

ROGER B. "PETE" SMART

Interview 172b

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Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer

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ABSTRACT: In this interview with Jonathan Gerland and Matt Gorzalski, Pete Smart reminisces about the beginnings of the Temple "T-Wheel" logo. There are conflicting stories as to its creation, but Mr. Smart tells the story he heard from Bill Hopson, from the Houston advertising firm Richie and Hopson, who designed the logo. Mr. Smart also talks about his first years as a salesman and his experiences selling Temple's southern yellow pine throughout the South. He also recalls Bob Weston and the first use of the magenta dye in the convoy of the Temple Studs, which set those studs apart from other yellow pine studs and led higher sales and better recognition at lumber yards and construction sites.

Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG): Today's date is January 25, 2011. My name is Jonathan Gerland and I'm here with Matt Gorzalski and Pete Smart, Roger Pete Smart.

Pete Smart (hereafter PS): Roger B. "Pete" Smart.

JG: Roger B. "Pete" Smart.

PS: Let's get this right for history. (laughing)

JG: All righty. He popped in out of the blue and he is going to tell us what he remembers of the design and creation of the Temple Industries T-Wheel.

PS: Well the basis of this, the reason I have some knowledge of this is that throughout the last part of my career with Temple I primarily did advertising. I was the, I was the person who dealt with the ad agencies and I did some of that fairly early on. And so, we did trade shows and that sort of thing. But, I knew the guys who did the ad agency that did the T-Wheel. The name of it, you guys have got it in your files. I don't know where it is. You remember I brought you a book one time that had a bunch of pictures and advertisements and stuff in it. I'm sure their name is on there somewhere. But it was Richie Hopkins, Hopson, yes Richie Hopson.

Matt Gorzalski (hereafter MG): Was that out of Houston?

PS: In Houston, yes.

MG: I've seen a lot of folders that say Richie Advertising on them.

PS: That is who it is.

MG: I had a hunch that was who it was.

JG: So is that two last names, two surnames Richie and Hopson?

PS: Yes, and it's a pretty old agency. I'm not sure they are still there or not.

JG: So they were hired by Temple Industries?

PS: At that time...let me go through and explain it to you a little bit. You'd have to...what is different now than what it's different than what it was then. Nowadays most ad agencies have their own graphic artist and those kind of issues. For instance J. Spell has two or three graphic artists. But, in that time they didn't use graphic artists on staff. The ad agency consisted of just, you know, the sales guy and the boss and two other guys, kind of the creative, you know, which was fine. And then of course now they still do it that way. They operate pretty much they were operating pretty much then like they would do now with photography, now that I think about it. Very few of them do their own photography; they work with an outsider. And, what was going on and the reason I got into this interview and things is there has been a debate about how this happened. But, a number of years ago I called Bill Hopson and asked him, I had his address, and I can't find it now but, he was in Houston and still living. I called him up and told him there had been a debate about it and I would like to get it worked out and confirmed. He confirmed my story and then retracted, saying, "I don't want Mr. Temple mad at me. If he thinks it was done some other way then let him have it that way but I don't want him to be upset with me." But he confirmed to me privately that this is the way it came down, which was exactly the way that I had heard it. Okay. Now, what was going on obviously was that when I came here in 1965 there had been several training classes in front of me and there were several after us.

JG: This is the sales department?

PS: The sales department and we were working for...

JG: Lindsey?

PS: Huh?

JG: I'm sorry. I was just trying to help, Bert Lindsey?

PS: Yes, well I was hired by Bert. I was at the University of Georgia and I came here with another gentleman, I talk to him occasionally. He didn't stay all that many years but it was J. B. Thompson. And we both interviewed at the University of Georgia and came here to interview and we both stayed. We moved here in January of '65 but the whole thing at that time was like a steam roller. Mr. Arthur Temple, Jr., I guess, he had determined in his mind and he was quite a...you know, he had a vision of what he wanted to do. He knew exactly what he wanted to do. I want to take this, our company, as far out nationally as we can so we can become more recognizable and this that and the other.

The whole object, in his mind he wanted to be in the paper business. And in order to do that they ultimately had to be large enough to be, you know, to become a public company, which they did. Okay but anyhow what we were doing, we were hired and it was the strangest thing you can ever imagine. Diboll, not that much different than it is now you know, when you look around, but there is a lot of the same houses and things here, but when you go back 50 years it's kind of strange. Well, I don't know how long it's been, 45, 46 years I think. But what was going on was that he brought all these trainees, most all of them college graduates and all of them came to town and we were the strangest looking people these folks had ever seen. Because it was just not, it was just a sawmill community at that time. But they had moved into the plywood business, the fiberboard plant was...hadn't been there too long so it was really hopping as far as growth was concerned. But the reason that for my discussion about this is that involved with all of this was Bob Weston. I don't remember him personally being involved in that part of it. I don't remember if he was or not, but we ultimately worked for Bob Weston. But I worked, I was hired by him and the training director at that time was a guy named Brooks Franklin. He lived here in town too. But anyhow okay now that I've kind of set the pace what they were doing, he wanted to take the company out of a sawmill town out to the, you know, the rest of the country and rightly so as a building products company instead of a sawmill company. Now, he, you know, he felt very strongly about that. So, the objective of doing this new logo was to shed the image of the sawmill and the trees. Now he knew what he wanted to look like and so...

JG: The Company had had two...pardon me Pete, but just for clarification the company had a couple of previous logos that did have a more traditional tree emblem inside of it.

PS: They were a very proud lumber company at that time and most of the other lumber companies in the area, but he was unique or Temple was unique at that time because of the venture into plywood that still exists. The building still exists, it has something else in it. But, that was debatably there were two plants being built in the United States, one by Georgia Pacific and one by Temple and southern pine being used in plywood.

JG: I think the t-wheel if I'm not mistaken was what November of '63?

MG: Yes, the annual report...

JG: Late '63 was when it was unveiled, just to set the stage for the time period which pre-dated the opening of the plywood plant. A lot of the things you were saying.

PS: That is where they were headed. And I had always heard this and now there were some of the guys in training. I don't think training classes go back that far. I think they go into '64 maybe, whatever. Training classes included Harold Maxwell, Joe Sample and myself and many, many others. But what Mr. Temple wanted to do now, I'm giving him credit for this. I don't know whether it was he and Bob Weston or just he, but he wanted to get rid of that image that I talked about. And so, he had gone, they had gone to several ad agencies primarily in Houston and Dallas and they had given the assignment to..."they winner take all" kind of thing. This is the way we need our logo built and their

instructions to them was obviously we want a very attractive logo but it can't have trees in it. And, see that was the assignment and so, Bill, Bill Hopson and his agency farmed this out to a graphic artist in Houston and then they all submitted their stuff to Hopson and they went through it and looked at it and decided and of course they picked out the t-wheel. Bill said that the night before they were coming here to show it to the company they had worked late and so there in their office in Houston, he and another gentleman, and they are going through stuff that they are going to talk about, you know. This is a pretty major push for them as an agency. And so they were sitting there at a table doing this and they had a college student working there at some kind of...what do you call them?

JG: An intern?

PS: An intern program and they had this t-wheel laid out on the table and everything and she walked by the table and she said, "I love that and the way you've got those little trees in there is great." And he said his heart dropped. "What trees?" And then she showed them the tree, you know, in between the t's. Well then he said for the next two hours they debated among themselves as to whether to bring this up here and present it because they thought it was the winner. They had others but they thought, what if they see that and what if they call us on it or whatever. And so he said that they decided to come with it as it was and so they brought the t-wheel up here. They presented it to among others Mr. Temple. I don't know who else. It could have been Joe Denman, it could have been whatever. And...

JG: I've heard Temple Webber was involved somehow.

PS: This is later.

JG: Okay.

PS: Yes, that is the funny part of it.

JG: Okay.

PS: Because Mr. Temple and whoever else had been involved with the first meeting did not see the trees. And a lot of people don't, you have to show it to them. And so he said that they decided to take it to Temple Webber and Temple Webber was kind of, he was a boss with the company at that time, you know, and he was a primary person and so anyhow they walked over across the hall in the old office building across the hall and everybody went into his office and they showed him the thing and he says, "That is really good, I like that a lot, Arthur, and the way they put those trees in there is great." And he says, "What trees?" you know. And that is exactly the way it came down. Then at that point the decision was made to go with it despite this because not everybody saw them. But now there was kind of a thing around town at that time that it was kind of understood we don't talk about trees in the logo, you know. If somebody sees it fine if they don't, but you don't go out and tell people look we got trees in our logo because they were dead

serious about this image, okay. And for your information we went...he knows all of this...we went from here as trainees and I went to Charlotte, North Carolina. Now, we were called at that time, we referred to ourselves as missionary salesman because we really didn't have enough product to sell out there. We could sell fiberboard and things and we had this agreement here in town, we had a sales agreement with CertainTeed Corporation who is already selling fiberboard and roof insulation and so it was...we had to compete with ourselves in a lot of these markets and whatever. We weren't quite ready for plywood. We got plywood while I was in South Carolina, I mean in North Carolina. And so, I traveled to parts of Virginia and North and South Carolina and so we took the t-wheel and went out and promoted the company and that is what they wanted okay. Now, I'm not saying they were being deceptive or not but, they soon became, it became the thing is this is Temple and we're now involved we are Regional. We are not a Texas company we are regional and we stretch from here to there to Virginia, which was shocking for a lot of people, you know. So, the t-wheel went on the road and it stuck and as far as I'm concerned it's probably one of the most successful marketing things I've ever seen.

JG: Now the company eventually came to embrace the trees and even had definitions for what they mean, I understand. The tree aspect of the t-wheel, maybe not initially.

PS: Well I don't know that or not but, I'm sure they did. But, this was...

JG: I've heard Jack Sweeny comment on the six points and how that is defined into the different aspects of the company.

PS: Well they were just using that to say this is particleboard, this is so and so and go around, whatever. But the objective originally was to shake that sawmill image and because they wanted to be much bigger than that and it was just...and you guys can fill in the blanks. But it wasn't but a short time before Clifford Grum landed in town and they started pursuing, you know, taking the company and Temple Industries and of course he came from Republic National Bank here. He was the person doing that and he started traveling the country and of course when they would get out and tell their story they would say, you know, "We are from Texas to here and we are doing this and we're doing that." It was all true but it was probably being floated more than it was.

JG: And again Bob Weston, Matt has asked me about him before. Did you want to add something Matt? Or maybe the role of...

MG: Bob Weston's side? I only know the one story that Patsy told me.

PS: What did Patsy tell you?

MG: Patsy, when I was working on Bob Weston's collection, his business papers, it said in his biographical sketch that Patsy had written that Bob Weston designed the t-wheel and came up with it himself. And I asked her where she got the information because it's kind of a big deal based on all the conflicting stories about the t-wheel. She

pointed me to an article in the In-Touch magazine, the newsletter for the company and said she thought it was in there. However it was not in there. The article was more about how Bob Weston came up with the magenta stud and marketed the purple stud.

PS: I really don't know whether Bob was involved in that or whether he was talking to the agencies with them because he was the marketing guy. It would be really interesting if you guys could find somebody authoritatively enough to...

JG: Did Mr. Hopson mention Bob Weston?

PS: No not to me, we just didn't talk about that. We were talking about the thing and how he presented it and what was said. But...

JG: He would have probably been involved then in some way.

PS: There was a story that we always heard that was really interesting about Bob Weston. How he came here and why he came here. He came here on a short term contract. I'm pretty sure of that but, he had worked for one of the major Westinghouse, G. E. somebody and he was...he left their employment and Mr. Temple brought him here. The only way he could...he was really high, top notch marketing guy. He really was. In no way somebody of his stature could be here. So, understand that he said we will come and stay two years and we will do this and we will do that. And he pretty much lived that out and...but I don't know enough about that story to confirm it. I just know that...and we've had very little contact with him, but he was the one who put things together as far as going out and setting up who went where in the sales and whatever. But the greatest story to me was that when Bob left town he got another job. He was evidently put the word out and Boise Cascade, I think it was.

MG: Yes, that is where he went.

PS: He contacted them and they brought a jet down here which was real early on. Jets were some kind of...it was really a high end airplane, picked him up out here and they said once they got up and had a few drinks and a little snack lunch and their headed out to Idaho or wherever and they said Bob said, "Now if you guys think you can come down here and pick me up and buy me a few drinks and wine me and dine me and fly me back, if you think you are impressing me you are." (laughter) And, they put the, evidently put that one trip put it together and that is where he went. He went to work and left here. It's almost like, in my opinion, it was almost like he was here on a short term to do a specific job and then he could turn it over and when he turned it over it was fine, you know. I mean, you know, Henry Holubec came along behind him. He was real close to Bob Weston and he probably knows a lot of these things. But, it's always been kind of disconcerting for me because of these discussions about who did the t-wheel. I know who did the T-Wheel and I don't know that that really matters but, that is the way it came down. It's a very unique story and we all liked it a lot.

JG: Do you care to comment on the doing away or the phasing out of the t-wheel? You don't have to I'm just curious.

PS: No, I am not that close to it you know.

JG: You had already retired by that [time].

PS: I'm not sure. I don't think so, but it was pure and simply a matter of there became a big push by Kenny Jastrow to make everybody in the company look and feel like we are going to all be Inland. You know what I mean? And he really wanted us to be Temple-Inland and then the paper group would be so and so Inland. And then when they went out to a customer everybody would have this same identification and it makes sense in a lot of ways. But anyhow the way I think it was is pretty much that building products was not that strong in terms of relations. If you look at Guaranty Bank and you had Inland Container and so the first one that got beat over the head was the building products company. You guys need to drop that, this is who you are gonna be and it was kind of sad because initially in order to ensure that this change was going to happen they enforced it to the point you couldn't...

JG: There were T-wheel police going about. (laughter)

PS: Yes, well I don't know if there were T-wheel police but there were some real sad things that happened. And believe me, you just can't imagine how many T-wheels were in this part of the country because you could take them off the plants and everything but you still had them out in the forest. You know, there on signs and on corners of property here and there and they used to put them on trees some and everything. So it was really a tough deal.

JG: There are two flag poles at Sabine Investment still, or old Sabine Investment.

PS: So, anyhow that is kind of the way that came down. But I do not have firsthand knowledge but I understand that a plane landed at the airport and a group from Austin came in and there was a mechanic, a guy that worked on helicopters and he had on an old t-wheel shirt. They didn't say anything to him, went to the office and while they were in the office they called Austin and told Austin to tell the airport guys to get that shirt off.

JG: Here in Angelina County?

PS: That is how bad it was really. And so, you know, a lot of customers even didn't care for that. They liked the T-wheel and you know, particularly in big markets like Dallas, you know, because it had been around for a long time and was very well accepted. In combination with the T-wheel was the purple stud. Now, Bob Weston did that. No question about that. I know for a fact that he did that. I'm talking about he developed that. But in those days they used what they called convoy treatments and it was a moisture repellent. It was not permanent.

JG: Spell that. Like convoy?

PS: Yes.

JG: C-o-n-v-o-y?

PS: Yes. They call it convoy and there was a major company that made this stuff but everybody used it.

JG: Is this a treatment of transport?

PS: Huh?

JG: Does that mean the way it was going to be transported?

PS: Well what they would do, they would take, and they did it at all the plants and they may still do some of it. When it comes off the planer mill and right...they drop it down in a vat and just push it right through the vat and comes out the other side, drips and goes down the conveyor belts and it's almost dry before it hits the other end. But, what it does is they used to tell us that it would give you 45 days of water repellent treatment. So, therefore when you deliver it most people in lumber yards around the country would leave their lumber outside.

JG: Or deliver it to a job site and it might sit there a little while.

PS: And you have to go back a little bit to understand this is that the period that we are dealing with Southern Pine was not well accepted in most areas of the country except where it was produced. You know what I mean? People here understood it and dealt with it or whatever but, if you go to Indiana or somewhere like that where they didn't see it they didn't like it and the reason is because it will bow on you if it's not treated correctly; if it's not dried and whatever. Then there is some people who know this better than I do. We talked about World War II and some things that happened in World War II. In order to get a lot of lumber into the housing market after the war they kind of started speeding the process up, the drying process, and made it more susceptible to crook and that sort of thing. For instance, when I went to South Carolina and North Carolina and we told them we had yellow pine plywood those dealers and their guys had been around a long time. I had a dealer one time tell me, he said, "Son, I am not buying any yellow pine plywood." And I said, "Well it's really pretty good." He said, "You cut the bands on that bundle and it's going to jump out in the street." You know, that is the way they felt about it. So, we had to...in all the other marketing you had to overcome that part of it. And so, Bob Weston was working on this. They produced what was called the Temple Jones Crook Reducer and it was a way of taking some of the stress and it was actually you got a little bow into it and you put it in the machine and it cuts it down to a straight piece and it really worked. Because nobody would use pine as a stud at that time and the reason is, obviously is that the stud bows it is going to affect the inside of the house and everything.

JG: Yes, on a sheetrock wall it would be terrible.

PS: It's not good. If you went to Dallas or somewhere like that and for many years to follow all you ever saw was West Coast White Pine and things of that nature that didn't have that. But, it has, pine has a superior structural strength, nail hole ability all of it was great but it just had that tendency to do that. So, they kind of whipped that with that stud. Well it was driving Bob crazy, I mean, Weston. It was driving him nuts because he had come out of...the industry he was working under I don't know if it was G.E. but he had been involved with things like refrigerators and stoves and things like that. So, it was pretty easy to differentiate your product. You did it with, you know, features and colors and things, but everybody in the south had yellow convoyed lumber. And the thinking on it was the manufacture who did the convoy, you know, it was, "Hey man y'all selling yellow pine lumber." And so, that later got to be a no-no. We were not ever allowed to say yellow pine. We had to say pine lumber for that reason. So anyhow, he was walking through a plant, I don't know whether it was here, I guess it was here, and he said, "What is that stuff?" And the guys with him said, "That is convoy." He says, "Why is it yellow?" And, they said, "It's a dye pigment, they put dye in it." "You mean you could change it into some other color?" And they said, "Yes" and boy lights went off in his head and so then they did according to the legend they did some marketing research on colors and things and magenta came out of that somehow or another. And but I remember we went to...we as trainees they would send us to big cities in groups like missionaries going out. We went out into job sites all over the place. I went to New Orleans and worked several weeks with a guy name Kirk Culotte and Kirk had done a really good job down there. But what we were doing was going out on a job and walking up to the guys with the hammer and say, "What do you think of this new purple stud?" "Well I hadn't used them, I saw them over there, pretty interesting," you know. Then you would find people that used them and they probably weren't that much better. They weren't twenty five percent better than what they were using but they would say, "Those things are great." And we would say, "Why are they great." "I don't know, they look straight and look good. I like that color." And they bought in big time and so, for whatever reason nobody for a long time didn't do that, didn't copy cat but then later some people went to brown and whatever and I guess they just, I don't know, but to this day there is a perceived quality that goes with that color. And what I'm saying is, I may be wrong, and a good sawmill man will tell me I'm wrong but if you took our regular two by four and laid it by a stud I'm not sure how much difference there is but at that time what made it even more of an issue that I remember is that most of the studs came out of small logs and cores, plywood cores and things of that nature. So, you got more...as you get closer to the heart of the wood you get more stresses, you know, and whatever. And so, it was really a battle to get that to happen. I've seen them run at the plywood plant in Pineland and they were running at that time I guess a hundred percent plywood core. You know, when they kick it out of a lathe they got this much and then they would get two, they would get four two by fours out of it and that was the stud.

JG: I think he's talking about, Matt, they would peel the outer layers off for plywood sheets and then the core that is left over...

MG: Okay.

PS: Yes, you could only peel it down so far and then you add this thing and it would spit that thing out. So, it could go into a fence post, you know, or something else like this or in our case we started making studs out of it. It was a real good thing. It was probably a major success for the company at that time. Anyhow, I'm very happy to have been a part of it. It was a time that you can't believe. Everybody was excited and you know, it was... the company was really doing something uniquely different and I told Jonathan this on many occasions. I really truly believe that a lot of people now say there is no such thing as vision, you know. You hear a lot of people arguing that. They say it's just good company people and good executives or whatever, but he had an unbelievable vision of where he wanted to go and we were just part of it.

JG: Arthur Temple?

PS: Yes, and we were just part of that. I told this in my other deal. I'm telling this for you. You want to cut this off, I don't care. We were all at Scrappin' Valley as a group and having a kind of farewell party and whatever before we went out in the field and Lottie and Mr. Temple came and they were there for dinner and spoke a little while. Then everybody started playing card games and some were sitting around drinking a little beer and it was just a nice event and we were at a table of probably eight or ten people and we were sitting there and Mr. Temple came over and sat down and he started talking about where the company was going to go and what part we would play in that. And he talked all the way through lumber to building products to paper. "We will be in the paper business" and this and that and the other. But I never will forget it because at the end of this thing, Donna was with me, but at the end of it he looked at us and he kind of smiled and he said, "Guys I know a lot of you are not going to stay, a lot of you are short timers," but he says, "Some of you will stay." He said, "I hope you will stay." He says, "We are going to have a lot of fun." Now he says, "Now damn it, I didn't say we were going to make a lot of money." He said, "I said we were going to have a lot of fun." And it was fun. It was amazing and truly we didn't make a lot of money, of course we ended up doing okay. But when I was in...to give you an idea, when I was in Charlotte, North Carolina, that was the economy at that time, I made \$450 a month. A month! When we came to town here Pavlic Supermarket, it is gone now, but it was the only supermarket in town and we lived in, Donna and I lived in the Clean Treet Apartments. It was right up here and it was owned by Lottie and her sisters. They were virtually one room apartments. You know, you had a kitchen over here and a little living room area and it was square like this and this part over here was the bathroom and the bedroom. You could see all the rooms from one location, you know. It was the only thing we could afford. They were nice enough at that time but they were just small. The first day we were in town, we hadn't been married long, we took our paycheck and Donna went to...no we took money we had brought from home, from Georgia, which wasn't that much but anyhow she went to Pavlic's and bought a mop and a broom and a bucket and some food for a few days and this that and the other and, she came back she was in a cold sweat. She said, "We will never make it." I said, "Why?" She said, "I spent twenty five dollars at Pavlic's... we only got so and so." But, twenty five dollars was pretty

disruptive at that time. And one of my favorite stories, I'm telling you this it doesn't matter about history at all but she would...do you know where the Clean Treet's were? You know right behind the Free Press back there and across from Woody's, there is some open space now. They tore them down. Anyhow, she was there in the apartment all day. I was in training here in town. But anyhow, so one of the things that she would do every day if the sun was shining was walk up to the post office. Post office was in the same place it is right now. But anyhow, the town was kind of small and, as I said you know, bringing in eight, ten college families, not that people were ignorant I don't mean that, it's just that you didn't use that many. Joe Denman and others and Stubby and them were college graduates too but we had flooded the town with a lot of folk. But anyhow she did this for a while and it was really funny. She walked in the post office here in Diboll one morning and she walked in and the lady behind the counter said, "Hi Mrs. Smart." She says, "You got a letter from your momma." (laughter) Small town USA, and sure enough she had some kind of a card or something.

JG: She didn't know what the contents of it were though did she?

PS: No, they were just that way.

JG: Yes, right. (laughter)

PS: And, at that time of course the Pine Bough was blowing and going and that was the meeting place in town. It really and truly was, it was a fun time. Mr. Temple kind of regretted it in later years but, everybody lived in town, you know, the senior officers of the company. You could throw a rock from here and hit most of them, you know, from where they lived in town. And so, you would go to the Pine Bough and you would see a lot of the principals involved in everyday business.

JG: Well Pete, thank you very much. I'll go ahead and stop the recorder now.

END OF INTERVIEW