonathan Gerland and today's date is July 16, 1999 and I'm with John White at the Temple Archives. We are going to do an oral history interview today. Mr. White if you could just begin by telling us when and where you were born.

John White (hereafter JW): Okay. I was born in Fastrill, Temple logging camp in Cherokee County on July 14, 1931. And we lived there off and on until we left and moved to Diboll in June 1940. During my early life we lived at Redgate Camp where they loaded logs and log trains in Trinity County and brought them to Diboll. And I've seen the times when both log trains and both loader crews would be loading out two train loads of logs and they used the eleven and the thirteen as log trains.

JG: Now that was while you lived at Redgate?

JW: Yes, Redgate.

JG: I've never heard of Redgate.

JW: Okay, that was a little community that Temple had put together there. And we lived in house cars and they were hauled on log trucks. In general a family would have two of those and they would put them close enough together that they would build a walk way between them or porches with steps. They were about six foot high, they were pretty mobile.

JG: So this would be in the mid '30's? You were born in '31 so about how old were you when you lived at Redgate?

JW: I was probably six or seven, somewhere along there. We went to school, one year we went to school in Hudson, which was in Angelina County. And then we didn't have a bus to bring us all the way home, so we would get off at the river bridge and walk approximately two miles. And that is what we had to do in the mornings was be there when the bus run. Later on they decided we should be going to school in Apple Springs

which was in Trinity County, and we finished up that year and I believe we moved back to Fastrill maybe in 1938.

JG: Who were your parents? And also, I know you have some brothers and sisters, just tell us who your family was. What your father did and who your mother was.

JW: My dad was Jimmy White and my mother was Ollie Stovall White. And my dad was mostly a laborer and sometime he would work on the railroad for TSE [Texas South Eastern Railroad]. He fired and braked too, he worked several years for the TSE and then he would work wherever they needed him. My mother was a housewife and I had five brothers, Jimmy Lee, Jr. and Bill White were the ones older than me. I'm John S. and my mother hung the name Stovall on me as my given middle name. And I have a brother named Charles, who lives in Diboll. I have a brother Kendal that lives in Lake Livingston area, and I have a brother named Herman that lives on the lake Rayburn.

JG: Now I believe your mother and father were married at Alcedo log camp, which was a Southern Pine camp. How did your mother get to be there and how did your father work for the company there, I guess?

JW: Yes, my dad worked for the company and my mother was a half sister to Levy Stovall, who was her boss and he was the manager of the commissary at Alcedo. And I guess they were both looking for somebody and they got married, I believe about, I think somewhere around 1919, or 1920. I'm not sure, I'd have to go look.

JG: Do you know where your father was born?

JW: My dad was born in 1899 and he died in 1960. And my mother lived to be 72 before she died. My oldest brother Jim died on Christmas Day at Carswell Air Force base in Fort Worth in 1972.

JG: Do you have any memories of maybe hearing your parents talk about Alcedo? Do you know, I'm just trying to learn the progression from camp to camp – did they go straight from Alcedo to Fastrill?

JW: I think the progression was, at first they logged out around Lindsey Springs, east of Diboll. And then they had logs brought in on the Cotton Belt from White City, which I believe is in San Augustine County. And they crossed the lake just...

JG: Now do you know if your father was working for the company then?

JW: My dad went to work for the company when he was about 14 or 15. So that would be probably about 1914, maybe.

JG: So he would have been too young to work at Lindsey Springs.

JW: Yes, right.

JG: But do you know if he worked at White City? I think they were logging there during World War I. They bought some timber from Kirby. Do you know if your father maybe worked at White City? Did he ever mention that?

JW: I don't know whether he worked or not, but my grandfather did, his dad.

JG: His dad worked there.

JW: I don't remember exactly where they were working when my dad went to work there. He went to work as a mule skidder. Which is, they skidded logs with a four mule team and it drug them to where the skidder or the loader could pick them up and put them on cars.

JG: Do you have many memories about your grandfather?

JW: My grandfather, John White, at one time was a very valuable employee for the Temple family. He always held a position of trust with the company and a lot of times when they moved into Fastrill, well Mr. Hill, one of the company executives, would always make sure that he got around to see my grandmother and grandfather. My grandfather had retired at that time. And I think maybe he could have been one of the first salary people to ever retire. I'm not sure, but he goes back a long way. He run a locomotive for years and I think in his later years he was team boss. He was in charge of getting the logs out to the skidders and loaders.

JG: So he lived there, your grandparents lived at Fastrill with you and your mom and dad?

JW: Right. I had an uncle, my dad's brother, Earline White, was killed in a logging accident in 1937 and he was crushed because the logs slid in on him. The truck hit a stump in a mud hole, he was running for or it wasn't cut low enough.

JG: He was working for Southern Pine?

JW: Uh-huh, yes.

JG: And what was his name?

JW: Earline White. Yes, his widow was probably one of the first people to ever collect a Providence Life Insurance policy. I believe it was a thousand dollars, which was a lot of money in those days. She later remarried and bought a small farm.

JG: Do you have any certain memories of Fastrill itself? Fastrill was always, I guess because it existed for so long, from 1922 throughout '40 or '41 and there are still quite a few people around today who lived there and have good memories, such as Eula

Burchfield. And everybody seems to have fond memories of it. Do you have any particular memories, fond or otherwise?

JW: I can remember people talking about how cold it was in the winter time because we would get snows in Fastrill. And one of the jokes was between the store, the commissary in Fastrill and the one here in Diboll, was that they was talking and somebody said “tell them it’s snowing here and we have a foot of snow on the ground.” And the favorite pass word people had, passing each other down here, “it’s snowing in Fastrill.” But the reason it was so cold was because we didn’t have adequate clothes and we didn’t have adequate heat. And we just chalked it up. But I have some fond memories of playing in the sand streets of Fastrill. A lot of my friends that I see on an occasional basis went to school with me there in Fastrill. I used to like to walk through the shops there where they kept the locomotives. After my grandfather retired he took care of the engines when they would bring them in at night. He would go ahead and move them around and water them and put oil in them if they needed fuel. We would ride with him some time if he was going to turn them around on the wye. They generally kept four engines up there. They kept the three and the five and the eleven and the twelve, as far as I can remember back. And on New Years Eve he would put steam on all four engines. And my cousin John Powers and my brother Bill and my brother Jimmy would all go over there and about two minutes to midnight they would blow the whistles until all the steam was out of the boilers. And I suppose that was our equivalent of celebrating the New Year.

JG: You had told me before about a certain log train accident over there actually the one I guess it was Lib Taylor who died?

JW: Yes.

JG: Tell us again for the tape maybe, as best as you can remember the details of what happened, and about what year? Of course we realize that you were born in ’31 so you probably would have been 9 when the camp closed, so we realize that was...

JW: The story that I remember about it was, they would always send the regular out. And I never knew what the regular meant except a train and two coaches and they had all the men on those coaches. And somebody came up and said the fireman for that train was sick and couldn’t work. So they got someone off the loaders or one of the skidders I think to fire that engine and to get the men to the work.

JG: So this would have been the work train carrying nothing but two cars and two coaches?

JW: Right, carrying two cars probably and they had all these cross cut saws on the side of the cars, outside of it, that is where they kept them in case they had an accident they wouldn’t be fighting around with sharp saws. And the train got over into Anderson County, probably about six and a half miles from where I have a farm right now. And the train got over there and stuck on the hill because the inexperienced person that was firing the engine just didn’t keep it in the right proportion, the water level in the boiler and the

generation of heat, and it stuck. And they had a log train that was shoving probably 20 empty flat cars. And the people that had got off the train over there knew that log train was coming and most of them just jumped and got out of the way. But I think a brakeman was going to try to flag them down.

JG: They were coming up behind them, coming down the same tracks?

JW: That is right, the same track. There were no sidings in there. And they was running for that hill too. So it was probably the eleven or the twelve, which was identical engines. They stacked all them flat cars against those coaches and killed a person by the name of Mr. Lib Taylor. I believe he was part of a train crew on the engine that had stalled. But it was a pretty good size accident and it took a while to get all the cars back on the track.

JG: So the eleven or the twelve, the train that was coming up behind the work crew was pushing flat cars.

JW: He was pushing those and it was still dark.

JG: Still dark.

JW: They didn't have as many safety rules then as they got now.

JG: And you had mentioned to me one time before that you thought they had named a little creek over there.

JW: Yes, it is a little creek over there. The locals over there don't call it that. They have something else, but all the people of Fastrill we just referred to it as Lib Taylor creek from then on, because he was killed near that creek.

JG: Did you ever hear of where Mr. Taylor was buried?

JW: No, I don't remember.

JG: I remember at the reunion there are just those two grave markers of children. And I just was wondering I know other people probably died there during the twenty years that there was a camp, and I was just wondering maybe if they brought them back to Diboll or they had other community cemeteries.

JW: It was probably dictated by where he was from originally and where the family wanted him placed. The two graves you are talking about was children. That was probably about 150 yards from where the electric light plant was at Fastrill. And I imagine at that time it was truly an economic move whatever they did and they did the best they could, you know having a Christian burial for those children.

JG: I think the undertaker, I remember according to the sign, was from Rusk.

JW: Yes, Wallace Funeral Home I believe. My parents, my grandmother died, her son got killed about eight or ten months before she died and my aunt said her grandmother just grieved her self to death over Uncle Earline. And all of them are buried at Black Jack Cemetery there about maybe twelve or thirteen miles from old Fastrill. It is probably around the same distance from Alto on highway 294. My grandfather died I believe in '43 here in Diboll and we took him back and buried him there beside my grandmother.

JG: Took him back where?

JW: To Black Jack Cemetery in Cherokee County.

JG: Okay, tell us a little bit about your remembrances of coming to Diboll and maybe compare or contrast life as you knew it at Fastrill and Diboll. Maybe compare the schools, just what you remember of that.

JW: Okay, we had a four room school house in Fastrill. And when we got out of school, the last session of the school year, they sent Mr. Ray Sparks and his wife up to take that school building down. They took the windows out, they took the roof off, they pulled the nails, stacked that lumber up and hauled it down here. I guess it was used in the Diboll school system here. And it was quite different school up there. I think we had three teachers and here when we got to Diboll it was just big, big, big.

JG: You moved to the big town of Diboll. (laughter)

JW: Oh yes it was, during the early part of the war, prior to the early part of the war and all during the war, we went with just room heaters. And after the war I believe they took a boiler that they didn't use any more and put it down next to the library and study hall and put steam radiators in all the rooms and it was great. Nobody was having to carry out ashes or bring in wood and steam heat was nice. Mr. Oscar Davis run the boiler, he was in charge of all the custodial work at the school. He did an excellent job. He was a friend to everybody he ever met.

JG: What about just the community of Fastrill, we know that it was a community for about 20 years, and of course you lived the first nine years of your life there, and your brothers and other families. What was the relationship once you got back to Diboll? Did the Fastrill community kind of all live in their own separate place? And did they interact, how was the interaction with the other Diboll people? And also, I guess I'm referring to your parents what you knew of your parents, but also the interaction as children, did y'all pretty much stick with your Fastrill friends or did you, how did the Diboll children accept you?

JW: We just blended in, we blended in well. One of my earlier childhood memories is of a special friend of mine, Douglas Minton, who just retired a few years ago out of the Air Force. I believe he served 36 years in the Air Force. We went and took basics together and then he was in the, got in the supplies, working the supply lines. He and my older brother Jim were stationed together three or four different times I think. I saw Douglas

and his wife Betty at the Fastrill reunion. When was that, the third week end of June of this year?

JG: The second weekend.

JW: The second, I believe it was, that is right. We met a lot of people that we've been knowing for...all of us are really senior citizens now. I've been retired approximately nine years. I have enjoyed it thoroughly except for a couple of deaths in my family and which marred me. But I have been extremely happy and probably in better physical shape now than I was for the last ten years I worked.

The people in Fastrill were very cohesive if there was somebody in need. And I remember one instance where they would cut wood, the men and large boys would cut wood and give to somebody if they was down with the flu or had a lot of sickness during the winter time. Pneumonia killed a lot of people out there. And we lived next door to Dr. C. W. Evans Sr. and his son, Dr. C.W. Evans Jr. came to be a doctor in Lufkin. My daddy would make, get up, if Mr. Evans came over and tapped on the side of the house with his flashlight my daddy would get up and go with him to make rounds at night because he wanted somebody to be with him. He didn't like the dark, either.

But the people, if there was a need, we had canning. And in the summer time the company had fixed a place where they had an employee there and people would take their cans and their jars and their produce and go down there and can. It didn't cost anything to have your food prepared to preserve it. And then they made mattresses one time, there was a surplus of cotton and the government said we are going to give so much cotton, ginned cotton. And there was a lady that made all the bed ticks and I think when we busted up my mothers housekeeping after she passed away, there was still some of those cotton mattresses around. I got used to inner springs and I didn't want a cotton mattress anymore. But she did a very professional job on those bed ticks. And her name was Mrs. Robert Red and she was a very, very good person.

We had a church, interdenominational church at Fastrill and they had certain preachers that would come by and preach and held lot of revivals.

JG: So there wasn't a minister there at Fastrill, just someone who would come in?

JW: Yes, it was basically, I don't think there was ever a call for a full time pastor at the church. I don't remember it. I remember that our basketball court was outside on red clay. If it rained they would have to call the games. And on Sunday's during the spring and summer there was always some baseball games on Sunday. People came from miles to get to see them.

JG: Would y'all play towns such as Rusk?

JW: No, we played people like Sardis and maybe Elkhart or Slocum. We played just all people from towns wherever they came from with their team. Some of them were very

good. Some of them probably could have gone semi-pro, from what I remember of them, how good they were.

JG: These are all workers who worked six days a week and then played ball on Sunday.

JW: Mr. George Thompson who is a real close friend of mine, and him and his son Buddy both pitched.

JG: Now is this George Thompson, the locomotive engineer?

JW: Yes, he was a very good pitcher. Boy he could swing one across the plate. And his son Buddy, who lives probably about 15 miles from me in Cherokee County, he is, I guess he still (unintelligible).

JG: Now does he come to the Fastrill reunion?

JW: I haven't seen him there. There was two boys and one daughter in that family. And I saw his brother Elmer, and I used to come to visit Mr. George, even when I was working. I'd take time off if he wanted to go somewhere. He was probably, the last seven or eight years I worked I would take time off and come and pick up Mr. Thompson and we'd ride all day long.

JG: I might want to try to talk with Buddy Thompson. I wonder if he would have any photographs of his father since his father was an engineer.

JW: He probably would, yes. Do you know Buddy?

JG: No.

JW: I can see if he is in my phone book and if he is I'll call him and tell him that Mr. Gerland at the Archives would like to speak with him.

JG: Yes, yes I'd like to.

JW: Buddy was the last person to leave Fastrill that was on the payroll. The last thing he done, he kept the commissary open for some of the stragglers because most of us didn't have cars or trucks or any mode of transportation except a pair of shoes that had thin soles on them. But he was the last person to be on the payroll there. And he boxed up and put in the boxcar what was left and brought it to Diboll and put it in the stock room at the commissary.

JG: So how old is Buddy?

JW: He is probably in his late seventies. I would think Buddy is, let's see he is probably at least ten years older than I am. But his brother Elmer worked down close most of his life. But Buddy worked for Humble Oil in the lab for years and years.

JG: I need to try to get a hold of him.

JW: Okay.

JG: I'll just go ahead and pause the tape just for a minute.

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JG: Okay, we are back now after a little break. Just wanted to maybe ask you to talk a little bit more about Diboll. You had told me some stories about working for Mr. Dred Devereaux and if you could, just tell us what you care to tell us about what you remember.

JW: Mr. Dred was a very colorful person. He had a lot of moods. And the one you tried to stay away from is when you had messed something up. And a lot of times his plates would get loose when he was talking or hollering at you. So, approximately 1950 I was working for Mr. Dred and Douglas Minton and I were working putting metal on one of the first big buildings that they had put over there near the dry kilns. I had a pair of snips that I had bought. I always tried to keep some tools around. And when I was 12 years old I probably had as good a set of tools as anybody that built around that I knew. Because I had two or three hand saws and I could always keep a lot because I had some brothers that needed all that stuff but they never knew where to put it back. So, we were standing around the fire before we went to work and Mr. Dred walked over there, and he always called me Jimmy because that was my daddy's name. And he called Douglas Minton Ramsey because that was his daddy's name. And they had grew up around Mr. Dred and he would say "Jimmy, do you have your snips this morning? We need to put some metal on." And I would do it purposely. I wouldn't carry my snips to work with me, I had a tool box and I kept them locked up at home. And I said "no sir." He said "well get in that truck and go get them, hurry up. I want you and Minton to put some metal on that building today." And I would sleep up until about twenty minutes to seven every morning and I would be dressing going to work, running and walking and I'd come back home to get the snips, mother would still have breakfast hot so I'd just sit down and eat breakfast. And those three dollar snips that I had, gave me a lot of benefits over the time that I worked for Mr. Dred. He was a prince, he was a brilliant man and he knew construction inside and out. When he built something it took a lot of people to tear it down. He always, if it got to where an engineer today would say that is strong enough, he'd put that much more in there. He was a very valuable asset to Southern Pine Lumber Company, to Temple Industries. And those people don't come along every day.

JG: I've heard that Dred had quite a temper and you kind of talked about that a little bit too. Do you remember any characteristics about him? I heard he had a foul mouth and I was talking with Jack, his son, one day, and he always remembers that hat that he had. He always waved that hat. You remember anything along those lines?

JW: If it didn't go right, he was going to tell everybody "you are fixing to start over or you can go to the office and get your time." He built a chicken yard behind his house all out of creosote lumber. And the post...

JG: A chicken house huh?

JW: A Chicken yard, I'm sorry.

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JW: A chicken yard behind his house and out to the road near the school building there. And the pickets on that fence was made out of either two inch lumber or three inch lumber he used for pickets. And that fence was about seven foot tall. So in the hot summer time we didn't climb up on the fence to see what he had over there because creosote starts running when it gets hot, it would sure blister you. He had a real idea that when he built something he wanted people to look at it fifty or hundred years later and say, "Mr. Devereaux put that up." I think he was probably the best construction engineer that I've ever been around.

JG: Do you recall any, I know from time to time he was responsible for getting the engines and cars back on the tracks after they would derail. Did any of that happen during your experience of working for him?

JW: I don't remember. No, it didn't happen when I was working for him. I would see him at Fastrill occasionally when I was a child because he was pointed out. If Mr. Strauss or Mr. Hill or any of the executives would come to Fastrill we knew it. And they used to take the payroll, they paid in cash, and the payroll would go up in the caboose of the log train. The first train out everyday, and it had armed guards on it and they would shove the caboose up near the store and the guards would take it around to Mr. Marshall's office. He was post master and also he was bookkeeper and time clerk and all the other things that go with it for all the employees at Fastrill. And they would take, the money would be counted out, the bills and the coins, and have the person's name and the amount and the date in a little manilla colored pay envelope at that time. I don't guess the train ever, no one ever attempted to rob it. Harvey Roland, he is one of the people that I know, he is passed on and he was one of the armed guards, they had shotguns. But nothing ever happened.

JG: What do you remember about World War II Diboll, just the World War II years, the forties?

JW: Well there is a lot of people left Diboll and a lot of different towns everywhere in the United States that never come back. Some of them are still at Omaha Beach. It was tough and everybody was patriotic. Everybody saved their used cooking oil, they would pour it in a can and it was contributed for making explosives, I believe it said. Dupont had to convert it to make it explosive. And during the war we had our rationing books.

But we couldn't afford a lot of the things in the ration book. If we got one pair of shoes a year we were doing good. But sugar and all, gasoline and everything was rationed, chocolates and nylon hose. But Diboll was a very patriotic bunch of people. And if you had a service man in the service they had things to hang on the front door, different colors of the stars meant different things. Serving, wounded, killed in action, was designated by the color of the stars. And the only way that you could really contact somebody in a short time would be to send a telegram. I don't think they delivered telegrams overseas. They went through the regular mail I guess. People in Diboll were very much behind the war. We knew that they were fighting in China. The Japanese was killing people all over the Far East, the Koreans, and nothing got in their way until finally with God's help, and the ingenuity of the American people, they were defeated very soundly.

And up by the Antlers Hotel they had a big billboard, fixed nice by the company. And they listed everybody that was in the service alphabetically. And would put, like my brother was Jimmy White, Jr. they would also put at the end of the name what rank he was whether he was a Seaman, First Class, Master Sergeant. But I don't know what year that was taken down but, it was always good to see that "we remember."

JG: Yes, a visual evidence, a reminder.

JW: Yes, and the company was behind nearly everything that was done here. Mr. Henry Temple was a very unique person. And his son, Gresham, I knew both on a casual basis. Back then when you was kids especially, you didn't approach an executive and just strike up a conversation unless your dad and them was friends and you were part of that. There was a pecking order for sure.

JG: What do you remember of Jay Boren? Was he with the Texas Rangers?

JW: I believe his capacity was he was a special ranger. And I was sure that he was, I believe at that time he was on Temple payroll as they needed a law enforcement person that had credentials.

JG: Do you know when he came?

JW: I don't remember exactly when he came, but I went to school with his daughter for a few years.

JG: In Diboll?

JW: Yes, and Mr. Boren was always around. Fortunately I never got caught doing anything that he would disagree with, but he did maintain law and order and he would lock you up, he had to.

JG: White and black?

JW: Yes, yes.

JG: Some of the earlier interviews that were done in the mid eighties for the *Cornbread Whistle*, several people remembered, well their views were that he was probably a little rougher on the blacks than the whites. Is that particularly your remembrance?

JW: Well, I wasn't around the blacks all that much. But it could possibly have happened but I don't remember anything where anybody was abused because of the color of their skin. We lived over here at Red Town and just across the street from us nearly was all the older Mexican Americans that moved down from Fastrill to here and I went to school with the Guerrero's and the Miranda's and the Sanchez's. Well all the Mexican American's that went to school when I did here. And we all got along great. I have some very special friends over there.

JG: Tell us, I know you moved away from Diboll and went on and did other things, can you tell us when that was and why you left and what you did?

JW: Well I guess the main reason I left, I was fixing to be drafted and I didn't want to be a foot soldier.

JG: And when was that, in the Korean War?

JW: Yes, this was in the Korean War and my brother Jimmy had just come back from the Far East and he said, we were off and I was asking him, "I've got to make a decision about leaving and I don't want to be in the Marines and I don't want to be in the Navy and I don't want to be in the Army." I said, "I'll try the Air Force. I think I can come out better that way." So I signed up. I spent four years in the Air Force. This was Douglas and Louis Stringer and Glenn Hines and several others, Jack Allen Goins and Danny Mack Smith. Douglas and Louis went in a few weeks before we did but he was still in basics when we got there. I wasn't particularly fond of being in the military but I did get to go to some good schools.

JG: So you joined the Air Force in approximately what year?

JW: I left here on about the 2nd of March, 1951 and I was inducted into the Air Force. There were so many people trying to get into the Air Force, somebody said they had 70,000 men in basic training at one time. And I got into the Air Force the 13th of March 1951, and I got out the 13th of March 1955. The first school they sent me to was Spark School Aeronautics in Tulsa, which was a civilian school. From there I was transferred to Chanute Field where I was an instrument and auto pilot technician. And I worked on the B-47's the whole time I was in there. I did work on the transit aircraft when one would come in and had a problem with instrumentation and auto pilot. After I left Chanute Field in January of '52, I was transferred to Wichita and I was assigned to the Boeing Airplane Company there in project y-back. Which at that time the bombers we had were twice as fast as any passenger airline around. We'd load up the jets and that program got broke about October of '52 and I was transferred to Pine Castle Air Force Base just outside of

Orlando. And I spent the rest of my time when I wasn't on temporary duty, I lived in Kissimmee, and that is where our oldest daughter was born.

JG: When did you meet your wife?

JW: I met my wife, Patty Pines, for the first time in June of '51. I come home on the weekend from Tulsa and I had wrote her a couple of times. And when we got together I felt like it was the only woman I ever considered marrying.

JG: Where was she from?

JW: She was from Lufkin and she had graduated from Lufkin High School in May of '51. And she went to Pineywoods Business College and she worked as a bookkeeper for a couple of finance companies. And when we were married on the first of March in '53 I went back, I had to find us a place to live and then she come back down about 4 weeks later. She had to give a notice too and train somebody for her job. And we lived in Kissimmee, Florida. Back then nobody knew where Kissimmee was at. But I think pretty well with Disney World and everything down there we went back about three times and we had moved in those two years we had moved twice, and both houses were still there and very well kept. I got out in March of '55 and I went to work for Texas Foundries, and worked up to foreman in the steel foundry.

JG: That is Texas Foundries in Lufkin?

JW: Yes, and then they didn't pay a lot of money and that is what I was looking for so I left and went to work for Brown and Root as personnel manager.

JG: Where was that in, Houston?

JW: They were based in Houston, but I was here at the Lufkin Paper Mill. They were putting in a number of paper machines. And then in October of that year the job was closing out and I went across the street and put in an application and went to work the following Monday. Back then everybody called it the Greater Buffalo Press. We worked there two weeks; Charles Anthony and myself were from Diboll. We were some of the first people hired to run the first machines.

JG: And where is this now, Southwest Color?

JW: It was Southwest Color when I retired. Right before I retired Sullivan Graphics started it and I decided I didn't want to work for Mr. Sullivan. And I took early retirement in 1990 and I've enjoyed it. But the people we worked for out at Buffalo, we started work for two dollars an hour. And the second week we were there they gave us a dollar an hour raise. So at that time we were making more than brick layers. Because a brick layer you could get a good one for \$2.75 to \$2.80 an hour. The foreman got \$3.00 and the superintendent got about \$3.25. We done real well, the company treated us well and I worked for them nearly 32 years and I enjoyed most of it.

JG: And you were personnel manager there?

JW: I went to work at Southwest Color working on the first press. I hired out as an oiler but you know, you could look around and even being a redneck, you could say “if I keep my nose clean I can move up in this company.” And after I had an illness in 1976, John Hershiser who was the plant manager and Orel Hershiser, his nephew, pitched for the Dodgers for a long time, he called me yesterday from Houston and we talked about an hour, Mr. Hershiser did. He is in charge of all the printing division, color printing division at the Houston Chronicle today. So I worked for them, in 1971 they asked me to move to Canada and put up a plant and train natives as pressmen. And I did and it was a very enjoyable experience. It started up with new machinery and we had the thing making money a long time before they thought I could. So, I had a very close relationship with the Mrs. Kessler. Her husband had died about six months before I went up and he had already asked me before he ever asked my boss. The plant manager in Lufkin didn’t know anything about it and finally he came over and he said, “I heard that Walter Kessler asked you to come up as soon as the kids were out of school to come up and start that operation.” I said, “yes he did, they are trying to find me a house now.” And he said “oh no, you won’t get a house you’re going have to travel and be by yourself.” I said, “well if you’re talking to Mr. Kessler you just tell him that if I go, my family goes.” That was one reasons I wanted out of the service so bad. I wasn’t around my family enough. But it was a very enjoyable experience to work for these people. And when they decided to sell out to the Sullivan interest I decided pretty quick that I didn’t want to represent Mr. Sullivan in the capacity that I had as personnel manager here in Lufkin. Because he said that we were going to have to cut wages and I helped get wage increases for everybody including myself. And I certainly wasn’t going to be, have two sides I was talking out of my mouth. I left with the respect of I’d say 95% of the people out there. Everyone was calling and telling me what had happened. I said, “Well there is nothing I can do about it.” But I did enjoy a good livelihood for many years, and they send me a check every month. That just proves how good they were to all of us.

JG: Okay, so you retired from...

JW: I took early retirement at 58. I had just turned 58 when I retired. We had bought a farm in Anderson County and I wanted to play around with that farm. I stayed on a retainer for 5 years to help him with some of the legal problems they had in California. But I didn’t stay quite the 5 years because I said, “this is not working out. I’m spending too much time trying to take care of somebody else’s problems.” I just called his secretary and told her that I would like to talk to him when he had time. He didn’t call for a couple of days. He thought that redneck wanted more money. And finally after I gave three depositions in one week I decided I didn’t want any more of it. I wrote a letter and told him that I was retiring.

JG: And you were living in Lufkin?

JW: Yes, Lufkin and Anderson County. I have a farm just west of Bird Mountain. It is all Temple land up there and it's kind of like home being up there.

JG: You have a house there?

JW: We have got a mobile home. I have friends up there and I have a cub tractor and I spend several hours a week helping people that can't afford to have it done, or in very poor health that can't do it.

JG: Mow grass?

JW: Yes, I told one widow woman I said "I'm going to keep your grass mowed but I don't do flower beds and window cleaning." She laughed and tried to give me money every time but I wouldn't take it.

JG: Okay, well I think that is good for now. I appreciate you doing the interview for us.

END OF INTERVIEW