

## **RAYFORD FAIRCLOTH**

**Interview 226a**

**July 19, 2011, at the History Center, Diboll, Texas**

**Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer**

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**ABSTRACT:** In this interview with Jonathan Gerland, Lufkin native Rayford Faircloth reminisces about growing up in Lufkin and working for the Temple Companies throughout his career. He started as the first Temple building material salesman in Arkansas and then went to work for Horace Stubblefield at Sabine Investment Company in the late 1960's. As part of Sabine, Mr. Faircloth helped develop the company's properties in Diboll and Pineland (including the golf course), the area surrounding lakes Sam Rayburn and Toledo Bend, and most notably, Crown Colony in Lufkin. He was involved in developing all parts of those areas, including business, residential, golf course, and country club. He talks about working for Arthur Temple, Jr., dealing with the Corps of Engineers at the lakes, and developing a master planned golf course community and all that entailed. He also mentions Ben Anthony, Clyde Thompson, and golf course design firm Von Hagge Devlin

**Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG):** Today's date is July 19, 2011 and my name is Jonathan Gerland and I'm with Mr. Rayford Faircloth. We are here in Diboll at the History Center and we are going to do an oral history interview. Mr. Faircloth I wanted to focus on your time with Sabine Investment Company and what that was all about but, maybe first just to get started maybe just tell us a little bit more about your personal life leading up to that. So, when and where were you born?

**Rayford Faircloth (hereafter RF):** I was born in Lufkin the first day of 1936 and...

**JG:** January 1<sup>st</sup> of '36.

**RF:** January 1<sup>st</sup>, New Years baby.

**JG:** All right!

**RF:** And, grew up there and graduated from Lufkin High School in '54.

**JG:** Who were your parents?

**RF:** My dad was Darcy Faircloth and his wife was Cloyce Shadix, my mother.

**JG:** Okay, okay.

**RF:** And, they were all native to the area too. Dad's people were all from out around Central and mother's folks were all here in Lufkin area.

**JG:** What were their backgrounds, occupations?

**RF:** Dad was a building contractor all of my growing up years and he built a lot of houses in Lufkin and East Texas area and probably was one of the most respected builders. He did a quality job back in those days. About the only interruption he had with that was World War II. He had a choice of either going into the Army or going out to supervise some construction crews for Brown & Root when they built the paper mill so, he decided to build the paper mill.

**JG:** Okay.

**RF:** Of course he was about 35 or 36 years old when World War II started. He had two kids and didn't really want to go to the army so he had a good choice there. He was a builder up until I guess about 1965 or 66 and at that point he got out of his own business and went to work for Temple himself.

**JG:** Okay.

**RF:** He actually worked for Temple Associates and from that point until he retired.

**JG:** And that would have been about the time you came to Sabine Investment.

**RF:** Yes, in fact I started with...actually I was hired by Temple Industries as a sales trainee. I went through the second sales training class here in Diboll.

**JG:** Okay, okay, so that was what 64?

**RF:** Yes, fall of '64.

**JG:** Okay.

**RF:** And then I was the first Temple building material salesman in Arkansas in 1965. I spent a year in Arkansas.

**JG:** Well what brought you to that? That was about ten years after you graduated from high school. Did you go to college?

**RF:** Yes, I went to the Air Force first and had a hitch in there for four years and got out early because it was no war going on and they were reducing force at the time. I got out after about three years and three months. I had gotten married in Amarillo and my wife and I moved back here and went back to work for dad in the building business.

**JG:** Okay.

**RF:** And, we did that up until our oldest son was born and we decided then we would probably just go on to college so we moved to Austin and I went to the University of Texas from '60 to '64, graduated in the summer of '64.

**JG:** What degree did you get?

**RF:** A Bachelor of Science in Architectural Studies.

**JG:** Architectural, okay, okay. And then you went to work for, well as a sales trainee I guess.

**RF:** Right, yes.

**JG:** Anything you care to share about that?

**RF:** Well Bert Lindsey was the sales manager at the time. He was a former high school football coach here and Bert...Dad was building a house for Joe Hedrick, who was running the plywood plant at that time and...

**JG:** I think the plywood plant would have just been pretty new at that time, in '64.

**RF:** Yes, it was brand new. And Joe got me an interview with Bert and Herschel Payne, who was a sales manager at the time so, I came down here and went into the second sales training class. That lasted until the end of '64 and I went on to Little Rock from here then. That was my territory up there for a year.

**JG:** You were first Temple salesman in that territory. How was that? Was it a challenge or what?

**RF:** It was a lot of fun. In fact at the point University of Texas and Arkansas were at the peak of all their football rivalries just about that time. I had a tie that had hook 'em horns on it so, when I wore that into the lumber dealers I didn't have any problem starting conversation. (laughter) But, it was a lot of fun; I enjoyed it.

**JG:** Okay. So, what lead you from that to Sabine Investment?

**RF:** Well, before I even left here to go to Little Rock, Horace Stubblefield, who was involved in a lot of things for Mr. Temple that had to do with development and housing and so forth, had heard about me and my background and he talked to me about the possibility of starting something like Sabine before I ever even went to Arkansas. And I didn't hear anything back from him until almost a year later and I came down here to a sales meeting and Stubby said, "Hey you about ready to come to work?" He was getting ready to start up Sabine, so I came on back in the first part of '66 and we started Sabine Investment Company.

**JG:** What was the vision at that time? When you say you are starting something, did he share much of the vision with you or what? Was that part of what your job was?

**RF:** He was already involved with housing and so forth with the company and of course with Temple Industries employees. They were trying to improve the housing in Diboll and Pineland primarily. He had gotten some federal projects going like the Walter Allen addition over here on the west side...

**JG:** The Housing Authority.

**RF:** ...the Housing Authority and he was heavily involved with those things here and in Pineland both. So, one of the first things we did...at the time I came to work there wasn't any water in any lakes yet, so Rayburn and Toledo Bend were still in progress, construction, but Stubby had said that we had a lot of shore line. The company had a lot of shore line on both of those lakes and at some point we would try to figure out what to do with that, you know, whether we would develop it, or sell it, wholesale it off or what so, I was to be involved in all of that. We were doing everything. We were developing subdivisions in Diboll and Pineland and selling a lot of the old houses over in the quarters on the west side and there were a lot of old run down houses over there and we sold a lot of those things to be moved away.

**JG:** Right, I was going to say where the plywood plant was put in was where a lot of those houses originally were.

**RF:** Right, all around on the other side of that and beyond it when I came there were still a lot of them there. So, we were trying to get rid of all that and improve and upgrade you know, to better housing for the employees.

**JG:** So, very much a local focus but also the lakes I guess, well let me just ask you an open question. I didn't want to lead you but, were the lakes, how much did the lakes contribute to Sabine Investment Company's being in existence I guess?

**RF:** Well I think they were the primary reason for the formation of Sabine. Sabine and its becoming a separate company from Temple Inland, or Temple Industries at the time.

**JG:** But all this other stuff was going on too?

**RF:** But, we were doing all this other stuff along with it, yes.

**JG:** Okay.

**RF:** We had a shopping center in Pineland and a shopping center here. Most of this shopping center right here belonged to Sabine at the time and we built the first Brookshire store and all that sort of thing. We owned it and they rented it. So, they were very much involved in the development of Diboll and Pineland both as well as later on the lakes. Now, it wasn't that much later. Rayburn filled up first and we started a little

subdivision over there that was going to be primarily for employees and Temple people were given preference and first chance to pick out a lot and that sort of thing. So, that was our first subdivision and it was probably 70 lots or 72 lots, something like that and had its own water system and oil top roads and a few water front lots, you know, pretty nice little subdivision. We put in a boat ramp.

**JG:** Now, the oil top road you mentioned that was all done at your expense, the company expense?

**RF:** Oh yes.

**JG:** What about, this maybe jumping ahead but, I was going to ask you something along the lines, what impact did these developments have with public roads or improvements of public transportation in that area if any? Were y'all involved with some of that, like the farm to market roads and developments?

**RF:** Not that much, of course we were always encouraging the improvement of the county roads and local roads but, what we put in were up to county specifications. They became county roads and were dedicated to the county. On Rayburn in particular you couldn't have a boat ramp unless it was public, so they had to be dedicated to the county as well after they were completed. So, even though we had one in the subdivision it wasn't strictly for subdivision use. Anybody could use it.

**JG:** How was working with the Corps of Engineers? (laughing)

**RF:** Typical bureaucratic situation, however it just depended on a large part it depended on the local ranger, you know, the guy that came around in the pickup truck. If you were pretty good buddies with him, you know, and somebody you could talk to you could generally get to do what you needed to do. But, they had their regulations you know and you had to abide by them.

**JG:** I guess they still do.

**RF:** Oh yes, yes. I think the take line on Sam Rayburn was about 171 sea level elevation. They have a flowage easement up to 179 so eight more feet above from where your property starts they can put eight feet of water on it.

**JG:** They are at about 154 right now, just letting it all go.

**RF:** Yes, it's really low.

**JG:** So, what would be a typical work day when we say you develop a property and you build the lots, were you involved with all aspects of that, planning the roads, dimensions of lots?

**RF:** Yes, I did lot and street layouts, worked with the surveyors and the engineers if we needed one and...

**JG:** Were those just Temple Associates people or did y'all just hire some other people?

**RF:** At that point we just hired outside people.

**JG:** Just whoever you needed you went and got them?

**RF:** Right. We put in our own water systems, designed those and hired a well driller to put them in and that sort of thing.

**JG:** Now it was just you and Stubby initially?

**RF:** Yes, at that point, us and one girl, the secretary. But, of course as it went on and we got more subdivisions we didn't sell each one out completely before we built another one, you know. We kept building them and kept doing them. I think from '66 to...I don't know what the last development we did on the lake was, but probably in the late seventies maybe fifteen years. We did...we had fourteen water systems and three sewer systems and had done twenty some odd subdivisions. I think it was over two thousand lots involved so, we had quite a bit. There was about six or seven, seven or eight on Rayburn and five or six on Toledo Bend.

**JG:** How did you advertise for that?

**RF:** A lot of them were just, like I say, starting out that very first one we did was just for employees and we just kind of advertised those in Diboll and Pineland at the pay windows and that sort of thing, hanging up flyers. As we developed more and got into bigger projects we advertised some in the media and more probably in the Golden Triangle area, probably Beaumont and Port Arthur, that area than Houston. We didn't really hit Houston much until later, but we did eventually get on down and do more in Houston too. But, I think probably most, particularly on Toledo Bend most of our business came from Beaumont and Port Arthur, that area down there. And later on we had some sales people and they would do marketing calls, you know, direct telephone that sort of thing. We did everything all the other land developers did pretty much.

**JG:** Did y'all get involved with construction of structures or you just laid the lots out and have the utilities there and then the buyer it was up to them to do the construction?

**RF:** Pretty much, we just once in awhile we would put up a model of some kind. At one point later on when Temple started building mobile homes, Creative Homes is what they called them, and we set up a lot and were selling some of those here in Diboll and we also decided well, we will put up one of these in a subdivision and see if we can sell the lot and mobile home together and we did a few of those, not a lot but a few of them around.

**JG:** Overall how was the development viewed? Again, there was a concept to develop it and do all the work and I guess as much a question of you know, how quickly did people get involved and essentially sell the lots and that kind of thing? How...what was sort of

the attitude of “hey this has been a good thing” or it’s moving a little slower, it’s going faster than we thought or, about the progress of it I guess? Any indications early on?

**RF:** Probably when the lakes were newest, you know, the first few years were the hottest because people were more interested in buying and having a place on the lake and the lakes were new and the fishing was good, you know. So, I would say probably the first eight or ten years were the best and then after that I guess maybe it started tapering off some. A lot of it depended on the economy and that sort of thing, whatever is happening at the time.

**JG:** But the plan was to sell them all off right?

**RF:** Yes, of course there were, I think Stubby said we had something like 600 miles of shoreline on Sam Rayburn, but we developed the properties that lent themselves to development. There were some others that were just wholesaled off and there were some others probably that the company still owned back when they recently sold off all their land. Some of those were still water front properties.

**JG:** You are talking about recently in 2007?

**RF:** Yes. So, we didn’t develop all of it by any means.

**JG:** How much was Mr. Temple involved, Arthur Temple, Jr.? Did you see him regularly?

**RF:** Oh yes, we would see him regularly. We would meet with him every now and then. We always got amused. He liked to go to Rayburn Country. He had a place over there, that wasn’t ours but...

**JG:** Who developed that?

**RF:** It was developed by East-Tex Pulp and Paper Company when they were a separate company. He was good friends with Ollie Crawford and I don’t remember who all the people were over there, but he had a place over there and Forest Hills was one of our developments right next to it which was much smaller than Rayburn Country, but every time he would go to Rayburn Country he would drive through Forest Hills and he would bring us back a laundry list of what all he saw was going on. (laughter) But, yes he was right in the middle of most of what we were doing. We worked with him pretty close. We worked, I’m sure you have heard of Ben Anthony.

**JG:** Yes sir, that is one of the people I was going to ask you about.

**RF:** Uncle Ben was one of our first salesmen. When we did Lakewood the very first little development for the employees Ben and I would sit over there on weekends. When people would come in we would show them around. In fact one of our developments just

right up the road from there that is up on Farm Road 83 we named it Anthony Harbor after him.

**JG:** Okay, okay. Any Ben Anthony stories you care to share?

**RF:** Well he was heavily involved with everything we were doing for the first few years. He would, when we were moving those old houses out down there he would work with the people that were buying them and the movers to get them out and that sort of thing.

**JG:** Very much involved, hands on.

**RF:** Yes, he was a good guy.

**JG:** He was fairly elderly at the time right?

**RF:** Oh yes, I'm sure he was well past retirement age at that time.

**JG:** What was the relationship, I didn't want to totally get away from that aspect of it but, more the management side I guess, with Lumbermen's Investment Corporation, Scotch Investment Company or Incorporation, and Sabine?

**RF:** Well Sabine was a separate entity and was incorporated as a subsidiary of Temple Inland, or Temple Industries I guess at the time. But, Scotch was I believe and I don't know a lot about Scotch, I think it was a company that Mr. Temple had personally put together with the guy that was mainly in charge of it. I can't remember his name right off hand, but Sabine didn't have anything much to do with Scotch except we inherited some of the stuff Scotch had after Scotch kind of closed down. I think the fellow that was running died or something and they had some issues of some kind but, anyway it was closed down and we ended up with Emerald Cove Hotel in...

**JG:** Corpus Christie.

**RF:** ...Corpus yes.

**JG:** That was a Scotch deal.

**RF:** Scotch owned that.

**JG:** In my notes I have that Scotch was formed in '59 so, I think that was one of their first projects was that Emerald Cove Hotel.

**RF:** It probably was. Seemed to me like maybe they had a land development or two but, I never was involved with any of that.

**JG:** Were they the ones that did the Fredonia Hotel in Nacogdoches?

**RF:** I don't know that. It's possible, but I don't remember.

**JG:** Some of the records just refer to a hotel in Nacogdoches. It didn't say which one.

**RF:** Well a lot of times Mr. Temple we would be talking about doing some project or other he would try to figure out who he wanted to own it, you know, and sometimes he would talk about Scotch needs to own this or something, but I don't remember that we ever added anything to Scotch. We just inherited some stuff they had.

**JG:** Then what about LIC, the Lumbermens Investment? We see those three entities kind of being together at times or at least related in some projects.

**RF:** Well LIC was separate as well, but then at some point, Arthur I think, bought LIC [Lumbermens Investment Company] and I don't remember now if the company bought it or he personally. He was personally involved in it with Jullian Zimmerman in the old days I think. But then I think somehow when the time came the company, Temple Inland, bought it.

**JG:** But operations wise you are saying that Sabine was pretty much its own thing?

**RF:** It was until after...but, after LIC came on board then at one point later on Sabine was actually put under LIC.

**JG:** Oh okay, and that was while you were still there?

**RF:** Yes, yes, we had Wayne McDonald and Kenny Jastrow and we dealt with them quite a bit in the later years. That was more after we had done most of the lake development. We had a project going in Beaumont as well and that was our first project really that Wayne and Kenny were involved with us much.

**JG:** Another one that we see a good bit about is Onion Creek Subdivision in Austin. Was that Sabine or Scotch or LIC?

**RF:** It was LIC's, yes.

**JG:** LIC's okay.

**RF:** We had nothing much to do with that.

**JG:** That was '72 I believe when that was, okay. Well, I didn't mean to get you away from your experience but I wanted to clarify operations-wise what all was involved.

**RF:** I think probably the last five or six years maybe I was there before late seventies early eighties LIC was pretty much running or over Sabine.

**JG:** Okay and you left in '83?

**RF:** Yes, '83.

**JG:** Well, so the lakes then took a good bit of your time I imagine?

**RF:** Yes, up until the time we started Crown Colony that was most of what we did.

**JG:** That actually had some earlier, I mean it goes back to '70 or so right, the plans for it?

**RF:** Yes, Mr. Temple had the master plans done for it several years before we started anything. He had the golf courses designed two or three times and that sort of thing.

**JG:** Again, I know I'm jumping around a little bit but I didn't want to lose track of it, were you involved much with the Diboll golf course here being built?

**RF:** Yes, yes I sure was.

**JG:** Well let's talk a little bit about that then we'll come to Crown I guess. Now, that was late sixties early seventies?

**RF:** That was one of the projects we did early on too and I don't remember the exact timing but that was one of the first things we did probably before we really got into the lake stuff very much.

**JG:** Oh okay!

**RF:** Stubby had gotten, well we went through the process of getting a grant from I don't know the exact entity but it was like a parks and wildlife type of grant but I don't think it was state I think it was federal. And I remember we went to Colorado or somewhere to meet with those people at one point but they worked out the deal to where Temple donated the land and that was the matching funds for the golf course and then the parks department or whatever the correct entity was, funded the construction to have it built. We had an architect out of Austin design the golf course. It was just nine holes at the time, just the first nine on this side.

**JG:** I interviewed Ray Paulsey a few years ago on how he got involved. But from your level tell a little bit about how it came to be. Did Stubby say, "Hey we are going to do a golf course" or did Mr. Temple, I mean, how did you get the news?

**RF:** You know, I don't remember exactly but I think it was just one of those things they wanted to get done in conjunction with all the improvements. Arthur was always interested in trying to make Diboll a little show place you know. He wanted it to be nice and he wanted people to want to live here and that was one of the amenities that he thought would help improve the quality of life.

**JG:** I understand you are pretty good golfer yourself. How did you take to actually getting involved with building a golf course?

**RF:** Yes, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it. I was trying to remember, I don't even remember who the contractor was on it or the architect. He was in Austin but...

**JG:** Was that your first experience with golf courses, designing them?

**RF:** Yes, I didn't even play golf until I went to college, you know, in Lufkin if your dad didn't belong to the country club you didn't know what golf was. When I was growing up I never hit a golf ball until I was 25 years old. But I took to the game when I was in college and I enjoyed it a lot so, I've been a golfer ever since.

**JG:** What about water? I understand water was kind of an issue with that golf course.

**RF:** That was at Crown Colony more so than here at Diboll.

**JG:** I hadn't heard anything about Crown's but I knew Ray Paulsey had mentioned it was a little bit of an issue I think.

**RF:** There was a well over there on the course I think at one point but then I don't know if later on they tied into the city or not. I know we had our own well there I think to start with.

**JG:** Any particular issues other than say water or something like that with you know, I guess this was a lot of people's first experiences with golf courses, anything that stands out in your memory of issues that came about in doing such a project?

**RF:** No, I don't remember that many big problems with it. It came together pretty nicely as I recall. We had later on, we developed some of the lots around it, you know, Shannon Forest and O'Hara Subdivision and Frankens Street, you know, all that over there by Old Orchard Park and up in there. All those were Sabine developments which we did back in those days along with the lake properties but it was all pretty much all going along together.

**JG:** Now, I think at one point you were on the parks board with the city.

**RF:** Yes, I guess I was.

**JG:** I had some notes here of when that was. I was trying to remember. Was that after the golf course was in?

**RF:** I don't remember if I was on the parks board or if I was on the, what do you call it, the board of appeals for tax authority or something.

**JG:** Yes, in '75 you were appointed to the board of adjustment and appeals of city council. But in '78 it just mentioned that you were a parks and recreation board member.

**RF:** That is possible. I don't really remember much about it.

**JG:** Anything stand out in your memory connected with that, being on the city board or anything?

**RF:** No, not really. We always worked well with the city and closely with the city and of course they were heavily involved in everything we were doing as far as rebuilding streets and that sort of thing. Whenever you do something like the Jackson Addition over on the west side we would redo all that. We would have to bring the streets up to code and that sort of thing. So, we had our share of planning and zoning issues and that sort of thing but, it was always congenial working relationship. Everybody got along pretty well.

**JG:** City council and all. I guess Clyde Thompson was mayor during all that.

**RF:** Clyde was mayor for years, yes.

**JG:** City managers, everything seemed to?

**RF:** Yes, Will Cockrell is one I remember and there was one named Jeff, I can't remember his last name. He rented my house at one time but anyway.

**JG:** Let's see. I know we've kind of put Crown Colony off several times so, I guess we can just move into Crown Colony, what that was all about.

**RF:** Okay. Well, like I said, Mr. Temple had several different kinds of plans drawn for the thing but whenever we really decided to go forward with it and do it what happened was we did an initial layout and it wasn't very much like this. [refers to map] But this was section one and this area right here, the white was the part that was sold and the red was part that was not sold as far as I know. They had a sale for this land here and they were going to build apartments on it so, we platted that section as section one of Crown Colony and that was where Temple Boulevard came in off of 59.

**JG:** Okay.

**RF:** We just put that in there and more or less dead ended it so we would have access to those apartments and sold that. That was the first thing done.

**JG:** This is where the Exeter office was built right here? (looking at drawing)

**RF:** Yes, right, Exeter office and there was another little office park over here. Then when we decided to go ahead with lot development we did section two which was this right here. At that point and time we weren't promising anybody a golf course. We were telling people that bought these lots these are golf course lots if there ever is a golf course.

**JG:** And what time would that be, early seventies?

**RF:** Yes, early seventies.

**JG:** So, the college was across the road?

**RF:** Yes, that was another thing that Mr. Temple was involved in and we were involved in to a minor degree was getting that college going and granting the land for that too. We didn't have much to do with that but I don't remember if it was already there or if it was under construction or what. It all happened about the same time. It may have preceded the actual development over here a little bit. But, anyway section two was developed first and then we went on around this way kind of, section three and four and five was actually over here. But, anyway we kind of jumped around. The point being we were trying to get to the golf course and the country club which we had picked a spot up here for the club to be located. So, we did the land plan to where we could get to the club and developed along the route to the club and then filled in later as we sold more stuff. But, the club actually happened in '76 I believe was the founding date. I can't remember exactly, no I think it must have been '78.

**JG:** Yes, I think it was a little later.

**RF:** Yes, it was '78 I believe when the club was actually founded. But we had to develop our way up to it before we could even do it so we had to have a street up there. All of this, there was a pipeline running through here and a pipeline running through here and a pipeline running through here.

**JG:** Yes I think this says Sun Pipeline. I don't know what that other one is.

**RF:** We didn't want to run a straight road up to the pipeline so we developed around this way to the clubhouse first.

**JG:** So, the clubhouse is right at the intersection of those pipelines.

**RF:** Yes, yes, pretty close.

**JG:** So, Mr. Temple had already had others kind of draw this master plan.

**RF:** Yes, but not this master plan. I mean we reworked this master plan many times. He had an architect I believe his name was Ted Robinson and the plan we started off all this with but...

**JG:** Now, architecture was your degree so how much did you personally impact this?

**RF:** Well, a great deal probably. I had, whenever we hired Von Hagee Devlin I already had a master layout of the golf course done and there were changes made, you know, but the writing of the whole thing and the street layout and the lot layout around it was pretty much set and we did not change that very much. I remember one of the things Von

Hagee, when we started this thing it was a thicket. I'm talking about you couldn't walk through it, you couldn't hardly run a cat through it. And, we laid this thing out on a contour map because you couldn't really get out there and see very much except trees and brush.

**JG:** Yes, that is what I was going to ask you what was there?

**RF:** It was a thicket, big pine timber and big trees, and grown up. It was just...

**JG:** Were any of these little lakes and ponds there?

**RF:** No.

**JG:** Nothing was there.

**RF:** But what we did when we got Von Hagee Devlin on board first thing we did we laid out the center lines of the fairways and then we run a dozer down the center line and clean out just the center line of the hole and then from there they would go out and try to mark trees they wanted to save and that sort of thing, out walking through the brush and then they would come back and clear some more and it just all took shape a little at a time that way. But, we had the layout, I had it done where this was number one and the layout went around the lake this way, it went clockwise and Bob Van Hagen said, "No that is not going to work, most golfers are slicers; we need to cross over" and from number one to number two we crossed a creek and he put number two on the other side going this way where I had it going this way. So, instead of going clock wise around the big lake we went counter clock wise in the end and that was his design. I remember when we were doing, on number three when they were pushing dirt, he liked the big...build big mounds and I said "hey Bob don't get that thing too damn high we are trying to sell lots here and they got to be able to see over it." So...(laughter)

**JG:** He liked tall mounds.

**RF:** He was thinking about his golf course architecture. But, one of the biggest surprises on this thing when we got ready to build this lake we thought well we will just damn up that little creek. Well, when you get into building lakes that size you got the Texas Water Quality Board...

**JG:** Permits and stuff.

**RF:** Yes, and got the permits and we wound up spending almost as much money on designing and building that lake as we had on the rest of the golf course.

**JG:** Wow!

**RF:** Because you had to have the dam engineered and the whole bit. And even these other smaller lakes they had to inspect all of them but they weren't near the problem that

the big one was. It was...now later on and I don't remember at what point, probably after the club was already started but this entrance here wasn't even part of the original plan.

**JG:** The Champions Drive entrance wasn't part of the original plan.

**RF:** Right, this is the main entrance.

**JG:** The Temple Blvd was the main, okay.

**RF:** Yes, but then after the college was built and we got to thinking well that is really a lot of load just on one entrance so, we decided to go ahead and put in another entrance here and run Champions Drive that way and just make a complete loop with Champions Drive around the project so, that is the way it turned out. See this in here this is not like this, Champions Drive comes up here to a little Boulevard entrance out on 819 but, it continues on around here and goes all in a complete loop. It doesn't...this stuff in here was not completed exactly as this map is drawn but, right now there is a complete loop all the way around the project.

**JG:** What about names of streets and things like that? Who came up with those?

**RF:** Well we did that in planning process.

**JG:** What was that?

**RF:** The theme was pretty much golf, you know. We named them after famous golf courses and other places, that was the theme and it was carried through pretty much. Each one of these sections individually we would have to plat it and go get the city Planning and Zoning commission to approve it and then you would have to get the city council to approve it and Lufkin and all that sort of thing because we were dealing with Lufkin then, we were in Lufkin. Each time we developed a section we would have it annexed and zoned and they had to approve all that.

**JG:** How was that working with Lufkin's council and everything?

**RF:** Really pretty good. It wasn't any big problem. They were very nice about working with us and we treated it as an overall master plan development and so each section came in in some kind of accord with the master plan as submitted. The overall design was approved initially so each individual segment wasn't much trouble.

**JG:** Now a lot of these other properties and things and then specifically the school was that all Temple land at one time or Sabine lands?

**RF:** Yes, right.

**JG:** Was there any kind of...did the school get a special deal?

**RF:** As I recall it was pretty much donated to them but I don't remember for sure. Yes, it was a special deal for sure but I don't remember if it was an absolute donation. I think it probably was.

**JG:** Was it about the same time it was being developed or some years later?

**RF:** No, it was some years later yes, it was after the country club and all were in.

**JG:** Go ahead.

**RF:** We had one little pool and tennis courts here that was for the property owners and everybody that owns the lot can use that but just owning a lot doesn't give anybody any rights to the country club. To join the club you have to join the club and become a member and pay an initiation fee and the dues and stuff.

**JG:** And you don't have to live there to be a member of the club?

**RF:** No, you don't so the country club is essentially separate from the development.

**JG:** How much was Mr. Temple involved with this project compared to some of the others?

**RF:** Oh, very much! He was always looking over everybody but particularly when it came to getting the club finished and decorated and that kind of thing. I think we had Louis Shanks out of Austin, you know he... Arthur loved Austin and everybody in it I think, Wayne McDonald and Kenny Jastrow and all those guys. He and Julian Zimmerman were close friends and he spent a lot of time in Austin. But it was a pet project for him no doubt.

**JG:** How does, since you play golf, I've hit a few balls and spent as much time looking for them as I do hitting them, well a lot more, but since you are a pretty good golfer I understand, how does it play and how did it play then, you know, compared today? I don't even know the question to ask. How is it as a golf course?

**RF:** I think it's a tough golf course but it's a fair golf course. If you can play the game a little bit you can enjoy yourself on it. It doesn't kill you, it doesn't beat you to death but if you don't keep it in play you can get in a lot of trouble too. It's a fair golf course.

**JG:** Does it play differently today than it did originally?

**RF:** Well there have been a lot of changes, lot of trees have come and gone and that sort of thing. The greens are different now. They all put in new greens last year but the majority of the changes have been pretty much cosmetic. I don't think it's changed that much. The biggest change I've noticed is me getting older. I don't hit it as far as I used to.

**JG:** It's getting longer huh?

**RF:** Well, one thing about it it's a little easier to find. I don't have to hit it quite as straight and it doesn't go as far.

**JG:** Well, I've never played Crown Colony course. All my playing was here at the nine-hole course. I've never played since it has been eighteen. I've played at Livingston once and Woodland Hills outside Nacogdoches. That is the extent of mine.

**RF:** I don't get tired of playing. I play it two or three times a week and I don't even really care if I go anywhere else I just enjoy it. It's a good golf course.

**JG:** You probably have a little sense of pride knowing you had a little something to do with it too.

**RF:** Yes, that is true.

**JG:** That is got to be pretty neat. Anything else you can think of or care to add about specifically about the Crown Colony project? I guess just chronologically it started in the early seventies and lasted a few years I guess before it was finished.

**RF:** Yes, I don't guess we are still sold out completely. After I left in '83 Stubby ran it pretty much by himself, well I'd say not by himself, he had some folks helping him but Jim Bressie who was the president last wasn't there when I left. He came a year or two later. I guess Stubby hired him after I left at some point but I never did work with Jim.

**JG:** Now, Sabine Investment itself and getting up into this time and just after and right before you left, you said it started out with yourself and Stubby what had it grown to late seventies early eighties people-wise, project-wise? And, also kind of coming to that I was going through some old annual reports the other day and I think in '76 you actually became a member of the board of Sabine Investment Company.

**RF:** I might have. I was vice president at the time I think.

**JG:** Yes, Mr. Temple, Mr. Stubblefield, Mr. Denman, Benjamin Brown, Rayford Faircloth, Aubrey Cannon and David Dolben.

**RF:** Okay, yes well, Aubrey was the company, Temple Inland treasurer. He wasn't actually working at Sabine.

**JG:** Okay, just on the board.

**RF:** Dave Dolben was the treasurer. He had even been at Time Inc. at one time.

**JG:** Right.

**RF:** David was not at Sabine per say he was just on the board.

**JG:** He was just on the board, okay.

**RF:** Yes, who were the others, Stubby?

**JG:** Stubby, Mr. Temple, Mr. Denman, Brown.

**RF:** Joe yes, Bennie was the only other one that was...Bennie and Stubby and I were the only ones.

**JG:** Only employees?

**RF:** Only ones but we had other employees. We had Jack Powell. Jack was kind of jack of all trades and he did whatever needed doing. He was...when we were doing stuff with mobile homes he was handling all that and then we had office staff and we had our own accounting people and secretary or two so we probably had seven or eight people mostly in the building on staff.

**JG:** Now where was the office here in Diboll?

**RF:** Where the Credit Union is now.

**JG:** Where did you...did you have an office originally when you were first hired?

**RF:** Yes, right across from the credit union and across the street to the right on the end building of the shopping center.

**JG:** Okay.

**RF:** We were in there at first. I don't remember at what point we built the new building but we built that building for Sabine. It was new.

**JG:** Now, jumping around, Diboll Day, did you get involved Diboll Day a few times?

**RF:** Oh yes.

**JG:** Anything you care to share about that?

**RF:** One year...the year that I was...I think you know every year the big office would always win. Whoever their candidate was Temple Inland the big office, Lottie and Arthur they always won. The year I was chairman of the merchants division Felton Burt and I, Tom Selman who was with Angelina Chevrolet then donated us a new Chevrolet Vega. Do you remember the Vega?

**JG:** Vaguely, vaguely, there is not any around anymore.

**RF:** I don't remember what year that was. No, they don't make them anymore. But Tom donated us a Vega and we drove all over the country selling chances on that Vega and we won that year.

**JG:** Who was your candidate?

**RF:** Becky Vodicka, she was the preacher's daughter, Methodist preacher's daughter.

**JG:** So, that was a pretty big victory huh beating the big office?

**RF:** Yes but, it might have been a hollow victory because we beat Joe Denman's daughter. She was running for the big office so the merchants beat the big office that year but I don't know how well that turned out really in the end. (laughter)

**JG:** I think you participated in the beard growing contest too.

**RF:** No, not me. I never did do that. Travis Groom was one of those from our office.

**JG:** Okay, were you involved with any of the hunting clubs or anything?

**RF:** Yes, I was a member of the Malibu Club.

**JG:** Malibu, okay.

**RF:** Stubby got me a membership in there at some point. I've forgotten now. I didn't hunt all that much, but I would hunt once in a while when we would have...we would always have the county commissioners from the various counties around where we had subdivisions and what not come to North Boggy and we would host them on hunts and I would hunt on those things. I would kill a deer every now and then, but I never did hunt a lot. But, Stubby got me in Malibu and I was in there for about two or three years I guess before I left. It was '79 or '80 when I got in there. I was president of it the year I left.

**JG:** Now, you left Sabine Investment in '83. You want to tell some of the stuff that happened right up to that maybe like when Crown Colony finished was there any other big projects you were then working on? Just what happened to bring you about to leave I guess?

**RF:** Well, the reason I left I guess was because there was a friend of mine who had...he was a former co-worker. He had worked at Sabine for awhile and, he was involved with a project in San Antonio and they were going to do a golf course development similar to Crown in San Antonio. So, he needed the help because he wasn't a development and construction guy or designer or anything else, so he talked me into coming over there and I went over there to do that.

**JG:** Who was that?

**RF:** It was C. W. Whitford. He was...he and Mark Web were hired. Mark was an engineer and C. W. was a numbers man and Stubby hired them I guess probably late seventies and they both eventually left. Anyway, C. W. asked me to come help him build that one in San Antonio and Crown was far enough along. We had finished all that and we weren't doing that much on the lakes anymore, so I was ready to do something else. Plus, I got a considerable boost to go over there so that made it worthwhile.

**JG:** That always helps, yes. What was the name of that development?

**RF:** Sonterra, S-o-n-t-e-r-r-a, it's directly on the north side of San Antonio on loop 1604 or off of loop 1604. It was about this size or even bigger project. We built a big golf course and country club and developed a lot of lots. You can go out there now and it's a city. It's amazing how the place has grown but, they have got a million people market and we go 25 to 30 thousand, so...

**JG:** Have you played that golf course any?

**RF:** Yes, I've gone back and played it oh every year or two since I left there. The people I was working for have been not close but good friends from time to time. When I wanted to go over there I played with... Tom Turner was the principal and his son, Tom Jr. was about my age and we hit it off good. Of course, I worked for him but we enjoyed each other's company and played golf together. But I haven't been over there now in three or four years.

**JG:** What brought you back to Angelina County?

**RF:** Well, that project, when I finished it and we got the club open and everything I was ready to come home. When I left here I didn't sell my house. I figured I would be back. So, we just came on back and went to work for Home Savings and they were having their problems with the S&L crisis. That lasted about two and a half years until they shut them down and then I had to do something else. After that I just consulted and free lanced until I finally retired. I owned some rental property and that kind of thing, you know.

**JG:** Kept your golf game up I guess.

**RF:** Yes, I rejoined the club when I came back. So, I've been a member of Crown all but a couple of years since its been open.

**JG:** Well, is there anything that I have failed to ask that you would like to share? I'm just going through a couple of quick little notes I had here.

**RF:** Well just, I enjoyed the time here and the people I worked with. We had some good folks and we got a lot done I think. I can look back on some things and feel like I did some good. Sometimes I used to say well I've had six years experience three times.

**JG:** Six years experience three times. (laughter)

**RF:** I was here eighteen years, but like I say when the Sonterra deal came up I was ready to do something different.

**JG:** All right, well I believe that is all I had and I appreciate you Mr. Faircloth for spending the time...

**RF:** You bet.

**JG:** ...and I'll go ahead and turn the recorder off. I'll be glad to show you around a little bit if you have time.

**RF:** Okay, yes.

**JG:** We will just stop this then.

**END OF INTERVIEW**