

CLYDE THOMPSON

Interview 10b

Jan. 14, 1984, Diboll, Texas

Becky Bailey, Interviewer (Also present: Ossie Thompson, Bea Burkhalter)

Daniel Guerrero, Transcriber

ABSTRACT: In an interview with Becky Bailey, Clyde Thompson (November 13, 1899 – February 17, 1987), his wife Ossie, and Beatrice Burkhalter recall life in Diboll in the middle of the 20th century. Thompson worked for Southern Pine Lumber Company as it evolved from 1916 through 1977. He was also the first Mayor of Diboll from 1962-1977. He recalled his beginning as a stenographer for G.W. Cleveland and D.C. Kenley at the age of 16 after attending Tyler Commercial College. Thompson and Bailey discuss the Depression, logging practices, clear cutting, moving from oxen to mules to trucks in logging, banking logs, the advent of power saws, tree farming, replanting, sawmill accidents, company finances, management practices, and the retail yards. They also discuss such notable people as T.L.L. Temple, Arthur Temple, Sr., Arthur Temple, Jr., Kenneth Nelson, Watson Walker, P.H. Strauss, John O’Hara, H.G. Temple, Lillian Knox, Laymon Gossett, Al Cudlipp, and Carrol Allen.

Becky Bailey: I’m interviewing Mr. Clyde Thompson at the Temple Memorial Library on January 14, 1984. His current address is 114 Hines Street. My name is Becky Bailey. Mr. Clyde, where were you born?

Clyde Thompson: Lufkin, Texas.

BB: What year?

CT: November 13, 1899.

BB: What were your parent’s names?

CT: My father was named George R. Thompson and my mother was Emma Burke Thompson.

BB: Were they from Texas or had they moved here?

CT: Angelina County.

BB: Okay, what about your grandparents, did they live around here or do you know from what state they came?

CT: My maternal grandparents came from Georgia and my paternal grandparents were raised here; they were the McMullens.

BB: Did you spend all your childhood in Lufkin?

CT: No, we moved to Huntington when I was two years old and lived there until I came to Diboll in 1916.

BB: So you were seventeen years old –

CT: Sixteen years old.

BB: What kind of education did you go through? Did you just go through high school?

CT: High school and three months business college education in Tyler – Tyler Commercial College.

BB: What type of work did you do when you first came to Diboll? Did your family move here or was it just you?

CT: I did what they called, in those days, stenographic work. That was before they refined it and call it secretarial work.

BB: Where was the office then?

CT: It was just a little north of the present big building that was the store and then the office later, the one that's got "Southern Pine Lumber Company" on it. We had a little office just north between that and what they called the library.

Betty Burkhalter: About how far was it from the steps, the steps are still there to the main store, it's the first building.

CT: That's right.

BBurk: How far was it? Not very far?

CT: Oh, just a short distance. They just built it right against there.

BB: How many people worked in the office then?

CT: Four.

BB: Were you the only secretary?

CT: No, there was one other.

BB: Both men? Was it a man, too?

CT: No, one was a lady. There was later a man. When I came there, there was a Mrs. Balsler, a lady.

BB: Wasn't that kind of unusual for a lady to be working then?

CT: No, I couldn't answer that. See, I was just out of high school, a little school from Huntington and I didn't know much about nothing that was going on.

BB: How did you end up in Diboll? What made you decide to come here?

CT: A man by the name of Welch who was married to my second cousin was in the office here. He called me and told me the job was open and he would get it for me if I wanted it. At that time, I was working in the mornings for the Huntington State Bank. My job there consisted of sweeping the floor, getting the mail and straightening the money, so if I have as many as two bills now I always straighten them. In the afternoon I worked for Mr. J.J. Collins, who was lawyer later in Lufkin, got fairly well known everywhere. I worked for him in the afternoon. I started that in June and then October 1st I came here in 1916.

BB: How many men worked at the plant at that time? Did you have anything to do with the payroll?

CT: I really don't know, I just don't know, but it was nothing compared to what it is now because they only made lumber and lathes, fence lathes. They burned up the rest of the stuff, you know, that they save now. It was just simply, strictly a saw mill. They made boards, dimensions and a few timbers and that's all it was to it. Fence lathes.

BB: What sort of housing arrangements did you have when you first moved here?

CT: I boarded with the Welches.

BB: You took your meals there, too?

BBurk: It was the old Hogue Home.

BB: Oh, was it? Okay.

CT: That's R.V. Welch's parents, who has been post master in Lufkin.

BB: Oh, that's the same, huh?

CT: I'd like to get in there that I started on the magnificent salary of \$40.00 a month.

BB: Goodness, what were your working hours?

CT: Eight until five 6 days a week and there was no such thing as vacations and Saturdays off and that kind of stuff. Later I got promoted up to where I had a secretary, Mrs. Pitser Garrison. I laughed here while back about her asking me when I hired her

“What about the vacation times and times off?” I told her “We had Christmas day off if it comes on Sunday”. That’s what she said I told her and I guess I did, and that’s about right.

BB: Christmas Day if it came on Sunday.

CT: It wasn’t anything like it is now and we generally went back at night, after we would go home to eat at 5, and as a general rule, even after we married, I’d go back at night, wouldn’t I?

Ossie Thompson: Sure did, dated three years and then by the time we got married he had to go back and stay until bed time. They did work though.

BB: What were your duties when you first started?

CT: I was stenographer for Mr. G.W. Cleveland, who was head of the hardwood department. He was hardwood sales manager. At that time they had a hardwood mill here in addition to the pine mill. Then I was also secretary to Mr. D.C. Kenley, who was in charge of the timber and land department. Kenly, K E N L E Y.

BB: Did they have foresters back then, you said he was in charge of the timber and land.

CT: He was “It”.

BB: Oh, he was It?

CT: He had charge of the land, buying timber, buying land and all that kind of stuff. He’s the man that is more responsible than anybody with the company having this million acres of land. Of course, he didn’t buy a million acres but he bought lots of it. He started here and bought it all the way to the other side of Rusk and on each side. Then they would run a railroad up there and all like that.

BB: There was no management, per se, I mean they didn’t have foresters who went out.

CT: No, he did all that.

BB: He did everything.

CT: Later he employed Kenneth Nelson to do a little typing for him and he offered him so much a sheet, and Kenneth was so much faster than he thought he would be and it cost him so much he put him on regular. That’s where Kenneth learned to survey and all that kind of stuff. Then later on they branched out. Of course, they did have foresters then, but I’m talking about the beginning.

BB: Who was superintendent of the pine mill at that time?

CT: Mr. Watson Walker was the general manager.

BB: Oh. Of the whole thing?

CT: Yes, and they had mill foremen at each mill. Mr. Marvin Hamner was foreman at mill No. 1.

BB: How many mills did they have?

CT: Two – the hardwood mill had just burned down when I came here and they did have three mills – then they ran mill #2 at night on hardwood. You see, it was double shift. Mr. Hendricks was foreman of mill No. 2.

BB: So they only had the two mills at that time?

CT: But three shifts. I mean one mill had two shifts and that made three shifts.

BB: Did they ever rebuild the mill after it burned?

CT: No.

BB: Okay, they had the general manager – oh, I know what I wanted to ask – how involved were the Temples at this time, which Mr. Temple was here?

CT: Mr. T.L.L. was the founder and he was the present Arthur Temple's grandfather. When I came here the present Arthur Temple's father, who is also named Arthur, had not married, he was in college. Arthur used to laugh and say that he never could fire me because grandfather hired me. Actually the office manager, Mr. Strauss, hired me but Mr. T.L.L. was very much in charge and he would come down. He lived in Texarkana. The sales office was in Texarkana. That's the reason we had such a small office force here to begin with. Then of course, the sales office and everything moved here but Mr. T.L.L. was down here pretty often. When he would come, after the Welches left here. Mr. Welch left here and I was given his job which was secretary to Mr. Strauss, kind of assistant to him. I was given that job. When they left I was living at, what they called in those days, it was built for a library. Mr. T.L.L. had it built. It is now what is Love Wood Products building and they had rooms upstairs and I had one of the rooms. I paid rent there and then ate over at the hotel which was called the Star Hotel and was operated by Mrs. Estes, who is Sis Pickle's grandmother and then her mother.

BB: Now, Mr. Strauss was the office manager?

CT: Yes.

BB: The office manager and Mr. Watson was the mill manager?

CT: The general manager.

BB: He was over everybody?

CT: That's right. Mr. Strauss had the office. Then after Mr. Watson Walker passed away they divided the operations between Mr. Strauss and Mr. O'Hara. Mr. O'Hara had been saw filer. They divided the operations and I was made assistant to both. Then I was privileged a secretary and I employed Harvey Rowin at Lufkin, who still lives in Lufkin. Incidentally, I introduced him to one of the Kelley girls and he took off pretty good because he married her.

BB: Did Temple have other holdings in Texarkana or was this the main operation?

CT: This was the main operation. Now, I don't remember the exact date but after I had been here a little while, I don't distinctly remember, they bought out the Pineland operation from Norton Lumber Company and then later, they bought the Hemphill operation from the famous Mrs. Knox.

BB: Why was she famous?

CT: Well, she ran that mill over there and she ran it, I mean and everything in Hemphill. She ran everything over there. She was quite a character and a fine woman now. One reason she got famous, her husband was killed and she was charged with killing him but, a Mr. Collins, whose cousin, whom I mentioned a while ago, got her out of it somehow. Now whether she killed him or not, I'm not sure on that. I don't know but that gave her a lot of publicity. She did like things like this for employees: on Junteenth she employed a white band, band composed of all white members, to come to Hemphill and play for a dance and barbecue for the black people. In those days they were Negroes, you know. That went all over the country, her doing that. She was good to her employees.

BB: What was her first name, do you remember?

CT: No, I don't. Her husband was named Hiram but I don't remember her name. Bea, do you remember her name?

BBurk: No, I don't.

CT: She would do things like this, I heard them laugh about it – one day some carpenter was working on the roof of a building and she didn't like the way he was going and there were several of them downstairs. So she went up the ladder and shouted, "Ya'll all get back so you can't see up my dress", and things like that, you know. She was something else. There were all kinds of tales told about her but nearly everybody loved her.

BB: About what year did they buy this from her, do you remember?

CT: I'll tell you on the next interview, I simply don't remember – those years have passed so. At my age I just can't pin point dates. Later now, after the company bought

her out, another thing she was famous for, she was convicted of evasion of income tax, she was sent up to Dallas, that institution they had there, I've forgotten, they had a special name for it. She had had all kinds of money for operating this mill over there and was well fixed but she ran through all of it. I remember her writing Mr. Henry Temple a letter one Christmas to please send her – and she named several items, I remember toilet articles, and some candy and things like that. Mr. Temple turned the letter over to me and asked me to handle it and I got the stuff and shipped it to her. I think she died in that institution. No, she didn't either. She was ill and I think they got her out early and she came to Huntington and passed away in Huntington. I believe that's right. Everybody, Lillian Knox, I've thought of her name, everybody knew her, in the industry, the lumber industry.

BB: It was kind of unusual for a female probably to be running the operation.

CT: Her husband was supposed to run it, but he just worked over there.

BB: Oh, she told him how to do it, huh?

CT: She was the one everybody looked to.

BB: So they got Pineland and Hemphill. Did they acquire any other smaller sawmills around or was that just about it?

CT: They didn't buy any. Now, they established several small sawmills around on various parts of the land, they had to cut the timber. I remember after I had made Vice President of the land and all that stuff, they put in a little mill in Louisiana. We bought a lot of timber up there, put in a mill there and then Mr. Carroll Allen, who married Arthur's sister, put in a mill out in Trinity County. There's probably other small sawmills, lumber was shipped here, you see. Shipped in the rough here to be dressed and so forth.

BB: When did you become Vice President?

CT: I don't know when – it was – no, I was one of the Vice Presidents. At the time they created the Vice Presidency I was made Vice President, Kenneth Nelson was a Vice President and Carroll Allen was a Vice President. Carroll was a brother-in-law to Arthur Temple, married Arthur's sister. Then later Joe Denman, then Joe was made Executive Vice President.

BB: But this all just grew rather gradually as people would retire?

CT: Yes, that's right. It didn't take a big splurge of growing until the present Arthur Temple came in command. After he – he finished school in Texarkana High School, went fifteen or twenty minutes to Texas University, that's the way he explained it himself. I think he went one term and then he came to Lufkin to manage the Lufkin Yard. I don't remember when the retail yards were established but they finally

established thirty-six retail yards and they advertised it from the Rio Grande to the Red River, that was their advertisement. Arthur was in charge of the Lufkin Yard. Then Mr. O'Hara and Mr. Strauss were made co-managers at Mr. Walker's death and then they moved Mr. Henry Temple from Pineland over here as general manager and soon after that Mr. Temple, I mean Mr. Strauss passed away and later Mr. O'Hara died. Or Mr. Strauss was retired and then passed away. Mr. O'Hara was still employed as kind of a superintendent when he passed away.

BB: I was trying to think now, Mr. Strauss didn't become general manager until – no

CT: No, he never was general manager, he was co-manager.

BB: This was in the '30s wasn't it? In the early '30s or '20s? Do you think it was earlier than that?

CT: It has to be in the '20s, I think. I can't tie down on those dates.

BB: Well, I saw a notice in the Lufkin news that in the 1928 or 29 where it said something about Mr. Strauss becoming something. Had gotten a big promotion and I wondered if that was about the date he became co-manager?

CT: Co-manager, they called him a co-manager. He had everything up to and including the machine shops, everything in the woods and all that and Mr. O'Hara had the manufacturing of it. He had charge of all that and then Mr. O'Hara had charge of the housing at that time. Mr. O'Hara, when he became co-manager, he took the – Mr. Strauss had charge of all the houses before then under Mr. Walker. They divided up the operation.

OT: I don't remember which one had the houses at that time. Before that Mr. Weise always – people went to him. Mr. Walker died along about '29 I believe. R.C. was born when he died. He died in our house, that was where they lived.

BB: Oh, the house you live in now?

OT: I had talked to him just about ten minutes before that, came to get some medicine for Clyde and he was all dressed going out to the camp and he was sitting on the porch and we had, it was on a Monday, and Clyde had eaten a lot of persimmons and was sick at home. I'd gone up there to get some medicine and Mr. Walker was sitting on the office porch waiting to go out to the camp, all dressed in his khakis, so when I came out he chuckled like and said "Well, I understand Clyde ate too many persimmons?" I said, "Yes, that's why I have come to get medicine." I went on back home, went into the kitchen to get water to give Clyde and Mrs. – Joe Donald's mother, Mrs. Smith, Alma Smith came to the gate and called me and when I went to the door she said, "Did you hear about Mr. Walker?" I knew he was dead, just the way she talked. He got sick with a heart attack there on the porch, came home and got in bed and died before they could get a doctor. I think that was in '29.

BB: That was just about when I was seeing the newspaper clipping. Now, there were some things I was reading about the Depression, didn't Temple move, or close down, a lot of their retail yards when the Depression hit?

CT: The Depression didn't have anything to do with it. They did begin to sell off some of the yards but the reason for that was they had so many yards almost, in the big cities, centers, you know. The sales office was having difficulty because, say for instance, they had one or two yards in Dallas and one or two in Houston, well, they were having difficulty selling to the other people because they were in competition in one way and selling to them in another. So the company decided, I don't know, I guess Mr. L.D. Gilbert, who was absolute general manager, out of Texarkana, I guess he made the decisions. They began to sell the yards off but the Depression, as such, didn't have anything to do with it. Well, it might have, too, but anyway, their reason was they were having difficulty to sell to – say Foxworth Lumber Company who was a big distributor because they were in competition to them and then trying to sell to them, too, you see. So they got out of the retail yards, but like I say, they advertised the Red River to the Rio Grande. They've got some more yards now, you see, they've got the Big Tin Barn here, one at Pineland and one in Houston and one in Dallas and one in Conroe, that's what I was trying to think of.

BB: I didn't know they had all those. Later when you became Vice President, now this was over land and timber?

CT: No, not then. They divided that and I had the logs operation what they called the forest harvest and then Kenneth Nelson made Vice President in land and timber. They divided that operation up.

BB: Into the two separate things. Okay, what kind of – how would they log at this time, can you tell us something about that?

CT: When I first came here it was strictly team logs, by that I mean mostly mules, of course, and they would skid with them and load with them. If any of you who have never had the opportunity to see them load trucks with mules, you have missed something. I imagine you've seen it, haven't you? Those mules would be so trained they'd put a chain, fasten it to the truck, come and put it under, they'd skid a log up beside the truck or log wagon rather, and these mules – they'd put that chain around it and they would say "Giddup" or something and these mules would take off and they could tell when it hit the log wagon, and they would turn and come back themselves.

BB: What did they use, kind of alike a pulley?

CT: Well, they had it tied here to the truck.

BB: Oh, and just pull it over.

CT: Just pull it up on there, and then they did trucks later but at first it was log wagons. Now they never did use oxen after I came here.

BBurk: I remember the oxen, in my early days. I remember them coming by with them, sometimes the old oxen would decide he wouldn't pull any more and he would just lay down right there, and there were those logs with the oxen laying down right in the middle of the road.

CT: They had discarded the oxen when we came here. The first trucks was what they called "September Morn", it consisted of four wheels a little body and a seat, that's all there was to it, wasn't a cab or nothing, they were just striped down, they called them "September Morn".

BB: Wish we had some pictures of them.

OT: They picked them up out here in front of our house for two or three years, you know. They'd put them on trucks to take them somewhere, the workers. I can't remember, that was along in the '30s.

CT: Yeah, what she's talking about, we always, these logging operations would get ahead of the spring, winter and spring months, now they have a tremendous stock ahead because they can't log so much normally, especially in April and May. That's the time we always dreaded, and they would bank out the logs, had to put them everywhere, out where they've got this present scout house, across there in front.

BB: Down in Old Orchard Park?

CT: Yes, that's right off what is now called Carter Drive, they used to bank logs and then they would have to pick them up.

BB: What do you mean by "bank"?

CT: Just be a big pile, to keep them to use them when they couldn't log.

BB: Didn't have to keep them wet or anything like that? I notice now-a-days they spray them.

CT: They later got to banking, they didn't in those days, no, not at first but then later they did, they got the new situation over there, the log handling process, then they did have sprays on them and they do now, spray on the ones. They stack then up over there now and they have sprays on them. Fill the ponds, they'd dump them in the ponds and then feed them up in the conveyor.

BB: That was after they had been dried out, or whatever?

CT: You see, if you know anything about sawmills, the saw floors are about on the second story, where the carriage and all was. They'd carry the logs up there, they do the same thing today. They have a conveyor.

OT: The chain would carry it from the water up there and then it was on that – what did you call it?

CT: Carriage.

OT: Carriage, and it was slashing that log.

BB: Into the 2 x 4's or whatever?

OT: And the sound of it didn't sound right and Mr. Fogg was eating his lunch and he knew there was something wrong so he got up from the table and went over there and when he got there he knew what happened and he just reached across and it slashed him.

CT: He had them stop the carriage and he got in to see what was the matter and the carriage got loose, the lock bar turned and run him right into the saw and cut him, they said, all to pieces. He wasn't shown at the funeral.

BBurk: Did they have many accidents like that or are they pretty uncommon?

CT: No, not like that but they used to have lots of accidents.

BEE: Vernon could tell you what condition he was in, he picked the body up and carried it in, you know, he was driving the ambulance.

CT: I hear he was cut up pretty bad, I never did ask anybody.

OT: My uncle lost an arm over there at nineteen years old. Dean Arrington's father.

BB: It was a pretty dangerous place to work really?

OT: Yes, he was oiling a machine and his sleeve got caught and just carried his arm, if he hadn't been such a strong man it would have ground him on up to his shoulders, I don't know what it would have done. But Tallmadge was just, you see, when it is going around like that, there is a time when it is a little bit slower, I guess. I was just five years old. He braced himself and pulled his arm from under it. I can see it today because I was with him when they buried it, great big slashes. He could still work his fingers. Now a days he wouldn't lose his arm.

BB: Did he continue working there, did they find other employment for him?

OT: No, in late years he did but he had to sue the company, didn't get very much out of it even then, but in his latter days he worked for the company.

CT: He went to school then after.

OT: He took the money he got and after what was left paying the lawyers and things, went to Sam Houston one year. But he was such a mama's boy. He stayed with us. Papa bought a home over there to send us to school and he stayed here with his grandmother. But Tallmadge, at night I studied in the room where he was and he was writing to my grandmother and crying most of the time. He just never could get used to being away from home.

BB: Whenever you were in charge of the logging operation, was it up to you, and what kind of operation? We hear a lot about the clear cutting now, what kind of operation was it then?

CT: As far as the clear cutting, the land and timber department had charge of that, we didn't want all the trees to be cut, we just harvested what they said harvest and we had – when I took charge of it, or it was under my jurisdiction, we had forty-eight men who used crosscut saws, that made twenty-four pair. You see, it would take two to a saw and they would fell the timber and trim it up and all like that, and cut the logs off. The Lufkin Foundry and Machine Company, Mr. Al Cudlipp heard about power saws and he got someone to send one down here and he asked me if we would try it too in the woods just to see what would happen. I told him I would and I won't tell who did it because they are still living. I gave it to a couple of the sawyers and the first thing they did, a tree fell on it and broke it all to pieces. Now, I've always thought they did it on purpose. The thing about it is they saw it as something that would take their jobs and it did take a good many of the jobs because, with power saws – but it got where everybody was using them. They got pretty fast, they could do so much more. They called them "Flatheads", the log sawyers, and you could no more get a flathead now than nothing because they are all power saws. A lot of people who have a fireplace owns a power saw now. I know Robert Ramsey is one I was thinking of, he talked to me the other day about it. It is just a different world. What they would do then, you see, these flatheads would fell the timber, cut them up and then they would skid them to where we had a pile of them, with teams and then load them on, first on the log wagons and then on trucks. All of the old log wagons are gone except I saved one, kept it well painted and we've got it loaned to the Forestry Museum. But it is strictly on loan, even the tag shows that, to the Forestry Museum in Lufkin. That's one of Southern Pine's farm log wagons.

BB: Whenever they would saw the logs, these sawyers on both sides of the tree with the cross cut saw, how far up would they go? I've heard they did it about waist high.

CT: They did, that's correct, but after Mr. Watson Walker passed away, Mr. Strauss, when he had charge of that, he began to make them bend their backs. We tried to go within a foot of the ground. Of course, it depends on the size of the log at that time. Some trees flare out at the bottom and you don't want that old big flare, so you cut above it. But we had a yard stick of twelve inches from the ground. Now with the power saws, that's not hard to do but with a cross-cut saw you've got to bend your back to do that.

BB: I'll bet you had some unhappy people whenever they told them to bend over.

CT: Yes, now they paid them by the thousands and after they got the power saws, they made so much we didn't pay them any more but they did so much more. One time Mr. Arthur Temple, Sr. was here and he had some friends from Texarkana and he asked me to carry them into the woods, and of course, I did. A man, Mr. Gossett, named Gossett, man, he was a worker, he and his brother. Mr. Temple tried to say something to him but he just kept on working. Mr. Temple said "You know, your crew is not very talkative, are they?" I just happened to have a copy of the day's, the prior day's cutting record in my pocket and I pulled it out and said "The Gossetts there made \$51.50 yesterday." He said, "My God, I wouldn't talk either." Oh, they made good money, those Gossett boys. Well, all of them did but they were the lead sawyers.

BB: You paid them by the thousand?

CT: That's right.

BB: What did that mean? Thousand board feet

CT: Thousand board feet, yes. Now they pay them by weight, you see, you notice trucks come on up there and they weigh them, that's what computers and things did. They can buy a truckload of logs and let it come on in and weigh it, call down to whoever runs the computer in the office and tell them how much weight it has and a man can go right on down there by the time he unloads it and get his check if he wants to. That just shows you how fast and how different things were. But they took a scale stick and measured the little end of the log, under the back. Then they had what they called a Doyle Scale, so many inches were produced, and had to take length into consideration. A log that was twelve inches at the little end and twenty feet long, you see, it would have quite a volume of timber in it.

OT: You talk about them being unhappy, the people who were selling the timber were unhappy, the trees, because when you have a stump up waist high, they got no money for it. I know I had an uncle and he wasn't too popular with some of them because Tallmadge took his stick and he'd stand by that because he hung on to it through the Depression and everything else with this timber. That land he had, he bought other land but this was given to him by his father. But the boys of the family got all from here on past Burke, you know, the boys were so important in the family and he was uncle Hiram. My grandmother was the baby of the family and her father gave her land but Tallmadge took good care of it.

BB: Whenever the land and timber people would mark the timber would you – it wasn't like the clear cutting, was it just selective cutting?

CT: That's right. In clear cutting you cut everything down to a stump diameter, say twelve inches or ten inches, or ten inches breast high, whatever they wanted it cut. It depends on the stand of timber.

OT: You put colors on those trees.

CT: Yes, they have what they call a “gun” that shoots and they’ll put two marks, they’ll put on about breast high and one on the stump. The idea of putting it on the stump is so they can check to be sure that they didn’t cut some of that that they weren’t supposed to. They do that now, but the clear cutting is something that is misunderstood generally. It’s the finest tool they’ve got for increasing the productivity of pine timber. People don’t understand, they don’t clear cut everything, it’s just the one that’s got so much hardwood mixed in it and all that. You hear a lot of people complaining about the clear cutting and all that. It does take about forty-five years for saw timber to grow back on it but that is faster than natural because they plant them, that’s faster than natural re-seeding. What I mean by “natural re-seeding” is when the wind blows the pine burrs out and they drop the seeds down and they come up from there.

BB: Being involved in the logging operation you weren’t involved in any replanting or anything like that?

CT: Now, that was strictly the other department.

OT: They didn’t always do that planting, they started that – what year was it? Along about the latter part, early part of the ‘40s. I know I went out and saw the first rows, out toward Boggy Slough.

BB: How big a tract did they do, do you remember?

OT: I don’t remember, you know numbers don’t mean too much to me, but the little trees they put out were little bitty things like that. I carried some. I was made principal of a brand new school in Houston and I carried a whole hand full of them and the PTA and all of us got out and planted them, but they wouldn’t grow in that sand down there. We didn’t have one pine tree to live.

BB: Oh my goodness, I hope they had better luck at Boggy Slough.

OT: They still use that, don’t they still plant out there?

CT: Oh yes, they plant when necessary. When they clear out they plant the whole thing. They actually get more timber than was there originally because they space them, you know. They are generally in rows and they get the right space and it makes bigger timber. Clear cutting is one of the best tools and one of the most misunderstood things because the average person doesn’t understand the reason for it. “That sawmill is just cleaning the land!”

BB: Well, it does look pretty ugly when they first do it.

CT: I’ll grant you that.

OT: Before they would take care of that tree farming. Our family has always been real proud of that because I.D. Fairchild was to my grandmother, like her own child. She loved him like he was hers and he was a senator and he would come to Huntsville and look over the pen. He would always come and spend the night with us, he and Mama loved each other and he was the one that started that idea of replanting the trees.

BEE: I've run into a group of people down at Kennedy. He was a senator, with I.D. Fairchild and I gave him some pine trees to plant on his land. He has a forest of pine trees down there that he had planted.

OT: I.D. loved the land, especially East Texas land.

BEE: The land out there is not conducive to pine trees but he has watered – I'll think of the name after a while, she was a teacher a retired teacher and we went to her home, one out from Kennedy. Had a home out there that had all of these pine trees.

CT: The state has one of their forests named the I.D. Fairchild State Forest.

OT: He was a lawyer and he was killed coming back from Austin to a meeting in the early '20s, wasn't it? We married in '22 and he used to tell me, "Well, I'm going to get your divorce for you when you want it." And he – maybe it was the '30s when he was killed.

MD: He taught school here, too, didn't he?

OT: Oh yes, when he got mad – he boarded with my grandmother and that little one-teacher school out there close to Zelda's. He would teach school and then he would walk back up to his father's and take the plow, they've told that – he was a wonderful man.

BB: What was your grandmother's name?

OT: Mrs. W.L. Arrington, Zelda lives out there on the home place.

BB: Can you tell us some of the troubles that the company went through during the Depression? I've heard some but do you have any inside stories you can tell us?

CT: No, I don't have any, just like everybody else, money was pretty scarce.

OT: You could tell that they needed money so bad that they cut everybody 10%. That was hard for some of them to take because 10¢, I guess after you counted everybody, meant something to the company. What was it, I was sitting here trying to think when I came home at one of the board meetings, Clyde was on the board then, and I remember that they talked about Mr. Arthur Temple's father, he was president then and he – they talked about him, he was the savior of the company, that's the way they would describe him because it was just about to go under, wasn't it?

CT: Well, he and Mr. L.D. Gilbert.

OT: He was dead then, he died when I was in Nacogdoches in the '30s. Oh no, not Mr. Gilbert. Mr. Temple. What I'm trying to think, I thought it was those of us who knew Mr. Henry's father, they said in talking about Arthur that day, the speaker, "That he was the savior of the company." Then the next one was Arthur, there were three of them, the old man – then it was almost going under and so Mr. Arthur Temple, Sr. was the savior of the company. He was the one who was able to save – but he was the one also that gave people raises.

CT: After that –

OT: Yes, after he saved it and then Arthur, well, you know, I don't know what they said about Arthur but he is the one that made it grow, he had all these ideas, you know. I know the first thing that I saw, I came home every weekend after Arthur was here, and across the railroad track over there was a wire fence put up, you know, a nice wire fence and all the Southern Pine trucks were parked, like the army, and I looked over there and it looked so nice because it was usually just hit and miss. I told Clyde I said, "Arthur is making a good place." But really and truly it was all like that, and he wanted those trucks washed. He didn't want these cars sitting around dirty.

CT: There was one dramatic thing that Arthur Sr. did to save the company, she mentioned, which I wish now and everybody does, that it hadn't happened but he had to have some money. He sold off this land, pine land in here to the government. That's where the government got a lot of this land, they sent a man down here, he stayed for months, buying land and they sold all this to a mill out of Trinity County. He had to have money and that was one thing he did to get it. He was very conservative, Arthur's father was. Arthur is the other way. But he was a very conservative man but he had to sell that land because he had to have some money.

OT: Some of it is in Crockett, some of it went to the National Forest, not all of it didn't go to the paper mill. I think one thing you have to remember, too, Arthur's father was conservative, he was looking to the ancestors, see, he didn't live to enjoy any of it, he died a young man, himself. I think we have to remember that his conservativeness was saving the company, holding it, saving it and that was his job to look beneath it all and see what he could do to save it. He is the savior. Then Arthur came in at a different time, Arthur came in on the rise and the manipulated – I don't think this company has ever had anybody that had the brains, unless it was the old man that – I don't know whether you read the article or not but I shed some tears up there, the old man went to borrow money and he went to Dallas. They knew he was coming but he sat there all day and nobody would see him that would amount to anything. That was in the article that Arthur wrote.

BB: In the Texas Monthly?

OT: I think it was. But that was sad to me, to think that he was trying to save, really he was he first savior. He sat out there in that lobby and nobody paid him any attention. He couldn't get the attention, he left without seeing a soul and all he wanted, oh, was

nothing. I don't remember, do you remember what he told them – was it a thousand dollars?

BB: No, I think it was more than that, I think he wanted extensions to a loan that he already had with them.

OT: I don't remember that it was an extension, I'm going to go back and read it. My remembrance is that he needed that money bad and I think he finally borrowed some money from Mr. O'Hara.

CT: He borrowed some from Mr. O'Hara, he borrowed from Mr. Oliver, who owned that store what was then the colored quarters and Mr. Oliver was one of the conservative men and was pretty well fixed, and the company borrowed money from him. I have gone over there lots of times. I'd do the transmitting, now they would do the borrowing and then, in that connection, one time they borrowed twenty-five thousand dollars from Jake Markus who was a Jew in Lufkin and a very wealthy man. They sent me up there to get the money and I called Mr. Markus and he told me to meet him at the Angelina Hotel. We went in the men's rest room and he took off a money belt and there was the twenty-five thousand dollars in cash. Of course, I had a note to give him that the company signed. I wasn't about to come back to Diboll with that kind of money so I just walked across to the Lufkin National Bank and deposited it. Mr. Roy Kurth, Sr. was living then, and he said "You've seen Jake Markus, haven't you?" I said, "Yes." He said, "He came in here and drew that money out about thirty or forty minutes ago. He thinks he is keeping me from knowing what he is doing with his money." I never will forget that.

BB: Why wouldn't they go to a bank for that?

CT: They had borrowed all they could. See, a bank has its limits of what they can loan in comparison to what the capital, the company is worth, and they had borrowed everything. Mr. L.D. Gilbert borrowed a million dollars from a bank in St. Louis, and that was before I came here but I used to pay the bills each month, that was one of my jobs, paying Boatmen's the note and interest and all like that. But they borrowed from everybody they could, you know. Like she said, they borrowed from Mr. O'Hara and anybody who had any money they would borrow it if they could.

OT: The reason I know so much about it, Mr. Strauss and Mr. O'Hara both used to tell me all this. Mr. Strauss was one of my favorite people, he was our Sunday school teacher, he knew the Bible from top to bottom. I loved him.

BB: That's where the Strauss class got its name?

OT: That's where it got its name. Another thing, there were no banks, and they weren't big banks, in Lufkin. They just had one at the time and we teachers had to go up at six o'clock to Lufkin and get our checks cashed up there and we would be getting back here at three o'clock, getting our checks cashed. But going back to Mr. Temple, the old man, do you remember that Arthur had a similar experience, he wanted to borrow some

money, after he got here. Now it is in that article, and Arthur went up to Mr. Kurth and wanted to borrow some money but, according to that article and this is Arthur's own article, Mr. Kurth wanted his father to go on his note and Arthur, being the kind of man he is, he wanted to do it on his own. So he just didn't borrow from him. He was mad, he wouldn't have his daddy sign, so then he goes over to Mr. Shands over at the other bank. He went to see Mr. Shands and he asked Mr. Shands what he would have to do to borrow some money and Mr. Shands said "Well, you can write, can't you?" So Arthur goes in and pulls everything out of that bank over there – well, he amazed Mr. Shands but now there was the difference, you see. In the way those Dallas people treated the old grandfather. Didn't even show him any respect at all. Even though he had an appointment with them, left him out there.

BB: I wanted to ask about the – Mr. Clyde, do you remember what time the company used the, not the tokens, but the checks, was it just during the depression?

CT: No, when I came here they had just – before that they had used a metal check, and there was a lumber company out on the cotton belt railroad by the name of Carl Wood Lumber Company and they had metal checks. Somebody duplicated some of the Carl Wood Lumber Company for several thousands of dollars and they couldn't do a thing in the world with them because they didn't explain. They'd go in and buy something, they didn't say this is U.S. money, they would just throw these checks down and they just assumed – they couldn't do anything with them so they discontinued the metal checks and went to making cardboard checks and different ones, Mr. Strauss was the principal one who would do the signing of them. Then after I came, I have sat all day long signing those checks. After a while your eyes would go closed. The reason they'd do that, they had a signature they couldn't duplicate, you see. It was put down in little U.S. money but they could sign individually and so just that signature, that's the reason. A lady here by the name of Mrs. Marvin Hamner, these were cardboard about three or four layers thick of paper, and Mrs. Hamner would sew around the edges, she would work days and days on them and then we'd shellac them. We had troughs upstairs and that's when Kenneth and Ed were kids and R.V. Welch, Jr., they would pay them maybe twenty-five or thirty cents a day or something, they would stand up there all day long and dip those checks in this shellac. So they would harden and then they would put them in these troughs like to dry. Then they would put powder on them, so that was the reason of going to the cardboard checks.