

**Dred D. Devereaux**  
**Interview TR7**  
**1954 Diboll, Texas**  
**Larson, John, Interviewer**

In this 1954 interview with John Larson of the Forest History Society, Dred Devereaux, longtime head of the Texas Southeastern Railroad Buildings and Bridges Department, talks about the changes in logging practices and railroads during his tenure in the business, from about 1905 to the 1950's. He talks about the changes in logging – from oxen to mules to machines and the changes in the railroads, from gauge sizes and manual labor to mechanized construction. He talks about working with Clyde Thompson, E.C. Durham, T.L.L. Temple, Arthur Temple, Sr. and Arthur Temple, Jr. of Southern Pine Lumber Company. Mr. Devereaux compares working conditions and pay and the quality of workers from the beginning to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He describes the first crane used on TSE tracks and how he righted a wrecked locomotive with the help of longtime engineer Titus Mooney in 1937.

**Dred Dardford Devereaux:** I was born and reared in Milam County, close to Jones Prairie.

**John Larson:** And your folks, were they from there, too?

**DD:** My mother's side, they were all born and reared there. They were among the oldest settlers of Milam County.

**JL:** And I wanted to get your full name down too, so we make sure we have it.

**DD:** Dred Dardford Devereaux.

**JL:** That sounds a little French.

**DD:** Yes, French descent, and all my people was born and reared in this country. But my father, he was born and reared in Alabama.

**JL:** What year were you born?

**DD:** 1881.

**JL:** When did you first get connected with this lumber business?

**DD:** I came down in 1898. I went out on the Pacific coast, and was out there quite a while, came back down here and went to work here in 1910.

**JL:** Where were you on the coast?

**DD:** 'Frisco. I worked all up and down the coast.

**JL:** Did you work in the lumber business out there?

**DD:** No, I was railroading out there. I was in 'Frisco in 1906 during the big shake.

**JL:** Can you remember any experiences?

**DD:** Oh, I can remember all of them – just as well as if it was yesterday. Mr. Thompson here, he's been up at Seattle and around among the big lumber industries out there and I was asking him if he stopped around 'Frisco to amount to anything – well, he was there a short while. I told him when I was there, Third and Market – that was the principle street, principle hang-out for everybody, right at the Call Building. Old Speckles, he owned that building, why right where the Bay Bridge comes out – I was stopping down on Howard just, you might say, two blocks from Third and Market.

**JL:** How old were you when you came back?

**DD:** Well, I came back in 1905 – that's 48 years ago. And I began working for a couple of lumber companies up here in Nacogdoches County. Burton Lingo and Carter Lumber Company. I got in with them bridging and building log cars and everything like that. And I moved the biggest part of the Emporia sawmill. In 1907, why I moved that for the Carter people up at Mayo and Press.

**JL:** How did you go about moving it?

**DD:** Just loaded it on the railroad car.

**JL:** What kind of a mill was that – a circular saw?

**DD:** It was a circular saw. I'm dismantling a mighty fine building here now. It was put up in 1906, I believe - that's the best record I have of it. And, of course, they started up in 1907 and I just accidentally wandered along and got in with this Southern Pine Lumber Company and I've been here ever since.

**JL:** When did you come to work for this company?

**DD:** I came here in 1910 a little while, but I pulled up and went down to Port Arthur for a while. The Gulf people started a job down there – the first concrete piling that was ever built in this country, and driven in this country, so I went down there, but I came back in the last of '10 and you might say I worked continuously since the last of '10 up to the present time.

**JL:** What was your first job with the company?

**DD:** Well, my first job with the company, I did a little work around the shop, but I had put in my application with E. C. Durham, who was vice-president and general manager

for Texas Southeastern Railroad. And I worked there for a little while and I took over the B and B department – bridging and building. And I had lots of it. That big shop up there was one of the first jobs I did in this country for them. Oh, I did various jobs here for them. I put a big steel bridge across the Trinity River, and we had another railroad over here, the GL&N railroad, and I did the work on that. That was another big lumber company and they operated over our track. We had a little junction out here, Vair Junction, 22 miles of road over there from Vair to Groveton, but they operated from Vair to Lufkin over our track. They bought some of the finest logging equipment that ever crossed this country; they bought a big body of timber down here at Colmesneil, and I'd go down there and do the work for them down there, and still I was working for Mr. Durham. I did their work for about sixteen years.

**JL:** But always in the construction of bridges?

**DD:** I supervised some big jobs for Southern Pine Lumber.

**JL:** Do you remember what they paid back there when you came to work in 1910?

**DD:** I'm sorry I can't remember. But in 1911 we worked ten hours on track, and had some of the best track men in the country; \$1.35 a day. And in some ways it was cheaper – it's been cheaper since then, though as far as that goes.

**JL:** You ate your lunch out in the field, did you?

**DD:** Oh yes – always carried my lunch.

**JL:** The men carried their own lunches?

**DD:** Oh yes.

**JL:** Did you have mostly colored crews?

**DD:** No, all the bridgeman men were all white. But all track men, they were darkies. Mighty good labor in that day and time.

**JL:** Ten hours a day, six days a week?

**DD:** Saturday was just the same as Monday.

**JL:** How did the boys entertain themselves those days?

**DD:** Well, I don't know. You know, it's just about the same old thing – they were just accustomed to working and they used to – long years ago – you could entertain yourself pretty good because there was four or five saloons here at that time, and naturally they'd have some place to go.

**JL:** Didn't take much effort?

**DD:** No, it didn't take much effort to keep them going. But that day and time, you know, men that had a job, they appreciated it, they'd be right back. You never had a man come up and say, "I want to be off tomorrow or the next day" like that.

**JL:** He had a job and he wanted to keep it.

**DD:** You could always tell when you hired a man as to whether he was going to be satisfied or not. And I've always watched them pretty close in that respect, and if he wants to be off a day or two this week or next week, why you could say there's not much to him and he's not going to make you the man that he should. You take Mr. Durham, he was a mighty fine man. I worked for him for many years. And Mr. Walker, he was a fine man. He was superintendent of the Southern Pine Lumber Company. He died in '29. And you take Mr. Hill, they've always had a wonderful logging organization here. You take Mr. Hill, he was given up to being one of the outstanding loggers in the country; he's dead now. You take Mr. Gilchrist at Pineland, he was another great logger. He died. You take Mr. Jack Sanders, he was the hardwood man and he got to be superintendent for a while in the woods.

**JL:** But you always worked with logging men – I mean being in the construction . . . ?

**DD:** Well, I always did the bridge building for them in the woods.

**JL:** What was the difference between the bridges you built in 1911, say, and the bridges you built in 1940?

**DD:** Well, I'll tell you. Of course, when I first came to Diboll we had about, well I'd say it was about 55-ton engine; that was one of the largest engines we had. At that time we used two-ply 7x14 and I hadn't been here long before we began to increase the rolling stock, and we got 70 and 75 engines, so I went from 7x14 three-ply standard deck to 8x16 standard three-ply open deck bridges. That's what we're operating on today. But we only have one engine; it weighs about 75 ton. It's the largest because the company isn't doing too much logging with the railroad any more. Still we had one of the finest railroads, and sometimes I can't quite understand why we're taking it up. We had a track, you might say, from Diboll to Anderson County – eighty miles to the end of it. Well, we've taken it all up now back to just about the twenty-six mile post. We used to have camp just fifty miles from Diboll, which was a wonderful camp. I think it was the outstanding camp that any logging company in this country has ever had. But you take the Southern Pine, why they have always, where they have located camp, they've always had a wonderful camp.

**JL:** What kind of a camp was this? Can you tell me a little bit more about it?

**DD:** Well, they built nice modern houses.

**JL:** Did the men have their families there with them?

**DD:** Oh yes. That camp stayed there for years and years.

**JL:** Did they eat in a common dining room or did they each cook at home?

**DD:** Oh no, they just had the family, just a regular home. The homes were modern.

**JL:** Did you have a saloon in camp and a church and....?

**DD:** No, there were no saloons there. That was a dry county when we moved up there. I was one of the first this country that got a hold of some motor cars. They were the old Casey Jones – wasn't much to them, and ...

**JL:** There was a car by the name of "Casey Jones"?

**DD:** Yes. A little 'ol car. We all called it Casey Jones.

**JL:** Who made them?

**DD:** I don't know. Seems to me like the Fairmont people first put out one. You know, so far back there, that they didn't last but just a little while. But they've really improved them. I never will forget one time, Arthur's grandfather, he was down and he brought Arthur's daddy with him. Well, we was operating quite a few trains here at that time, so I had an extra car. So he was up at the car house and he asked me, "Mr. Devereaux, I want to get a motor car this morning." I said, "Well, Arthur, we have lots of trains coming in this morning, and now don't you think I don't want you to have it, but I'd rather you'd wait until a little later and I'll be over there and I'll let you have it about the proper time, when I know you can run it down and road and be in the clear." He said "All right." But he didn't like it much. He was just a kid-like, you know. So I wandered on down to the shop and ran into Mr. Temple, that was his father, and I told him about it and I told him that I told Arthur that we had lots of trains operating here in the morning and that I'd fix him up when we got a little time when he could run around and shove that car. "Well," he said, "Mr. Devereaux, I wish you would let him have one, but caution him very particular." He was a great old fellow. Oh yes, Mr. Temple, he used to come down here years and years ago. Oh, the majority of officials they was just a little bit slow about getting out in the morning, but he was all out and over to work. You'd meet him up in the shop, out always running around mighty early. And I ran into him lots of times, had lots of conversations.

**JL:** Who was this?

**DD:** That was founder, the old man, T. L. himself. He was very active in those days.

**JL:** Did he get out in the morning and meet the men?

**DD:** Oh yes, he was all over the works. He was always that way. You take Dan Gilbert. He was Superintendent for the Southern Pine Lumber Company and he used to come down once a month. If Mr. Temple was going out, we'd leave at 7 o'clock in the morning going out to Rayville. He used to have a big ranch out there, you know, buying a lot of stock. And if Mr. Walker, Mr. Durham, Mr. Gilbert or whoever was supposed to be in the party, was just a little bit late, Mr. Temple, he'd get a little bit impatient and he'd say, "You know, I just can't understand why they can't get here on time." Mr. Durham, he was always just a little bit of a sleepyhead and he'd often be just a little bit late. But Mr. Walker, the Superintendent here at the time, he was on time.

**JL:** Did you have any bad accidents or bridges falling on you?

**DD:** No, never had. We have had some pretty bad wrecks all right, but not because of the bridges. Not since I've been here, we haven't. I went fourteen years without an accident. I never had but just a very few. Of course, we had a fellow killed here a couple weeks ago. You will have these unavoidable accidents occasionally. 'Course, I have been very fortunate in that line.

**JL:** Do you remember how your work was affected by the First World War?

**DD:** Oh, mighty well. Yes sir. You know, if we had undertaken something I was a little bit sorry of, men was scarce, oh, they was awful scarce. And we had lots of track that had got out of gauge, had lots of ties to put in, so I had some awful good foremen and we just got started out. The foreman, and of course, we had a few men, and we gauged this track all the way from Diboll to Lufkin and distributed, hammered it back, and we put all the rail equal space. Sometimes, I'd go out and spike all day. And I remember World War I and how it affected us, but we happened to have everything up in pretty fair shape, always kept it up in pretty fair shape, but that was one thing we went over and gauged all that track. I just put all the foremen together and just went right ahead with it.

**JL:** Pretty fancy crew, then.

**DD:** Oh, they was all huskies too, and we really got the job done. 'Course, we got lots of spike, we had lots of spike when World War I come on and we had quite a few ties and we just took our time.

**JL:** Where did you get your ties? What did you use for spikes?

**DD:** Oh, we used to use post oak here. We've gone to creosote now. But we used to use post oak.

**JL:** Not treated at all?

**DD:** No. They'd last, my goodness, they'd last ten or eleven years. But along in '17 we went to creosote. And we've been using all of our ties in bridges and everything else now; it's all creosote.

**JL:** Where do you get them from?

**DD:** At the treating plant. They have one of the outstanding treating plants of the country.

**JL:** What can you say about the quality of the men over the years? Has it been harder? You say they were pretty good back in the early days.

**DD:** That's a question, that. A fellow hates to answer that question. You know, we have in this day now – we've got lots of modern equipment that has taken the place of labor, you know, of man power. And, of course, after being around and seeing it as I have, we used to didn't take anything going out, you know, and just picking up [unintelligible] and throwing it up on the car – five or six of them, go drop them in, run back down the hill and get them. But men won't do that any more. They just – they run down.

**JL:** Now you gave me a clue just now as to what my next question is. Can you remember the steps – how various machines were introduced and what, how they made it unnecessary to have men on that particular job, and that sort of thing? Can you remember any of those steps?

**DD:** Oh well, yes, I can in a way. You know, I couldn't hardly tell you, but seeing it and being instrumental in seeing it installed and kind of supervising it and everything, I see lots of it – we have so much of it here.

**JL:** Can you remember the first machine along this line that you installed?

**DD:** Well, yes, I can. We have one or two out there. 'Course there are other places been installing them too, you know. We put one machine in over there and . . .

**JL:** What do you call it?

**DD:** It's a stacker. It'll stack more lumber.

**JL:** But I meant mainly in your own field, your own work.

**DD:** Well, we rigged up just a little old small crane on wheels and we'd go out and just pick it up and carry it right on out. And it takes the place of eight or ten men, there on that one particular lift. You could go right ahead and operate and you could put in, you could take and use it where three, four and five men – just where you'd have ten or twelve men handling the timber.

**JL:** What do you suppose forced you to go into that sort of machinery?

**DD:** Well, I'll tell you. Times just changed and the railroads kind of went into it, and of course, we were just a small road, but they've taken it up. Of course, we'd get catalogues every month from various companies.

**JL:** We were talking about how you introduced the steam shovel.

**DD:** Well, all the railroads, they began to get what we called the steam ditcher. So we bought one. Well, the Angelina Lumber Company, they bought one. We borrowed it, for a period of thirty or forty days.

**JL:** Do you remember about what the date was?

**DD:** Well, 1912. So I had a large bridge across the pond over here and of course, the water stood up over the caps and I'd taken it up with Mr. Durham. I said, "It's a pity that we don't have some way of filling that bridge up over there, Mr. Durham. It's about three hundred feet long and ..." He said, "Now, Devereaux, you know, that's what we should do. I want to see about that." So he went up to Calgers and he made a deal for this machine. So they had a wonderful operator. We called him wonderful – at that time he was good. And we brought it out and started filing it up, had lots of dirt handy. Mr. Durham said, "Devereaux, I'm going to get us one. I see now we can't do without it." Sure enough, it wasn't long about ninety days 'til we had one on the grounds. And still have the same machine. It's been a wonderful machine. It's used almost every day; you can just use it for most anything. You can put it down on the track, on the ground, and just forget about it. Got a big cut to go through, why just let him cut it. Nobody but the operator there to send it out.

**JL:** It would take all kinds of men to do that work?

**DD:** Oh yah. That was a big saving. And you see, whenever we started servicing track, why we always had flat cars that loaded up, you know, and we'd just go along with that machine. We could sand two or three miles of track daily with a light surface. Yah, you know, we had dirt track for a good many years. I was road master over there for years and years and we got one of the best inspections for seventeen miles of track of any road in the state of Texas. That was dirt track. But you take Mr. Durham, he took a great interest in his railroad and his coach and he kept everything always painted up; looked mighty nice just for a little short time. Had lots of pride about his self and all of his rolling stock and everything else. He took great pride in keeping everything painted up.

**JL:** What did they call that short line?

**DD:** Texas-Southeastern. Like Arthur Temple, here. Arthur Temple, if he got a little tired, he'd have a bucket of paint sitting right there. He'd brush it up here and he'd really keep things pretty well painted up, too. That's one thing he believed in is paint. Mrs. Farrington. Wonderful old lady. I guess she worked in the store here for I expect forty-five years. You take her husband, he was postmaster here for years and years.

**JL:** Do you know anything about her work here? I mean the things that she has done around in the town?

**DD:** Oh yes, she deserves lots of credit. She got a little bit disabled, got ill health. She had a little church over here and it was a wonderful thing. When we moved the camp in here, you know, there was lots of people. They were camp folks and she got this little church over and she was there all the time – prayer meeting Wednesday night; Sunday morning, church; Sunday afternoons, S. S. She has done a wonderful work there. They still have that little church over there. And, of course, she's been in mighty ill health, Mrs. Farrington has. But she has done lots and lots for Diboll. She seems to get a kick out of trying to help somebody and worked with the churches. Wonderful lady.

**JL:** How were you paid in those days – say back in 1912?

**DD:** They used to pay us once a month.

**JL:** What about picking up these checks at night? Did you pick those up every night or how did that work?

**DD:** The checks they used to issue here?

**JL:** Yes.

**DD:** Commissary checks. Oh yes, you could buy them two bits or seven dollars.

**JL:** You would?

**DD:** Oh yes. He'd just take it, live on it, buy groceries with it, you know.

**JL:** He'd want a little cash some place and so he'd sell it for less?

**DD:** Oh yes. Discount it, you know. There was big business here when it come to buying checks.

**JL:** Anybody who had a little cash could buy up some of those?

**DD:** Oh yes. That's right. These saloon men over here, you know – they really got lots of them.

**JL:** How much would they give you on the dollar at a saloon, if a dollar was the check. What would they give you?

**DD:** Well, the saloons they would take, but they'd discount the check about 20%. Used to tell a good story on – we had a man over there, his name was Bloomer Florence, made lots of money over there. And he had a world of Diboll checks he had bought. Mr. Rutland, he was commissary man here – he was commissary manager for these people

for, I reckon, forty years or longer, and so old Bloomer come over to see Bud, and he said, "Bud, I've got thirteen or fourteen hundred dollars in checks. I want the cash for them. I'll trade them now." "Well," he said, "I wish you would, Bloomer. You know, it'll be hard to cash that much." Bloomer said, "Well, I'll tell you, Bud. Let me have about thirteen hundred dollars worth of matches." Bud said, "Oh, now, Bloomer, you know I haven't got thirteen hundred dollars worth of matches." Bud said, "Oh well," he said, "Then I'll just take it out and starve." "Bud," he said, "Let me have thirteen hundred dollars worth of Star Tobacco." Well, you know, he run him around. They finally cashed them, of course. They used to have an awful time with these checks. Some fellows got a lot of them, you know, and tried to make them cash them.

**JL:** But wouldn't the company redeem them if they went to the saloon?

**DD:** No, no, the company they issued them, you know.

**JL:** Yes, but they issued them only for use in the commissary?

**DD:** Oh yes. But you didn't have to draw them out. You could leave them in, you know. Most people would draw, you know, draw everything they had in, out, you know, and payday they wouldn't have nothing. Just go and draw five or ten dollars, take the discount and get a little cash.

These people don't realize the sawmills in this country, they've gone through some pretty hardships themselves. This company, they've operated along here years and years ago just for the sake of taking care of the people, just to let them work enough to – they were losing money and everybody knew it. I'll never ever forget one time I was out on the road, a good many years ago, doing some work, and Mr. Walker was superintendent – a wonderful fellow. He and Mr. Strauss had been up at the camp and come back. It was on a Saturday afternoon. Mr. Walker, he was a great fellow. "Mr. Walker," I said. "I'm coming in this afternoon. I'll be a little late getting in but I'm coming in. I'd like to get about \$15." "So, Mr. Devereaux. Don't you know," he said. "\$15 is a hell of a lot of money, sir?" I said, "Yes, sir. I need a lot of money, Mr. Walker." So I come down to his house, and Mr. Strauss, he was a good follow too. He was assistant to him. And Mr. Walker said, "Strauss, let Devereaux have \$15. I don't know what he'll do with all that money." Yes, time has been pretty hard for these people. Lumber worth nothing.

We bought a rehauled skidder. Well, we operated it a year or two, but they come to the conclusion that they were knocking down and ruining too much young timber, so they made a horse skidder out of it. Well, the rehaul, you see – it would carry the tongs and everything back on the rehaul line and, of course, they had the finest of horses for skidder horses. Well, when this line come in, this horse would be right there, you know, and they'd just hook the tongs to him, they had a rig on him, you know; he'd carry it right back to the logs and you didn't knock this timber down, you drug the log on the ground all the way. And it proved more satisfactory. It just didn't ruin the timber like the rehaul – that just comes through, you know, over canyons, just knocking everything down.

But you take forty years ago, the lumber companies they didn't take too much about trying to take care of the timber or reforesting or nothing like that. But the last forty years, why they've gotten into it.

**JL:** When did they put that rehaul in, do you remember?

**DD:** Yes, it was in – it must have been the last of 1913.

**JL:** But it only lasted for a little while.

**DD:** Oh no, they operated it for quite a while. They operated it for about, I'd say, about seven or eight years. Then we set it there for awhile, and they bought a big body of hardwood down here in San Jacinto Country, so we carried it down there. And that was the last it was used. We left it down there. They operated about eight or nine years. It was mighty fine on this big, heavy hardwood. They had bull team, cattle – that's what they hauled all the hardwood out with.

**JL:** How long did they use those bull teams?

**DD:** Oh, they kept bull teams here until about – we had some bull teams during World War I. Carter down here still operates – he still has bulls.

**JL:** When you took the bulls out, what did you replace them with?

**DD:** Mules.

**JL:** Why?

**DD:** Well, they began to decide that the oxen was a little slow, and of course, it was the general thing. Of course, they always said that a bull could stand up and haul a good load, where a mule couldn't stand up, but when the woods got like that there wasn't nothing doing anyway, so what difference did it make? So they finally just got away from it. Still they were mighty good on the hardwood.

**JL:** Were they harder to take care of or easier?

**DD:** Well, I'd say they were a little easier to take care of.

**JL:** Didn't have to worry much about them?

**DD:** No, just feed them a little bit. A mule you've really got to take good care of. They cost you lots of money too – used to – they don't cost so much now.

The main depot was a little old box car. They was just little old small engines run over here. They used to come along here and we used to load cars up here. And they got these little old cotton belt cars, you know – just short cars. Had to get the train crew to pull them apart, you know. Got them so you could put this long stuff into the end one, you know. And you had to unload them the same way. And so they used to have small engines over there. They just come along here, you – sixteen or seventeen cars. We have a hill across the river over here. It's hard to make and they'd just whip them, you know,

but now they've got these heavy big diesels and they make it all right. Yah, we had a little old depot there. Agent set there, you know – old man Dows. He was here for years and years.

**JL:** What kind of rail did you have then? When you first came?

**DD:** Here they had 60. I went to Alexandria, Louisiana. I loaded that steel out down there between Boyce and Alexandria and from Boyce up to Cypress and from Cypress up to Nacogdoches. I loaded out a lot of steel down there. I did quite a few jobs. I was over to Rockwood, Tennessee. This power plant we have here I dismantled it at Rockwood, Tennessee, and I went up to Charleston, West Virginia, for the first turbine we put in here. This mill was built for turbine and I had taken the first turbine out from Charleston, West Virginia, well twelve miles from Charleston at a little place named St. Albany.

**JL:** They had a secondhand one there that you could get?

**DD:** Yah. Dupont Chemical Plant. We had a Corliss here; we decided we'd get a generated Corliss. They had one over at Greenville, Mississippi, so I went over and got that thing; so we operated quite a while.

The chief engineer and I went up there and it was a right hazardous job there at Rockwood taking this power plant down. And the insurance people, they wanted an enormous sum to insure the job, so I tried the Travelers, oh I tried every insurance company. Finally a little boy from Texas, he was from Fort Worth, he was in the insurance business in a little old place, I forget the name of it. Well, we wandered around there about a week during the day just to have them come out. Well, they'd rather not have anything to do with such a hazardous-looking job. I went over one morning, and I asked him – his name was Smith, and I said, "Smith, I came over here to ask you a question. Want you to tell me how many men a man's allowed to work in the state of Tennessee without being insured." He said, "Four." I said, "Well, that's all I wanted to know." So I went back and I hired my four men. "Of course," he said, "if anything happens to them you yourself are responsible." I said, "Yah, I realize that. I've got to take that chance though." And I did. I went over and teared all that down. It was a mean place, had to build a good piece of railroad to get it out of there.

**JL:** Did you move the whole plant?

**DD:** No, the machinery down there. And when I got up at St. Albany – of course, the place had been abandoned quite a while and there was lots of miners lived in there and they had a couple of houses where the car wouldn't pass, so I had to make a deal with them. I told them I'd move the house and move it back, and I did. And the track was a little bit bad, but I contacted the road master up there and got him to look the situation over and I had to get, he got about 46 empties and shoved back down, and I put in a few ties, and he was good enough to take that much interest in it and help me out and we pulled it out.

**JL:** What kind of a power plant did you have before you got that one?

**DD:** We just had a small one.

**JL:** Well, how did you power this mill then? With steam?

**DD:** Oh yes.

**JL:** It's electric now though?

**DD:** The mill?

**JL:** Yes.

**DD:** No. No. Still steam.

**JL:** Did you have anything to do with the power plant there at the mill before you got that . . . ?

**DD:** Oh yah, we put in a small generator there. We just come back, you know, and run the foundation, and I just set the machinery and got a fellow up here to wire it up. Just set it up and went to work, and it's still up there just like we put it up. Yah, we've done a little of everything around here.

One of the largest [wrecks] we had here, why coming in the track buckled here, down at the two-mile board, and they just turned out in the clear. No one got hurt, although it went way down. Mr. Durham, he was sick. He was the superintendent, vice-president and general manager. And so I was out to the river, I put the bridge in across the river, Gilbert, so I come in and we had a couple – Mr. Looney, he was with the Cotton Belt and Santa Fe and another man also with the Cotton Belt for years and years. So they'd been in to see Mr. Durham and, of course, they was high-powered fellows, all from the mainline, you know, and most everybody that called Durham, he'd see. And they told him there was nothing to do but to get a big hook and there was a big wreck hurled off some mainline. . . Well, he said TSERR didn't have that kind of money. He said it costs lots of money to get a big wrecking hook.

I got the tender up that night and brought that on in at 11 o'clock. Well, Mr. Durham asked me to come down to the house. Well, he called me "governor" lots of time. He said, "Well, governor, it was pretty bad, wasn't it?" I said, "Yes, could have been worse, I reckon. Nobody got hurt." "Well, Devereaux," he says, "I wonder, do we have to get a big hook to get the engine up?" I said, "We've had lots of wrecks around here, but we've never mentioned big hooks." "Well," he says, "Mr. Lovett and Mr. Looney came and said we'll have to get a big hook off the main line to get it up." I said, "I think I can get it up all right." So the next day we had the official of the Cotton Belt, the officials off the Santa Fe down here, and all the S. P. officials, everybody out to the wreck. I really had some good tackle and I had a good man on the engine to turn it up. We had a preacher here, a Methodist minister; he was pastor here, and he was an old Cotton Belt conductor and he said, "Mr. Durham, Devereaux's got some good ideas all right, but he'll never shake it with what he's got." Well, I got ready with everything. There is a retired man here, Mooney was his name – old log train man. He could just

operate an engine and take care of it and go all over the hills wherever the majority of them wouldn't run no more. And I went to him and I said, "Mr. Mooney, now we are ready to make the pull. Now it's all up to you. If you'll take my signal we'll turn it up without a particle of trouble in the world." He bats his eyes, and he said, "You give me the signal and I'll take the signal." And do you know, I got to one side, and I had cut way back under the drivers; I was afraid it might slip, and I put a rail over on this side, chained it so it wouldn't come down and just eased up and the engine just commenced to turning up as pretty and it just lift, and that rail set up straight. I looked for it to turn over but it didn't. He had just taken the slack up and he just turned the engine on up and we shoved the other rail under and in twenty-two minutes we had it up on the mainline. Mr. Durham said, "Well, boys, what do you think about that?" "Well," he said, "I'll tell you. That fellow knows more about what he's doing than this whole bunch of us."

**JL:** About what year was that wreck?

**DD:** In 1937.

**JL:** How did she get off in the first place?

**DD:** A sun kink.