

W. TEMPLE WEBBER, JR.

Interview 221a

April 12, 2011, at Kirby Drive, Houston, Texas

Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer

Patsy Colbert, Transcriber

ABSTRACT: In this interview with Jonathan Gerland, W. Temple Webber reminisces about growing up as a member of the Temple family and talks about the family businesses. A banker in Houston, Mr. Webber grew up in Texarkana, AR and Texarkana, TX near his aunts and uncles and cousins in various branches of the Temple family, including T.L.L. Temple, T.L.L. Temple, Jr., his grandmother Gertrude Temple, and her sisters Georgie Temple Munz and Marguerite, Arthur Temple, cousins Arthur Temple, Sr., Bill Temple, and Sally Temple Bond, among others. He reminisces about his father, W. Temple Webber, Sr. and his relationship with T.L.L. Temple and Arthur Temple, Sr. He also discusses moving company operations from Texarkana to Diboll, Arthur Temple, Jr.'s tenure as the company's head and the changes he made, as well as the various family members and their feelings about the changes. He also talks about the T.L.L. Temple foundation and the changes within its structures through the years as it began to give more donations to the communities it served.

Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG): Today's date is April 12, 2011. My name is Jonathan Gerland and I'm in the office with W. Temple Webber, Jr. We are at his office here on Kirby Drive in downtown Houston and we are going to do an oral history interview today. Mr. Webber if you would maybe just begin by let's just start in Texarkana just growing up in Texarkana.

W. Temple Webber (hereafter WTW): Well of course one of my earliest memories in Texarkana was that I lived on Fifth St., 320 East Fifth Street, and right next door to the home of T. L. L. Temple, my great grandfather. After his death in 1935 the home became the offices of Southern Pine Lumber Company where my great uncle, Arthur Temple, Sr. and my father, W. Temple Webber, both worked. And, of course it was an unusual situation where on the second floor of the home my father's office was the bedroom in which he was born.

JG: How about that. So, that was T. L. L. Temple's home at Fifth and Walnut is it?

WTW: Well it's Walnut and Fifth Street.

JG: Walnut and Fifth Street, okay.

WTW: Walnut and Fifth Street, and of course it remained to be the offices of Southern Pine Lumber Company until after Arthur Temple, Sr.'s death in 1951. In 1952 the offices of Southern Pine Lumber Company were moved to Diboll.

JG: So your father's office was actually in the room that he was born in.

WTW: Which he was born.

JG: How about that?

WTW: And he left that office in 1952 with two or three others in the office to move to Lufkin and Diboll and from that point a lot of the activities of the Temple family were, well my grandmother and her sisters were still alive, it seemed like the company activities of course were moved down farther to East Texas.

JG: So, you were born in 1931 and you actually have memories of your great grandfather, T. L. L. Temple?

WTW: Yes I do.

JG: Okay.

WTW: Yes, right, he died on my fourth birthday.

JG: On your fourth birthday.

WTW: October 3, 1935. And, before, really I guess beginning when I was about two and half to three years old he had a habit of wanting me to go, to drive with him with two or three others to his farm which was right outside of Texarkana. So, usually at that time I was dressed put in the...taken across the alley as we referred to it then, taken across the alley and put in the car waiting for my great grandfather to leave to go to the farm on Sunday morning.

JG: And, you would drive in an automobile?

WTW: Yes, we would drive in his automobile to the farm. I have very vague memories of what happened after we got to the farm. All I can remember is those were my...usually an hour or two we spent out at the farm and then back home, of course, ready for his Sunday dinner which normally was accompanied by any number of visitors. He always had a group of visitors for Sunday dinner, Sunday lunch.

JG: Did your mom and dad go with you on these excursions or just you and your grandfather, great grandfather?

WTW: No, no, usually I was just sent alone.

JG: Okay.

WTW: There was always somebody in the front seat to hold my hand when he was not interested in holding my hand. (laughter) Another thing that I have a fairly good memory

of is that when usually Sunday noon or on special occasions, Thanksgiving or Christmas or what have you, where they were having dinner in the dining room at his home, I would be back in the kitchen with some of his servants who were wonderful, wonderful people. I tell you, they lived in the lower apartments or what have you over the garage there on Fifth Street. And, I remember one very well. She lived to be I think a hundred years old, Alice. And Alice was always the one that took care of me and see that I surely had enough for Sunday dinner and then to be taken in when they served the dessert and I would sit on the lap of my great grandfather. So, it was a fun thing as I remember and of course, he was a very serious type person. He, I guess he had his time of laughter, not that I recall too many. So, and then of course we continued to live on Fifth Street until 1941 and that is when we moved, my mother and dad and I moved from Arkansas over to the Texas side. And, at that time we were only about two blocks from the Arthur Temple Sr. home on Pine Street.

JG: If we could, sorry to interrupt, but I didn't want to leave that earlier house if we could.

WTW: Okay.

JG: If you had any more memories in talking several years back with Bill Temple, he described it as jokingly called it a compound where members of the family all lived at Fourth, Fifth and Sixth and he would talk about how, I guess y'all were double cousins or something like that. Do you have any memories of that? Were you closely their age did you...

WTW: Oh yes.

JG: Just describe growing up and playing. He mentioned a lot about Sally Temple and just playing in the neighborhood and that kind of thing.

WTW: Sally Temple, of course Sally and her sister Susanne they lived down Fifth Street towards the post office about two blocks. Bill, I can appreciate that because his grandmother and his great aunt lived on the corner of Fourth Street and Walnut. There was a house in between the T. L. L. Temple home and their home, the William Temple home. And of course William Temple was Sally Temple's grandfather. Now, they...my great grandfather...I'm always a little bit confused about this Jonathan, I have to get my wheel [transcriber's note: he is referring to the Temple Family Genealogy Wheel] out to remember that...the association with William Temple, of course William Temple, he and his brother came down from Virginia and went into the farming business along the Red River over in Fulton, Arkansas which is only about nineteen miles from Texarkana. And he...I remember well when I was about eight or nine years old the hospital was located caddy cornered from the T. L. L. Temple home. The ambulance would go down that ramp on Fifth St. a half block away and whenever the ambulance went down there the kids always ran to that to see what in the world had happened. Well, we ran down there one Saturday, I guess it was either the summer time or a Saturday morning and we didn't know it at the time but it was William, Sally's grandfather. He had been in an automobile

accident going to the farm and as it turned out he died shortly that afternoon. They lived there. Bill lived on Sixth St. so he had the biggest play yard in the whole neighborhood. His side yard was the biggest baseball field we had.

JG: I may be wrong about this. I wanted to think that he mentioned where his father built that house used to be T. L. L. Temple's tennis courts. Is that right?

WTW: Could have been.

JG: Something like that. Anyway, I didn't mean to interrupt you but, that fits with maybe having a big baseball field. And your house was actually built by your grandmother, Gertrude?

WTW: Yes, Gertrude.

JG: T.L.L.'s daughter.

WTW: Yes. And so, yes, but I had...growing up as I say, we were there until I was ten years old when we moved from that Fifth Street location out to Oak Hill place on the Texas side and with that I started going to another school. I started going to the Texas School. So, you might say at that point I lost contact with Sally and Bill kind of temporarily because I used to see them on an everyday basis. All of a sudden I was a number of blocks away. I didn't see them very much then. But that was...and then at some point I don't know what happened to the William Temple home there on the corner of Fourth and Walnut. The little Rogers house, which was between the two there on Walnut, that was there for a long long time.

JG: Now, that is a name R-o-g-e-r-s?

WTW: Yes.

JG: And he had some connection with the lumber company?

WTW: No, but there is somewhere in there where they refer to as cousin, I can't remember what her name was now; but anyway they referred to I think it was somewhere along the Lewis Family. Of course the Lewis Family, the Latane's, and the Temple's, they all came out of the Miller Tavern, in Virginia, Essex County.

JG: Right, so then you moved, about ten years old or so and then you moved near Arthur Temple, Sr.'s home.

WTW: Arthur Temple, Sr. on one end and the Harry Munz house which was on Wood Street just about three blocks away from me. So, I had those two families and then we had Ross Perot [pronouncing it pee-row] in the middle, so he was the corner of 29th and Olive.

JG: Well let's talk about him for a little bit if you don't mind. Now you called him Perot [pronouncing it pee-row, like Mr. Webber].

WTW: I'm going to say Perot [pronouncing it pee-row] until the day I die too, Jonathan. (laughing)

JG: Okay.

WTW: That story he tells about his friend's teacher in Indianapolis changed his name, I don't believe that. (laughter) He of course, Ross lived a block away from where I lived.

JG: And just about a year older?

WTW: Yes, I guess closer to two years older and he was in...the Texas schools, see they were on an eleven grade system where the Arkansas schools were on a twelve grade system. And, right along the time the second or...I guess it was 1942, '43 somewhere along in there is when Texas went to the twelve grade schools and of course it pushed up so instead of being one grade ahead of me Ross was two grades ahead of me. And, the same is true of a good friend of ours right around the corner whose father was a doctor in Texarkana, very, very fine well respected doctor. The three of us were problems in the neighborhood for a long time.

JG: What do you mean by that?

WTW: Oh, I tell you, we had across the caddy corner from Ross was a family whose name was Brown and he was mayor of Texarkana, Texas. And one year on Halloween we were loose in the neighborhood and Charles decided it was time to egg, throw an egg at the mayor's house. Well the next day in the Texarkana Gazette there was a story on the front page of the paper "new dealers egg Mayor Brown." (laughter) I really didn't know what a new dealer was if you want to know the truth about it. But anyway, it became the subject at my mother and fathers, at dinner that night and they were laughing and I all of a sudden I just couldn't stand it any longer and I said to both of them I said "I'm not sure I know what a new dealer is if it was it was Charles and Ross and me."

JG: So you confessed up?

WTW: So, that is the sort of thing. We were problems and, we also oh, it's amazing to me now how close things were back then. You may have been two or three blocks away but it was almost like you were next door. The Holly's, the Robert Hawley's, Mrs. Robert Hawley was Zetta who later became my step mother, married my father.

JG: H-a-w-l-e-y?

WTW: Yes, H-a-w-l-e-y. They lived next door to my Aunt Georgie. Of course the Hawley girls were very, very, popular. At this age they were about 16, 14 and 12 and of course, just right in our league so, we were constantly bugging the Hawley girls. So, but

that seems now like, as I say, almost right next door to me. Texarkana was a close community. I think I grew up being very good friends with my parents and my great uncles and aunts' friends. Their generation at that time seemed to be my generation even though I had a lot of friends my own age, Ross and all, but we associated with them. They gave us rides to school. They would take their time out to drive us out to Texarkana Country Club.

JG: I know Harry Munz was relatively young when he passed away. Do you have any memories of him?

WTW: Oh do I! He was a great baseball fan and when I was about nine or ten years old when the St. Louis Cardinals were coming to life and making the World Series. He would tell me great stories about all the players. He knew everyone of them.

JG: He was very athletic. He was a pretty good golfer too wasn't he?

WTW: Well he was, but of course you know my Aunt Georgie was the golfer. She and my Aunt Marguerite, Mrs. Robert Keeler, she was...they were constantly on the golf course and good.

JG: Now did your father and mother play golf?

WTW: My father and mother both played golf. My father was a pretty good golfer.

JG: And this was all at the Texarkana Country Club?

WTW: Yes, which was founded of course, as you probably know, by my great grandfather, T. L. L. Temple. He went out and found this property and bought it and then went around making phone calls and personal visits to different ones, Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Wadley and all and say, "Look I bought this property to build a golf course now come help me out and get me out of the trap." And they did and built the most beautiful little clubhouse and golf course there. Of course today it was built for real amateurs and that is all but it was a great little place.

JG: I'm really digressing here and I didn't mean to get you off my outline here, but in the big context of Texarkana, because you were talking before we started the interview about how special a place Texarkana was, and we are talking now what 80 to 100 years ago the differences. I've been through Texarkana a few times, you know, you go on the interstate you are not really in the town. But, I had gone up there I guess about five or six years ago and went to the downtown area and of course like many towns, not just Texarkana, but the towns look run down. I couldn't help but notice the old Grim Hotel and how dilapidated that was. Some of the jokes about the name, at the time I know Arthur Temple, Sr. was trying to raise funds for that project when it was getting going. The name was even a concern at the time. But, I don't know what my question is now but, just if you could comment on, you know, reflecting back how has Texarkana changed? What happened? You know, the Temples there were sort of the headquarters of

a forest products industry there and of course the Temple's, the operations were farther south and moved. Texarkana is a different place now than it was back then.

WTW: Oh yes, entirely different...ugh...Jonathan...

JG: What has changed?

WTW: What has changed is...I can't tell you, I bet it's been ten years since I've been there. Texarkana as I remember growing up was a thriving place at the corner of Broad and State Line. You had at one corner you had the Texarkana National Bank and across the street you had the State National Bank. It was the two biggest banks between Dallas and Little Rock. Here were two financial giants you might say and of course today, Texarkana National is now Capitol One Bank. I mean I don't sense any of the people being associated with Texarkana National Bank as being these characters you see on their TV commercials. Across the street at the State National Bank I'm not sure what bank that is or if it's even a bank. I know the Texarkana National is, it's all moved. It's moved west, actually more north than anywhere else. Texarkana grew north and, I see another thing is the big spot in downtown Texarkana was Bryce's Cafeteria. Did you ever eat at Bryce's Cafeteria?

JG: No.

WTW: I don't know how you missed it.

JG: Tell me about it.

WTW: That is where Mrs. Arthur Temple had lunch every day.

JG: Okay.

WTW: Every day!

JG: Every day.

WTW: After Arthur Sr. died you could always spot...

JG: Mrs. Katherine Sage Temple?

WTW: Yes, Katherine Sage Temple's car right in front of the Bryce's Cafeteria.

JG: That is B-r-i-c-e?

WTW: B-r-y-c-e, he was Bryce Lawrence and he as a matter of fact, Bryce and his wife Dorothy moved. They bought the Arthur Temple home on Pine Street a number of years ago. I think within the last month or two months I was talking with this friend of mine in Texarkana, Hays McClurkin, in Texarkana and he said I've got to go I'm going to

Dorothy Lawrence's funeral. She was 92 or 93 years old and she died. They had...she and Bryce had sold that house but they were the ones who initially bought it, the Arthur Temple home there on Pine. But, as I say it was a thriving place and that was the...as I say Bryce's Cafeteria right next door to the bank was the center, Offenhauser Insurance. I'm sure that has come up in some of your interviews.

JG: Yes sir.

WTW: Offenhauser...

JG: Handled all the insurance for the company for a long time.

WTW: Josh Morris, who was Offenhauser's son-in-law, married Marjorie Offenhauser. Josh Morris, they lived next door to us on Oak Hill, so I was very, very close to both the Morris's, all of the Morris's. But, that was one of the key spots in that little triangle down by where the State Line and Broad Street. And, of course, I could probably go down Broad Street right now and wouldn't even know the same shop.

JG: Where you were.

WTW: I mean on Broad Street right two doors down from the Texas State National Bank on the Arkansas State side was Harry Munz dress shop, the Criterion. The Criterion was like, you talk about a classy ladies shop that was it.

JG: Criterion, is that what you are saying?

WTW: It was called the Criterion.

JG: Okay.

WTW: You are making me remember some names I didn't even know that I could remember.

JG: Now, going back to Ross Perot as you say, now he went to Patty Hill School is that right?

WTW: Yes.

JG: Did you go to this school?

WTW: Yes.

JG: Okay, so what kind of students were y'all?

WTW: You know, I don't remember Ross being a real good student and I surely wasn't. I seemed to make it real well through school but I was not a Phi Beta Kappa or what have

you, an honor student at any stage of my life. But, I don't remember Ross really being. Ross was just a good, he was a good plow horse. Of course his family, his mother and father, were really good hard working people.

JG: What did his father do for a living?

WTW: His father was a cotton trader.

JG: A cotton trader.

WTW: He had a little office out on the outskirts of Texarkana that he went to everyday. Open that door and when those cotton trucks or whatever would pull through there he would see if he could trade with them and all. That was his life. And, he...Mrs. Perot, I don't ever remember her working, but she sure did a good job of raising her daughter Betty and Ross. We had a lot of fun back in those days. About once or twice a year Ross will call up here and he will remind me of something you know. He'd say, "I just heard from so and so and we were talking about you." He'd just say, "How are you doing, how is your family doing?" and that sort of thing. We kind of cross courtesies and that is about it.

JG: Again, I'm jumping around a good bit, but let's talk a little bit more about your father.

WTW: Okay.

JG: You said he worked in the T.L.L. Temple home from say mid thirties to about fifty-one, fifty-two I guess you said. Did...I'm assuming he came down to Diboll and Pineland from time to time to check on things. Did you ever as a youth remember traveling with him? Did you visit Diboll a time or two?

WTW: Only once or twice did I have the opportunity to spend the night in the...what did they call it the library?

JG: Yes, the so called library.

WTW: So called library. (laughter) There was the best poker game in town on the second floor, I recall that.

JG: Okay. (laughter) So, you remember traveling there at least once?

WTW: Yes, and of course with that I remember Henry Temple.

JG: Okay.

WTW: Uncle Henry was a...I never really knew Uncle Henry real well. I knew of him and knew Gresham.

JG: Bill Temple mentioned that he and Sally sometimes would come down to Diboll in the summer starting about '39 or '40 somewhere in there and he said that is about the time '38, '39 is when Henry Gresham Temple had the house built that Arthur Jr. and Lottie later lived in. Arthur Temple, Sr. had that house built, the Temple home there in Diboll for Henry Gresham.

WTW: It was built for...I tell you, I think I'm pretty sure of this Jonathan of what I'm saying, that house was built for Henry Temple to get him to move from Pineland over to Diboll.

JG: Yes sir, yes sir.

WTW: And, at the time he didn't want to do it.

JG: Yes sir. That is the story that Bill Temple had told.

WTW: He did not want to move.

JG: He liked it there in Pineland huh? He said that there was a little swimming pool that they had built and they later filled it in. He said it was...that he and Sally would swim in the yard there at that home. I was just curious if you had any memories like that.

WTW: No, no, I tell you what because at that time I was...probably when they were going to Diboll I was going to camp. In the beginning of 1940 I went to...started going to Camp Stewart in Hunt, Texas in the summer time for six weeks.

JG: Okay.

WTW: So, I have no memory of going to that swimming pool.

JG: Okay.

WTW: No, but as I say my father used to go to Diboll and my mother sometimes questioned if he really had to go. He and my Uncle Arthur they were big buddies and whenever Arthur said, "Well it's time for us to go, I've talked to Eddie Farley and I've talked to so and so and they want us to come down and visit about something and incidentally," he said, "bring some money."

JG: Incidentally! (laughter) Well, tell me a little bit more about your father. Of course, we see his name a lot in the records, but we really don't know a whole lot about him in comparison of course to Arthur Jr. and Arthur Sr. I just wanted to share this with you, Ward Burke more than once told me that Arthur Jr. and your father made a pretty good business team and that without your father's and these are my words not his, I can't quite remember how he phrased it, but just had a little bit more practical business side. That Arthur Jr. was good at the big picture ideas, the vision, but your father had a little more

practical business sense. I don't know what...again these are my words but, can you comment a little bit on that?

WTW: Yes, Jonathan it's interesting how that all developed. I guess you might say it goes back to when Arthur Jr. was a youngster and he was going off to school. He did not like going off to school. He had a habit of running away from school. In my mind I still have this, I had the flu or whatever it was you had in those days and my mother put me in the front bedroom of our house on Fifth Street and about two or three o'clock in the morning I felt this body next to me and everything and here I was about seven or eight years old or something like that and I heard this voice "quiet, quiet, I'll tell you in the morning." So, anyway the next morning my mother came in and it was Arthur Jr. He had gotten off the train, he was at Williams College and he says uh-uh...he was there a week and he said I'm through. He caught the train. The train came through Texarkana and it came through about two or three o'clock in the morning and he got off and walked up from the train station up to our house on Fifth Street which was about five or six blocks and he knew how to get into our house. He had done it many times before and he knew where to go to get to that front bedroom. The only thing was he wasn't accustomed to finding somebody like me being in the front bedroom. So, I think he just did not want to go, first of all he didn't want to walk all the way to Beach Street, his mother and dad's house, and he didn't want to approach his father at that hour. (laughter)

JG: In the middle of the night. (laughter)

WTW: In the middle of the night either having run away from Williams. Of course, his father, Arthur Temple, Sr. went to Williams, my father went to Williams and so when Arthur Jr. came along and did not want to go to Williams that was not good. (laughter)

JG: That was not good huh.

WTW: But, anyway I wonder if that is where that friendship and sort of partnership developed back then. And, then when Arthur Temple, Sr. died, and of course he died very unexpectedly, and it became necessary for them to make decisions about the family and about what they were going to do with the leadership of both Southern Pine Lumber Company and Temple Lumber Company. Well, Arthur of course had been in Diboll for...

JG: About three years I guess when Henry passed away in '48.

WTW: Just about, when Henry Temple died in 1948, you are right, he had gone to Diboll or agreed to go to Diboll and of course that is when he started developing these ideas about the manufacturing part of the business. And as far as I'm concerned Arthur Jr. was a damn good engineer without even being in...no more than one year of University of Texas education. He and Henry Bovay, I mean my gosh what they developed there in Diboll at that time people in the industry said well he is going to break the company, he's going to break the family. But anyway, so it was only natural that he become you might say Southern Pine Lumber Company. And then Dad, his love was

sales. That is what he had done ever since he graduated from college was work in sales with the Southern Pine Lumber Company and that he take over the retail, which was Temple Lumber Company and also that at Pineland. So, he ran Pineland for...

JG: The manufacturing side of Temple Lumber.

WTW: The manufacturing part there, but that Arthur still he had more I guess you might say he didn't have I won't say more say at Pineland but Dad just kind of let that...Dad was really more interested in running the retail part of it. At that time I guess Temple Lumber Company had about 35 yards, 30 to 35 yards, something like that. But anyway, then of course when they were in the office, the old office, they were side by side and there Lottie became kind of in between there when, I'm trying to think what happened.

JG: Now, you are talking about in Diboll, Arthur Jr. and your father?

WTW: Yes, well they moved to Lufkin in 1952, a year later after Arthur [Sr.] died.

JG: Well because before that, I just want to clarify for the record, it was Arthur Sr. and your father side by side in Texarkana.

WTW: Right.

JG: And Jr. then became I guess head of operations of Diboll and Pineland in '48 so there was about a three year period where Arthur Sr. and your father, management, and Arthur Jr. was under that and then after Arthur Sr. died then Jr. moved up so to speak.

WTW: Yes, and at that point there was a...

JG: Do you remember anything about that transition period after Arthur Sr. passed away?

WTW: Yes I do.

JG: You kind of alluded a little bit to it but, what did your grandmother Gertrude and the family feel?

WTW: My grandmother and her two sisters were just not too sure of the direction that Arthur Jr. was headed with Southern Pine Lumber Company and they were pretty conservative.

JG: This would be Gertrude and...

WTW: Marguerite and Georgie.

JG: Marguerite and Georgie, all three.

WTW: All three, they were very close and they were very tight. Marguerite of course was of a different character. Bill Temple always, he probably told you this story that someone asked Marguerite one time what was the difference between her and Georgie and she said, "About 5,000 martinis." So, they were of different character but they did, and that transition period was at first I don't think they all liked it but they all went along.

JG: So, did Jr. really push for it?

WTW: No.

JG: I mean if they had those concerns how then did he...

WTW: No, I don't think that you might say that Arthur Jr. pushed for it, but he had his mother in the picture at that time.

JG: Okay.

WTW: She was pretty...she pushed a lot for it.

JG: She pushed for it.

WTW: And my father was all for it too. But as I say, they had a tendency, and particularly Newman Gregory, my grandmother's second husband, he was just very conservative and he did not think that when we had any business or money to try to recreate the wheel. They all felt like that was what Arthur Jr. was doing, but so many of the machinery that they were developing turned out to be saving so many man hours that it was all worth it.

JG: Well and too, I guess that generation ahead of Jr. had to really deal with the affects of the Great Depression. So, not only just generational differences that happen at any time but with the impact of the Depression and the conservative reaction that I think Sr. had Jr. coming along when he did was maybe part of it too. Or do you feel so?

WTW: Well I'll tell you one thing, the best example I can give you of what happens to a company of what happened to Southern Pine Lumber Company and Temple Lumber Company is what happened to W. T. Carter and Brothers. W. T. Carter and Brothers when Tommy Carter's father, not Albert, anyway when he died here came...there was nobody left and here was these five women that owned W. T. Carter and Brothers and it was a partnership. It was not a corporation it was a partnership and they did not ever let Tom Carter Sr. run that company. They ran it and they ran it through Mr. Randolph, R. D. Randolph, who is associated with Union National Bank here in Houston. Of course all of them lived here in Houston, all the Carter sisters. And that happened and then Tommy died and when Don Anderson of Baker and Botts, who was married to one of the Carter sisters, he arranged the merger of Champion International with W. T. Carter, or the buyout really. And they bought everything except the minerals and then of all things another generation comes along, young Tom Carter, and he has developed that whole

Carter...what four or five hundred thousand acres of oil properties into a fortune. That family, their second, third or fourth generation are living very well off the oil production, off the Carter lands. But that was a good example of where they would not let...if my grandmother and her two sisters had probably prevailed back in 1948, I mean '51, something may have happened. I tell you what Arthur could have done other things.

JG: Yes, he himself had told me that he even had some questions about joining the company in '48 when Henry died.

WTW: Yes.

JG: Of course, he had been in the retail side a little bit but, as far as management and that kind of thing he had other ideas and he said his father had to kind of talk him into it so, he did. Of course he told the joke that his father says, "Well there will be a salary with it." He said, "Well then." (laughter) I don't know if he thought maybe he wasn't going to have a salary or what.

WTW: Of course those years there was a period there where when I was off at school from 1946 through the time I graduated from Washington College in '54.

JG: Where did you go to college?

WTW: Washington Lee.

JG: Washington Lee, okay.

WTW: I kind of lost a little track there because of being away and then of course as I said it was different because I was no longer next door to the house to the Temple house even though the office was there. I would run, as a kid I would run next door to my dad's office or Arthur's office or Emma Jean...you should have known some of the people that worked for them in their home. Those were not only loyal friends...

JG: You are talking about the Texarkana office?

WTW: Yes.

JG: Now Emma Jean, was that Arthur Sr.'s secretary?

WTW: Yes, Arthur Sr.'s secretary.

JG: I think I've seen a few photographs.

WTW: Emma Jean Mitchell was a beautiful girl, beautiful woman and she was kind of my buddy when I needed something. I always kind of played on her if I needed to get something done. She was only a good softball throw from her stand to dad's office.

JG: Did you ever work for the company?

WTW: Briefly.

JG: Briefly, in what department?

WTW: In the retail.

JG: In retail, okay.

WTW: I was here.

JG: Houston?

WTW: I was here and I was at Lufkin for a period of time.

JG: Now here I know there was the Heights Yard on Kirby, right or Texas Avenue?

WTW: The Kirby Drive yard was down here where the Chrysler place is right here on Kirby.

JG: Okay.

WTW: In fact there is a restaurant across the street used to be called Houston's now I think it's called Hill House, Hous House or something like that [ed. Note: the new name is Hillstone]. Anyway, frequently we would go over there for lunch on Sunday and sit at the bar and I could look out the window and see where my desk was across the street.

JG: Okay, so that is where you worked. You worked at Kirby Drive?

WTW: Yes, then I moved to Lufkin. Then in Lufkin in 1959 was when our son Temp was burned and we had to move. We moved back here and I went to Polk Avenue. Actually Polk Avenue was where the Temple Lumber Company general offices were for a long many years until we moved out here on Kirby. But back in the thirties that is where it was on Polk Avenue.

JG: Was Latane involved with that at the time or was this before?

WTW: Latane had...was about to be...he was never head of it when I was around. I skipped, I went to the Texas National Bank in 1960 so, I came down here in spring of '59, so you might say less than a year that I was out at Polk Avenue.

JG: So, this was before the Texas Lumber Company.

WTW: Then McNair, Doug McNair died and that is when Latane became involved.

JG: Okay, and that is when later he changed the name to Texas Lumber Company for a little while?

WTW: Yes.

JG: Okay. So, did your father influence that decision to go into the retail sales initially?

WTW: You mean with me?

JG: Yes, with you.

WTW: Yes, that is when I...

JG: You mentioned he really liked that side of the business.

WTW: Yes, my last year in college we decided okay this was what I was going to do. I was going to go to work for the retail down here because Barbara and I were getting married in June of 1954. So we moved down and we were here, so I feel like with only a brief stay in Lufkin, three years, I feel like I'm a native Houstonian. I've lived here long enough to at least say I ought to be.

JG: Houston certainly has changed. We were talking about Texarkana changing, Houston has certainly changed too.

WTW: Oh gosh!

JG: Well I don't know if there is any question for that, but I wanted to ask you a little bit about that experience with the retail side. Is there anything stands out in your memory about working for the company?

WTW: No, the only thing I can think is that I think back then they could have done some things particularly in the Houston area that would have advanced the retail division of the company much like they did with the Charlie Wilson and Diboll.

JG: The Big Tin Barn.

WTW: The Big Tin Barn, I think we could have started if they would have had a mini home depot and all but at that time they weren't ready to get into anything except the lumber.

JG: The solid wood which was really before all the divisions.

WTW: And they were slow and I think the reason for it was we had seen so many ups and downs in housing starts back then in that period that they were hesitant to get into the land development business. They tried it, they liked it but, they never did want to seem to go a little step farther. They went in partnership with a fellow here in Houston out here on the south part of the city and they were very successful in selling lots and the builders

were using Temple Lumber Company. They were using products from Diboll and Pineland. But, I mean they never did seem to want to get that far over the edge.

JG: Now, did Latane try to do some of that when he came in?

WTW: Yes he tried some of it.

JG: He tried okay, and kind of got in a little bit of trouble.

WTW: Yes, it just kind of got over his head a little bit.

JG: Now this may be after your time with the company but, I just thought of this name the other day, Herschel Payne.

WTW: Oh yes.

JG: Did he work after your time or did y'all work together? Because wasn't he from Texarkana also?

WTW: Well Herschel...oh yes. Herschel he worked out at the Heights Lumber yard.

JG: Now where was that?

WTW: Out here off the Heights Blvd.

JG: Okay, it was actually on Heights Blvd.

WTW: Yes, Eighteenth or Nineteenth and Heights I think.

JG: Okay so he was at Heights and you were at Kirby.

WTW: I was at Kirby but Herschel was also with Temple Industries in the sales department because he had part of this area as his sales area. And, he was in fact he was one of the few salaried salesmen. The rest of them were all commission people all over the country. The family in St. Louis...

JG: Fleischel?

WTW: Fleischel Lumber Company they were big, they represented Temple and Temple Industries.

JG: How did that relationship get started? Do you know anything about that?

WTW: I have no idea.

JG: I see that name a lot. Was it something that Arthur Jr. started or before that?

WTW: No, it goes way back, way back.

JG: The Fleischel of St. Louis.

WTW: Mr. Fleischel at one time was part owner of the St. Louis Cardinals.

JG: Right.

WTW: That is when they all, we all started going to the Cardinals game. We would catch the train...

JG: Any connection with Harry Munz?

WTW: No, in the 1940's, 1941, '42, '43, '44, '46 those were the years the Cardinals won the National League and my father and Arthur Temple they couldn't get on that train fast enough to get to the World Series and leave me at home.

JG: Leave you at home, oh man!

WW: In 1946 the Cardinals were about to win the National League pennant and my father we went to St. Louis for the Brooklyn Dodgers series and we...actually Mr. Fleischel said "Temp now this year if we win the National League it's your turn to come to the World Series." That was the fall that I went off to prep school in Connecticut. The Cardinals won the World Series and I was listening to the Red Sox-Cardinals series out in the play yard out in Connecticut. I wasn't anywhere near close to St. Louis.

JG: Oh man! (laughter)

WTW: But those were...yes...as I say, I did not know, Burns, was his name Dick Burns that worked for Temple for a long time in Diboll. Do you know that name?

JG: Yes, but I don't know anything.

WTW: He was in the sales department at Southern Pine Lumber Company. He was married to a Fleischel.

JG: Oh okay.

WTW: The Fleischel girl, but that goes back to the thirties.

JG: Again we are really jumping around and we've mentioned Latane a couple of times already. Can you just talk a little bit about Latane and what you remember about him? This would be for the recording T. L. L. Temple, III. And, maybe talk a little bit about his father too, Junior. Do you have memories of him?

WTW: Oh yes, you mean T. L. Sr.?

JG: T. L. L. Temple Jr.

WTW: Oh yes, yes, he...T. L. L. Jr. you know, he was one of the few successful farmers in the Rio Grande Valley. He didn't like the fruit trees, he got rid of the fruit trees and raised cabbage and they had the biggest ice storm they ever had and killed all the fruit trees and his cabbage or what have you, just grew fine. Of course, have you ever talked with John Rogers Temple?

JG: No sir.

WTW: John Rogers, you know who I'm talking about don't you?

JG: I've heard the name.

WTW: That is Latane's half brother and John Rogers of course is still very much...they refer to me as being the senior citizen and what have you of the family but I'm not...for one thing because I think Virginia Keeler is still alive. I think Virginia is still alive. Virginia Keeler Townley?

JG: I don't really know.

WTW: Her last name I think was...she was married, of course she would be...Virginia would be 91 or 92 years old.

JG: Just where I was going with that was...well not really going anywhere, but Bill Temple was probably one of the only ones that really talked much about T.L.L., Jr. but it was always along the lines of he and his older brother would get phone calls just out of the blue and it would be T. L. L., Jr. and he would want to talk to his older brother because they liked music, enjoyed music. He would just call from some place in Mexico or wherever and he'd say, "Listen to this cat play the saxophone" or whatever instrument it was, the guitar or the piano and said he would hold the phone out and Bill being the younger brother would run and they would listen, you know, and it was Uncle T. L. L. or whatever they called him. He said they always enjoyed the phone calls but they came just completely out of the blue and "Listen to this" and then "All right I got to go."

WTW: Well of course for a long time they always referred to Temple Lumber Company as part of the company that T. L. L. Sr. developed for his son T. L. and then T. L. moved down here and he found the Houston Club first and then he found the Galvez Balinese room in Galveston and from that he hired somebody to run the general offices of Temple Lumber Company. I can only assume that that story is true because, there were people that worked at Temple Lumber Company back when I first joined the company in 1954, one particular one Joe Martin who worked back then he was more or less a runner, you know, if you wanted something delivered to another office he was kind of a messenger service sort of thing. He knew T. L. L. Temple, Jr. very, very well because T. L. would call him and say "Joe would you get so and so to write a check for \$1500, I need that money tomorrow morning down here in Galveston." By the time Joe would get down

there with the \$1500 T.L. was out of the hole and in the chips and he would say “Joe what are you doing here.” And, apparently he did that a number of times. But, of course Latane had lost his mother. I’m trying to think how old Latane was at the time but, he and John Rogers they never...I don’t say that they really didn’t get along but, they really as far as Latane was concerned Madeline, John Rogers mother, was of a different era from him. I think that has been true of Kate and all of Latane’s children that John Rogers. When we had this thing come up about four or five years ago with Mary Munz in Texarkana and I kind of got involved in that because Kate didn’t know anybody and she and her sisters were trying to figure out what in the world was going on with the estate and the trust that Mary had left or actually Aunt Georgie had left. When Mary died it came to all of us who were children or whatever. Of course John Rogers was involved with the bank in Texarkana and all and they all thought John Rogers was dead. Well John Rogers was by a long shot not dead. He was living out in Sweetwater, Texas and very happy and very successful in what he has done. And I happened to talk to him when they discovered that they had left him out of the formula. He discovered somehow or another, he discovered what was going on and he was not left out he was still in the picture. At that time Virginia was still, Virginia Keeler was still alive. We are not sure about Virginia because this past year is the first time that we have not heard from Virginia at Christmas time, this past year. But I don’t say that...Barbara thinks Virginia has died during the last year and we just didn’t know about it because we don’t know any of her children. They all live in Wisconsin and Minnesota so I just don’t know. But, when you talk about Latane I think of John Rogers and I think of T. L. and his...because that was the last time that I remember seeing T. L. was in the Valley when he was married to Madeline and John Rogers was about five or six years old.

JG: Yes, T. L. L. Jr. died in ’47 and John Rogers was born in ’35. The same year that T. L. L. Sr. passed away, ’35.

WTW: Yes. He...I’m four years older than John Rogers, yes.

JG: Okay, we’ve mentioned this person a few times too, but I’d like for you to talk a little bit more about her and your specific memories. We’ve heard plenty of stories but, that is your Aunt Georgie, Mrs. Georgie Temple Munz.

WTW: Well you might say...she...when I came home from school on vacation at Christmas time and in the spring I had two stops I had to make before I could do anything else. One was to go see my Aunt Georgie and the other was to see my Uncle Arthur Temple. Pine Street and Wood Street were the two stops I had to make before I could go anywhere else. So, Aunt Georgie was of course she was my grandmother’s closest sister. And...

JG: Can we turn the sound off for a minute?

WTW: Are you hearing that?

JG: Yes sir a little bit...I can do it.

WTW: She will get it. He's going to turn the sound down.

JG: Well I don't know if it's doing anything.

WTW: If you want to just turn it off. (television on)

JG: Okay, thank you.

WTW: As I was saying, Georgie was my grandmother's closest sister. Of course, you know my grandmother she was the oldest and she was the oldest by a lot if you look at the thing you will see that she was like 19 years old when her mother died. And so she literally became you might say, the number one and here was T. L. who was 7 years difference, younger, then you had Georgie and Marguerite, or vice versa. I'm not sure which one, and then Arthur. Arthur Sr. was literally a baby when his mother died.

JG: Yes, he was about six I guess.

WTW: Wasn't Arthur Sr. born in 1890?

JG: 1894.

WTW: The year that Southern Pine Lumber Company was founded, yes.

JG: So she being the much older sister was close to the mother figure maybe a little bit and she lived right next door.

WTW: She ran the house. I mean, she ran my grandfather's house strictly because she was the oldest. And of course at that time, nineteen years old, you were expected to be ready to get married and have children and have your family and everything in those days.

JG: I guess she married the same year that her mother passed away.

WTW: So, that is why through the years they all kind of looked to her. But now Marguerite never looked to anybody. Marguerite, she was a wonderful person but boy she could go out and just do whatever she wanted to do. Nobody was going to stop Marguerite, she was a free spirit. But then of course when Arthur Sr. died that just really kind of the three sisters really, really kind of pulled them back together again. I mean they had all kind of scattered and they all came back to the desk, and they came back to my grandmother. I mean they came and said, "Now look you are going to have to...whatever you want to do." And she was a...well, I look back on it, she wasn't...she didn't...she didn't issue orders like a military person but she was close and she could do it in a way that she got away with. And so, a lot of times you might say they were in a...I guess you might say there were some members of the family really were afraid of my grandmother. They didn't want to cross her. They would say "we are not going to get

cross with Gertrude.” Of course there was a close call back in the 1950’s when Arthur Jr. wanted to merge Temple Manufacturing Company into Temple Industries and by...

JG: That was the box and crate business.

WTW: Yes, up in Dallas.

JG: Yes sir.

WTW: It was no reason for it not to be. I mean as I look back on it now. But, I know what stopped it that was my grandmother and Aunt Georgie. I don’t know where Marguerite was at the time but I do know the two of them said “don’t dodge” and it really made Arthur mad. I don’t think he really cared about my grandmother after that.

JG: Now, I know it eventually got the T-wheel, Temple Manufacturing Company did, but was it ever a part of...so it never did become a part of Temple Industries?

WTW: Not that I know of.

JG: Okay, ‘cause we’ve actually got a coca-cola crate in red that says Temple MFG. Co. and it’s got the T-wheel on it.

WTW: On it, yes.

JG: I think it may be early seventies. I might be wrong on that. I can’t remember but I know it maybe as...maybe they had enough ownership in it that it could have been a subsidiary. I don’t know. But, I do believe it said it was connected with the T-wheel, later on.

WTW: Yes, I think you are right. I remember seeing the coke boxes with the wheel on it.

JG: Anyways, that is interesting what you said about that.

WTW: We had moved to Lufkin and we hadn’t been there very long when this came up.

JG: Now, was your grandmother, where was she living at the time?

WTW: Texarkana.

JG: Texarkana okay.

WTW: They moved back to Texarkana.

JG: Where did she go, Dallas right?

WTW: Dallas, they lived in Dallas for a long time and then moved back to Texarkana.

JG: Okay, but we were talking about Mrs. Munz, Aunt Georgie.

WTW: You might say that really I saw, as a youngster growing up I saw an awful lot of Aunt Georgie, and Martha and Mary. I guess it would probably be safe to say that at one time I might have been the only one of the others that actually knew Martha and Mary very well.

JG: Her two children.

WTW: Yes, her two girls. That, sounds like we are moving the world downstairs. (noise) That is basically my memories of Aunt Georgie. I lived close by. I saw a lot of her up until the time I married and moved down here and I didn't really see her except on visits up there.

JG: How long have you been serving on the T.L.L. Temple Foundation board of directors?

WTW: Oh since 1983, '84.

JG: Okay.

WTW: Well my father died in '83 and I came on in '84.

JG: Okay, when your father passed away, okay.

WTW: At that time it was only the three of us.

JG: The three of us being?

WTW: Arthur, Ward [Burke] and me.

JG: Okay.

WTW: Yes they were...

JG: Anything stands out in your memory of some of those early experiences at that time?

WTW: Yes, we didn't have much money at that time. We hadn't completed my getting Aunt Georgie's estate.

JG: She passed away in '82 then.

WTW: And, we hadn't completed that and so we just really didn't have a whole lot of things to give. I remember when a thousand dollars or fifteen hundred dollars that was a big gift from the Temple Foundation.

JG: I guess it was established about '62 and then as you alluded to I guess, after Mrs. Munz passed away the large sum that she bequeathed, so it took some time then is what you are saying before you actually had access to the money.

WTW: Yes.

JG: Well what were some of the...because that is interesting, I didn't even realize that until just now, the timing of Mrs. Munz dying in '82, your father in '83 and then you're coming on board so, this would be a good question to ask you. What was the conversation then with, okay wow we are really going to have some money to do something? Where was the direction headed and what was the leadership? What was the thinking at that time or what was wanted to be done?

WTW: I think we were okay but, first of all we were concentrating on needs in Diboll. Lufkin was second and we had a lot of I guess you might say small gifts and grants to different organizations that really Arthur and Ward because I had no idea what they were talking about. And, they...but the direction was not...I don't think it really had any you might say direction, except for the boundaries of the counties in which...

JG: So it was more geographic boundaries but not necessarily...

WTW: We looked more at the amount of acreage that was in a particular county and say well gosh we have got to really do something for these people. Well, one of the first ones we did was CISC. Is that what they call it?

JG: The Christian Information, CISC?

WTW: No, it's when we had the...were you around in '84.

JG: Yes, I was young. I was still in high school.

WTW: Oh okay, well do you remember the cold spell similar to what we had this year?

JG: Well I remember there was a winter we got a lot of snow and about a week it was below freezing.

WTW: I mean absolutely cold, I mean really and Arthur Temple got so mad at the Salvation Army, Red Cross, and I can't remember who else. He said the CISC is the only ones who are doing anything for these people and I guess it was one of my first or second meetings. And he said "Temp I think you would really, just take my word for it, these people have just..." And, they have been the ones that we have followed up with year after year in different places where they have part of their organization and we issue their

grant money based on a formula. But it started from the very beginning in 1984 and that was the year, I'll never forget, it was so cold and he was so mad at different organizations like the Salvation Army. He would say, "They are not doing anything." Of course, you know how he could get.

JG: A little bit...I know a little bit. (laughter)

WTW: I'm sure you probably...he could get so upset and then the next day he would be all over it.

JG: I learned that too late. (laughter) But, yes that has been a very fascinating story I guess is the foundation and how it grew and what all it has done all these years. Of course, our very existence wouldn't even be...we wouldn't even exist, that is the truth, we being The History Center and what we are trying to do with historical preservation and that kind of thing. I don't mean to belabor but is there anything else you care to share about some of those earlier days in the mid '80's of the foundation and the work. I mean that is interesting the story you just told. We don't really have much on this subject and just how the foundation evolved I guess a little bit.

WTW: Well you know, it's funny how time seems to go by and you don't realize an awful lot of time has gone in between. Now, it's been twenty eight or twenty nine years that I've...and then of course when Phillip became a trustee.

JG: Phillip Leach.

WTW: Phillip Leach and then Buddy and then Arthur awakened everybody one time when he had decided that Jay Shands would make a good trustee. And he always had a way, and I don't know why this was so Jonathan, he used to do this with my father. Arthur Temple, Jr. had a way of saying I'm going to tell one person what I want to do before I do it. In other words it's like, I'm going to bounce this off of you and see what happens. And he would do that so many times with my father and it wasn't until after my dad died he really, we used to laugh...Arthur wouldn't go, he didn't care anything about going to Texarkana to the bank meeting or anything like that. In fact he resigned from the Texarkana National Bank back then because he didn't have any reason to go but he always had to go up there and talk Dad into something. But he would always bounce it off of dad before he did it. Then he did that with me. He would say, "Now I think Jay might be a real good trustee." Then he would bounce it and I'd say, "Okay, I think that is fine." Then he would announce it and he hasn't mentioned it to Buddy, he hasn't mentioned it to Phillip, he hasn't mentioned it to no one. Now, don't you tell that, but that is the way he was. (laughter) So many times he would call down here and I hadn't heard from him in three months and he would call here and he would tell Michelle, I need to talk to him and sure enough I would think uh-oh...sure enough he's got something he wants to do and he's not sure if he really wants to do it or not but he is going to see what I think about it. (laughter)

JG: What about some of the stories with Aunt Georgie and the dividend checks and her not doing anything with her checks except putting them in the books.

WTW: Oh my gosh!

JG: Is there more of that you can share? Mr. Burke has told a lot about that.

WTW: Well of course you never got an opportunity to talk to Nick Peay.

JG: No sir.

WTW: Nick Peay, Sr. managed my Aunt Georgie's things for a long time. That was Uteley, my fathers' sister's husband, Nick Peay. Not Nick Peay, Jr. who now who lives in Cleveland, Ohio. Nick he had a terrible time keeping up with Aunt Georgie's things. She would get things in the mail and she had no idea what they were and she would put them aside and she also got to the point...she by no means had Alzheimer's or anything like that but, she would just forget things that she had. And, so yes, it was trying times for those who were trying to keep up with it.

JG: For those who had to deal with it.

WTW: I remember that Nick, and of course Dad, Dad didn't have much trouble because he lived in Texarkana. Nick didn't either for a while. He was just always hesitant to say anything to her. "Did you receive something" or "should you have received something?" He just wouldn't do it. Dad wasn't hesitant at all about saying, "Well, I know what you've got where is it, let's get it to the bank." I tell you one thing the only thing I can think of about Aunt Georgie that I wish I had been able to play golf like Miller Barber. Miller Barber it's a shame he wasn't her grandson because she absolutely adored Miller Barber.

JG: I'm not familiar with who that is.

WTW: You don't know who that is? Miller Barber was a professional golfer.

JG: Okay. Miller?

WTW: Yes, Miller Barber.

JG: Barber, B-a-r-b-e-r.

WTW: Yes, right. His uncle was Bryce Lawrence of Bryce's cafeteria. Miller Barber and I went through school together and when I started playing golf at age twelve or thirteen years old and hard to keep me off the football field and some other places, my dad...Miller kind of tailed along with me and Dad bought Miller his first set of golf clubs. And my Aunt Georgie from that day on, when he started playing golf at the Texarkana Country Club, he and I were playing golf, my Aunt Georgie as I say, she

absolutely adored Miller. Every time I would go to Texarkana and see her the first thing she would mention is, "I've been watching television and I seen Miller and he's doing pretty well." She said, "I just think I want him to win a big tournament" or something like that. Well he almost won the big one down here. He was leading after three rounds and he did kind of what happened Sunday, the boy from Ireland.

JG: Just fall apart.

WTW: He fell apart on the last day and that was the end. I guess he ended up about third of fourth. Then he won the U.S.G.A Seniors a couple of times later. Of course, now he is retired but, as I say Aunt Georgie just loved Miller.

JG: Well, Mr. Webber I see we have gone a little over an hour and a half. I certainly don't want to keep you longer. I know you are a very busy man, but is there anything else before we stop the recording, have I neglected to ask you certain questions or anything you wanted to add?

WTW: Gosh I don't know Jonathan. How have I done? (laughter)

JG: I think you've done pretty good, I've learned a lot. Just you know, different perspectives are always good. That is the strength of oral histories is everyone...you take a whole group of people have similar experiences of what they've lived through, but everybody expresses it in their own way and just the differences of those perspectives. So, I know I learned a lot today.

WTW: Well good I hope so.

JG: But, like I said is there anything you wanted to add or anything I cut you short on.

WTW: Not that I know of.

JG: Okay I will stop the recording then. I thank you very much.

WTW: All right.

END OF INTERVIEW