

ARTHUR TEMPLE JR.

Interview 56d

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Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer

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ABSTRACT: In this two-hour interview, third generation industrialist and philanthropist Arthur Temple Jr. shares with interviewer Jonathan Gerland memories of early business activities in Diboll. He gives biographical information pertaining to his coming to work for the family business at an early age, rebuilding the physical plant and operational organization, and restructuring the culture of a company town. Temple also discusses the formation of the T.L.L. Temple Foundation, the origins of Diboll Day, the Pine Bough Restaurant, Crown Colony Country Club, Antlers Hotel, Rayville Ranch, box factories in Diboll, a Kurth family rivalry, and Trinity County hunting club houses at Boggy Slough. People remembered in some detail include Arthur Temple Sr., Horace Stubblefield, Paul “Bunny” Hogue, Jay Boren, E.C. Durham, Latane Temple, Dred Devereaux, Jake Durham, and Joe Denman. A brief subject index follows the transcript.

Jonathan Gerland: I wanted to ask you about the Antlers Hotel and your box factory, the Temple & Associates Box Factory. (AT: Okay.) In the background of that, I wanted to ask a little bit about the Temple Manufacturing box factory that was there. (AT: All right.) Was Diboll the first plant of Temple Manufacturing Company? I think they opened in the twenties sometime.

Arthur Temple: No, I don’t know whether it was or not. We had a plant in Dallas. I kind of think the Dallas plant was the first one, but I’m not sure.

JG: Then, the one in Diboll burned in 1946. (AT: That’s about right.) So, at that time they had one in Dallas operating at the same time. Tell me about your idea to bring another box factory to Diboll and what that was all about.

AT: Well, during the, I believe it was during the Korean War. Do you have the date when we did that?

JG: I think 1951.

AT: 1951. Well, that had to be the Korean War. (JG: Early 1951, yes, sir). During the Korean War, we saw an opportunity to manufacture ammunition boxes for the government which had big factories producing shells and things of that kind for the war. One was in Texarkana, one was over near Monroe, Louisiana, maybe it was Minden, one of those places. Then, we later sold to a few other arsenals, I guess you’d call them. No, they’re not arsenals, they’re ammunition factories, and we produced way over a million boxes there for the government, mainly going to Texarkana, to the Red River Depot or either Lone Star, I’m not sure which, they’re both right there together.

JG: I think one was Red River, if I remember correctly reading about it in “The Buzz Saw,” it was the Red River Depot. (AT: Yes.) I understand there were quite a few women that were employed there.

AT: Most of them were women, almost all of them.

JG: I’ve been talking with Nannie Breazeale. (AT: Yes.) She worked there. She and her husband both, they worked at both factories. The one before...

AT: Bunny Hogue was the foreman. Horace Stubblefield was in charge of it, and he was the manager, and it was part of Temple Associates, of course. We built that big old plant, factory over there which is still standing, I think. (JG: It is? Okay.) It’s used for storage I believe now, or they may have torn it down, but I don’t think so. I never go back there. It was kind of back there near the log processing operation. Anybody ought to be able to show you where it was. And we produced...we bought lumber off...we didn’t get it from Diboll because we used mostly lumber from these small mills around and....

JG: You didn’t get any from Diboll?

AT: Oh, yeh, we got some, a little bit.

JG: But you got from other mills as well.

AT: Our principal supply was otherwise. We really had a good operation. We made lots of boxes.

JG: Sherrell Fears says that you were making so many boxes that you didn’t have enough hinges so you had to start Temple Steel.

AT: So, then we started Temple Steel, and I hired a machinist from up in Ohio. He moved down there. Tom Sulzbaugh, and he is now up in a little town out of Dallas.

JG: How would you spell that?

AT: S-U-L-Z-B-A-U-G-H. He was a crackerjack machinist, and we equipped it with stamping machines and all sorts of things. Of course we had hell getting steel, but we managed, and we made...when it went through our presses it came out the other end as finished parts. It was really...we did it the complicated way, which it would have been simpler to do it another way. But, we had a very fine machine shop there that made all the tools and dyes. Let’s see, we also sold hardware to other box factories.

JG: Did you sell any to Temple Manufacturing?

AT: No. They didn’t use hardware. Oh, in the...their business got down to the point where it...at first, it made a lot of boxes for the tomato business which is big business up

in this area. I guess that had a lot to do with the origin of it which is before my time, in the thirties. But, it changed over and made soda water cases, Coke cases, and we were, I guess, the biggest in the country in that business. We stayed in it until we decided to get out of the business. It got where plastics and that sort of thing were taking its place. It wasn't difficult doing it. It wasn't all that big a money-maker. But, ask me questions, I'll answer them.

JG: Okay. Was the box factory the first Temple & Associates manufacturing operation?

AT: Yes, the ammunition box factory. Was the first what?

JG: I know Temple & Associates, actually, I guess, began before the box factory.

AT: Temple Associates was a company I formed in 1940 to build houses which was the first large housing project built in the country under Title VI of the FHA. We built it to house the workers who were coming into Texarkana to work for the government, and it was a big project in those days. It was a hundred and forty-two houses. We were not allowed to build them over a certain size, two- and three-bedroom houses, and when the...we were required to, we had a government insured loan, we were required to rent them. I put Ben Anthony, who was a famous person around Diboll, I put Ben Anthony in charge of the rentals, and then when I was drafted into the Navy, well, he stayed there and rented them. That was a lucky break they wouldn't let us sell them, because they doubled in value during the time that he had them rented out. Then, we wound up selling them all. That was where Temple Associates came from. I formed that construction company mainly for that project, but it stayed in business up until the time I...Temple...I later sold it to Temple-Inland because they had a very good engineering department, and it made it very easy for us to estimate the costs of new plants, to make lumber, and one thing or the other, fiberboard, and so forth, and it worked real well. Elvin Jones was the head of that, and he was excellent, and Harvey Moore was the chief estimator. They had both come with me from the Texarkana project.

JG: Was Elvin Jones with Temple Manufacturing before? No, he came from Temple Associates.

AT: No, he never was with Temple Manufacturing. Temple Manufacturing was a soda water case company that burned, but the ammunition box factory, he was the head of that company. I was the chairman, but he was the president and chief operating officer.

JG: Was Temple Steel part of Temple Associates? (AT: Yes.) What about the Angelina Furniture Company?

AT: We went in to that because, when we got out of the box business for the government, our war...the ammunition box business played out after the Korean War, and gradually...

JG: About 1955 or 1956?

AT: I don't know. There's got to be.... You know your best form of research on that kind of stuff is the paper, and I'd urge you to do it because there's a lot of errors creep in to those stories. They're not bad errors, but somebody needs to check the dates. That's probably about right.

JG: We have some of the records from the plant, and 1955 and 1956 seems to be when it shut down, but there is a lot of history...

AT: We had a good organization going, and Horace Stubblefield was the kind of guy who could do anything. So, he's the one I always called on when I had a new deal to work out, and he was excellent. That's Gandy's father. He never gets enough credit for all the things he did. He ran the box factory, and...

JG: He was a pilot, too, I understand.

AT: Oh, yeh. He, well, the first planes...that's an interesting story, too, though. The first plane we bought, I bought it myself, or either bought it for Temple Associates, because we needed it to use it in Temple Industries or Southern Pine Lumber Company for forest fires and also travel. So, I bought a little plane myself, Temple Associates probably, because I didn't think the Company at that time could afford it. I don't think it cost but about fifteen thousand dollars. It was a Cessna 172. I think Bill Lindsey is getting some information together.

JG: Yes, sir. I've talked to him about that.

AT: Anyway, we talked about it the other day, and we decided it was a 170 or a 172...The first one was a 170. Later, it was a 172. Then, we went to several others. It's up to where we are now. But, after we bought the first one, it was so obvious we needed it that, and I guess business was a little better, so I had the Company take over the obligation on that.

JG: Did the employees that worked at the Temple Associates box factory transfer into the furniture making?

AT: All the top people did, and I imagine a good many...I'm sure they did. We had a good crew. Now, the guy that actually ran, he was the head man in the factory, the ammunition box factory, is dead now, but he was the father of Lester Lowery's wife. His name was Bunny, his nickname was Bunny, Hogue, H-O-G-U-E.

JG: Is that Paul Hogue?

AT: Yeh, but his name was Bunny. Everybody called him "Bunny."

JG: "The Buzz Saw" called him "Bunyan," Paul Bunyan Hogue, I believe.

AT: He was wonderful. He was a wonderful guy, and one of my best friends as it turned out. His daughter, Othal Lowery, married Lester Lowery. He lives in Huntington. He has all the banks.

JG: This is actually going back to even earlier than Temple Associates, but I wanted to ask you about the Antlers Hotel. I understand a fellow by the name of John Poindexter Cammack...(AT: That's correct. I don't know about the John Poindexter part.) Did he...the newspapers say that he designed and built it. Is that pretty much correct?

AT: That's correct, but the Company paid for it. It was built for the Company. He'd approached my cousin, Henry Temple, who was running Diboll at that time, he was vice-president of the Company, I think, Southern Pine Lumber Company, and he talked him in to putting up the money to build a beautiful log building. It was a big building, and it was a hotel, and it was very much in the style of the resort hotels that the Park Service has on the National Parks, and he had a lot of taxidermy work that he'd mounted and put in. It had heads all over the place. It had a lot of charm. It was the gathering place for many years. I don't know what year it was, but you could find this in the paper, too, because the old pine logs were not treated, and it was just impossible to keep it in repair, particularly when those logs started getting termites, and we fought it as hard as we could fight it for a little while, and then I...it would have been a terrific job to tear it down. So, I hit on the bright idea of calling out the fire department and having a fire drill. So, we burned it after we got everything of value out of it. Well, we had a fire drill one afternoon and burned her down.

JG: I hadn't heard it put that way, but I heard it was intentionally burned, because of the termites.

AT: Oh, yeh. Well, it would just have been impossible. It was a very large building.

JG: Two stories and you had courts added on.

AT: Well, I added the courts on. They're still there. The school has them. We gave them to the school, but I lived there for awhile, in those courts.

JG: That was 1954 that it burned, and it was built in 1939, which brings me to my next question, the South Boggy Slough clubhouse. Was it built about in that time period, late thirties, early forties?

AT: No, I built it. Henry Temple wasn't very interested in hunting or any of that stuff, and there wasn't any real membership in Boggy Slough Club. It was just the officers, and key people in the Company would take people out there and hunt. Well, Henry asked me, when I was still working in the lumber yard up in Lufkin, Henry Temple asked me if I would like to take that over and kind of look after it. I organized the club which was still comprised of the same people. They were mainly officers and key people in the Company. They had a little shack upon the slough...there's a picture of it out in my clubhouse, not of the old Boggy Slough Clubhouse that burned, but of the shack that they

used before that. We used to have safety meetings out there, and there's a picture with Dad and Clyde Thompson, and the shack is kind of in the background. We used to go out there and hunt and stay there, and it was cold and didn't have any plumbing. It was pretty rough. But, we frequently had big outdoor dinners out there, "safety meetings" they always called them, and I have a lot of wonderful memories of that. Particularly one night, they were having a meeting, and my Dad came down from Texarkana and there were about sixty people there or something like that, and when they got ready to eat, well they asked Clyde, not Clyde, they asked Dred Devereaux, you've heard of him, I know, asked Dred Devereaux to ask the blessing, and he talked for over forty minutes, and finally Dad got up and said, "Amen", and we all sat down and ate cold steaks. But, I was going to tell you, the clubhouse, I built it about 1950, after I went to Diboll. I take that back. I don't know whether...you've got to find out when it was built, but it was about '50. It may have been...I went down there in '48. *[editorial note by Jonathan Gerland: this clubhouse was built in 1941 near the old Rayville ranch house, replacing the earlier one on the slough that was built about 1922]*. I was twenty-eight years old, and I designed...I had my architect up at the lumber yard draw some plans which were largely my sketches, and we built that thing, and it was a wonderful clubhouse. It had two big dormitories with bunk beds in it and a big great hall in the middle where we had an enormous fireplace which still stands, and we entertained about five thousand people a year in one fashion or another out there, mostly meals. I say five thousand people. We served five thousand meals, and I figured it was getting...and I was getting kind of tired of the idea of all that much entertainment. Somebody may have set it on fire. Some intruder, I guess. I really think though that it probably was some electrical fault that it burned. It was a frame building. Of course, there was no protection, well, when it started, it started. And because we were doing so much entertainment, we let the community use it, you know, it got to be such a big operation that we decided not to build it back right away, and we even had some preliminary plans made to rebuild, to build a new clubhouse. Stubby, Horace Stubblefield, who was an architect, he worked with some architects over in Alabama. We had a really beautiful clubhouse designed which we were going to put back down where Vernon Burkhalter now has his clubhouse, overlooking the lake, as you go in. You've been out there.

JG: Yes, sir. One time with Charlie Harber last week.

AT: Well, as you go in, you know where the keeper's house is, (JG: Yes, sir.) a little ways beyond that up on the hill on the right, a little rise, Vernon Burkhalter's got a clubhouse now, and that was about where we were going to put it which would have a view of the lake, and we anticipated that there would be a lot of people that would like to use it, and when you had people come out from town, they didn't have to drive five miles of dirt road, or three miles. So, but we get...it was...it doesn't seem like much today, but the estimate was a good bit more than I wanted to spend at that time, so, we never did quite get around to doing it. I wish we had, really, because it would have been so much more convenient than the lovely clubhouse they now use upon the north end at North Boggy. They would have been much more convenient and really better in a lot of ways, but what they've got now is fine. But, we had wonderful times out there.

JG: To clarify the Dred Devereaux story that you told about him saying the long prayer, that was at the clubhouse before the one...

AT: That was the one that burned. Excuse me, I shouldn't have said that. No, of course not, that was the shack that was on Boggy Slough. (JG: The early one.) Boggy Slough runs through our property out there, and it creates a big island with the river, totally surrounded by Boggy Slough where it comes out of the river and comes down and goes back into the river. It was on the mainland, not the island, and it was right across from the island, right on Boggy Slough, and a real good fishing hole, I might add.

JG: Mr. Harber was telling me about that early one. He said it was always...the roads were always pretty bad if it had rained, just getting back in there.

AT: Oh my God! I've been out there when we couldn't get out for three days because of the rains, but we'd go in there, and they had board roads, didn't have any bulldozers in those days or tractors. People would get stuck. There would always be some guy that couldn't handle the muddy road, and he'd get stuck. Then everybody behind him would be stuck, and they'd have to walk up to the clubhouse, and then walk back out and try to get their cars out and go on in. One time, I remember, we were there for three days because we couldn't get out. I mean the cars couldn't, and, of course, if we...

JG: No telephone?

AT: No, hell, no. We didn't have lights either. We had a little power plant that would never run, little batteries and power plant. No we didn't have anything. We had a spring right there where we got our water.

JG: That would have been through the thirties, so you think that the one you built was...

AT: I may have built it in the late forties, but I wasn't...

JG: Was that after you came to Diboll?

AT: I wasn't at Diboll, no, because Henry Temple told me to go and do it. I built the clubhouse when I was running the lumber yard up here and was looking after Boggy Slough by default and...

JG: It was during the war? During or just after?

AT: It was right after the war.

JG: Right after. That would be 1946 to 1948.

AT: I think it was probably about 1946, come to think about it, because I went down in '48, and I really believe I built it before I went down there. Yeh, I think that's right, but you'll have to go back to the written word to find out about all that.

JG: It just helps if I had a year to start with.

AT: I wish I could be more helpful, but you know things kind of run together on you.

JG: Oh, yes, sir, and you've done a lot and lived a lot.

AT: I know we've enjoyed it, every damn bit. Now, I want to straighten you out on one other thing. Every time they write up the library, they don't . . . it started because I told my cousin, Latane, that I wanted to start trying to have a library. Now, he was the one that actually did the work, but I want some kind of credit for being the initiator of it. Now, the reason I initiated it was that there was a big article in "The American Lumberman," which you've seen, which talked about Diboll, and one of the things that my grandfather wanted and did build the building where CISC is now, but it's about to poop. That was called the library, but truthfully it never was the library. But, anyway, he wanted a library, and I thought it was just part of my obligation to finish what he started. Somewhere, I don't want to take anything away from Latane because he did it, but I was the one that told him to do it.

JG: I didn't write anything about that, but if I do, I'll remember that.

AT: Well, I want to get as much of the record straight as I can.

JG: Yes, sir. I agree. I feel the same way. I don't know if you remember Charlie Harber. (AT: Oh, yeh.) He used to be a pasture rider out there. That's the first time I had ever been back through there, and I had a really enjoyable time. He grew up out there, lived there, was born and raised out there.

AT: Well, I wish I was in condition to take you out. I can show you a lot of things that he probably didn't.

JG: I'm sure you could.

AT: I can show you right where the old clubhouse was (JG: Oh Great). I've gone out there a lot of times. I'm talking about the old, old clubhouse. I've gone out there a lot of times and picked up pine knots and just looked around to see if I could find a piece of metal or something laying around there.

JG: Well, if you're ever up to it, give me a holler.

AT: Well, I had many a good time. Well, sometime, we can get Don Dietz, and I'll go with him, and I'll direct him where to go. I can't see, you see, and I can't drive at all. I can see you all right, but I can't see any detail much. But, I've had a wonderful time. I've walked every foot of that whole damn place.

JG: He was showing me where Rayville was, (AT: Yeh.) there's still an old barn there.

AT: Yeh. You see, there's an area that was cleared, 640 acres, and Rayville was the ranch head-quarters, and Captain Ray was there, and then his son lived in Lufkin a long time after that, J.J. Ray. But, I used to go out there a good bit when...in those days, but I never really knew Captain Ray. I don't think he was even living when I went out there, but Judge Minton was a great naturalist, and he was our Company chief counsel, and he was a great naturalist, and he really took over. When Captain Ray quit protecting the game, well, Judge Minton took that over, and that's a whole...that's great history. I think Ward Burke wrote a little history of it. You might check with him sometime. Ward Burke worked with Judge Minton. Judge Minton hired him when I went to Diboll. I wanted to beef-up our law department a little bit because Judge was getting to the stage where he didn't want to work too much. But, anyhow, I think Ward did write a history of it. It's incomplete. But, let me just say this, the 640 acres that they tried to settle it with... apparently there were a lot of Polish people immigrating into the United States, and they brought in some of them and some Mexicans, and they worked out there with the cattle. We had about, I think the figure is about six thousand head of cattle, and it was a pretty good size operation anyway, whatever it was. May not have been that much.

JG: Charlie said about three thousand, but he may not know exactly.

AT: Well, he's probably...well, we're both probably in the right ballpark. You know, I've always been worried that you'd go deep, dig in to it, you'd find out that it was five hundred. But, it sounded like a big operation, and they had dipping vats and all that sort of thing, but they had cleared this 640 acres, and I can show you where it is out there on the ground. The old fence is still there, parts of it. It was fenced. Then, after we quit raising cattle, they let Dave Kenley, who was head of our...he was our head timber buyer, and he was also a cattleman on the side, and he used all of our land, for nothing [in return], except it did help us protect the title because that's holding it adversely against encroachment. So, that went on for quite awhile, and then when I went down there, I got in some foresters, and one of them was from Duke University. He was head of the Forestry School at Duke, at that time thought to be the best in the country. He came down here, and he said, "You are making a terrible mistake running cattle on the land because we can show you that each year those little grassy areas get bigger and bigger and bigger through mechanical damage." You know, cattle lying down on the seedlings because they'd come to those little patches of grass, and they'd lie down around there, and that was kind of their headquarters, and then they'd move to another one. Well, they convinced me. So, I told Dave we were going to have to discontinue that, and he was very upset. But, he did it, and he told me those places wouldn't grow pine trees. I said, "Well, Dave, I respect your judgment, but I know they're not going to grow them like we're doing it. So, we are going to try." I can take you places now that have been cut twice since then and still have big pine trees on it. We planted them, of course, and it really brought in a lot of timber production, but . . .

JG: We saw a few longleaf out there. They were small.

AT: I had those planted. There's some big ones over by where the old clubhouse burned.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

AT: Most pines that are longleafs had things that I liked about them.

JG: Pretty tree.

AT: They're a pretty tree, and when they're big, they grow just as fast as the shortleaf. It's my opinion, as the loblolly, and I think I can prove, and I think a lot of people would agree, from start to harvest, if you're growing them for mature pine trees, they actually grow so fast at the end and are so tall and such good grade that it really is just as good a tree for us to grow in my opinion. Now, we've done this several places. The area you looked at out there and also that little pilot plan right by Buddy's Lake right behind the clubhouse that burned and . . .

JG: I think that's where I saw some of the smaller ones, was in that area.

AT: Well, they're some big ones, too. I mean, they're not great big, but they're...the place has been cut twice since I planted them. When I say I planted them, I told them to plant them. You know, I didn't plant them. I also planted a hundred acres of those long-leaf right across from the prison on my personal property in Diboll, and they're getting up about...some of them are close to twelve, fourteen feet high now, but they're very slow taking off, but once they get going, and I just did that as an experiment, too. I like it. They'll grow fine, they just...they were cut out. This was never was part of the heart of the longleaf area. You have to go over around Zavalla and Jasper to get into that.

JG: I planted a little longleaf in my front yard last year, and it hasn't done anything. It's going to take awhile, I guess.

AT: It takes about two years. Then, you begin to get encouraged. Third year, it will really go. They call it "in the grass stage" when they're small, and you just can't really see them. I drove by my place in Diboll, and I would say, "I don't believe they got any of these to live," and I couldn't find any of them. Well, I'd see one every now and then, if I looked real close. Second year, I could see a few, but I still worried, and I went out there the other day and had Sam drive me every where I could tell, and it looks to me like there's going to be a pretty good crop of them.

JG: That's good. Well, that's pretty much all I had today, but I'm always thinking of something to ask.

AT: Well, now listen. Pick up a phone and call me (JG: Okay.) and if its necessary for you to come up here, come. I have very little to keep me occupied. I've watched the market, and I invest and do things like that, and I go to a lot of meetings. But, if my secretary, Betty, tells you that...she'll set up an appointment anytime. But, most of the things you can ask me to...I'll be glad to proof-read your copy before you print it, and I'll be glad to do anything I can to help you. And, I want you to know that even though I'm

not down there serving on the Board now, I am very interested in what you're doing. Now, the Archives was purely my idea. I'm not sure it was a good one.

JG: Why is that?

AT: Because it's a tar baby. We started out spending about ten thousand dollars a year, and now we're spending a good bit more, and well, a lot more, and we're building a million dollar building, and who's going to support it but us?

JG: Well, we're . . . you do agree with the importance of historical preservation . . .?

AT: We've got to get the city to do something a little bit toward it, if they're not, then we've got to get the Foundation, I mean the Temple-Inland Foundation, and Temple-Inland itself to support it. Now, Bill Temple, my cousin who lives out here...

JG: Yes, sir. I've talked to him on the phone.

AT: Well, he's got a lot of stuff, and Temple Webber, Jr., in Houston, has a good bit of stuff, I suspect. But, there's a lot of that stuff that ought to . . . I think the new building will give you a chance to put the full court press on it (JG: Yes Sir.). But, we do need it because we're a little late getting started on . . . we never completed the oral history thing that I started back there with that brass wire, back in the fifties, I believe or...Dred Devereaux kept one. Clyde Thompson kept one. I don't know what's happened to them. Are they there?

JG: You mean the Forest History Society project of 1954? Those . . .

AT: The Forest History Society didn't do what I'm talking about. They may have wound up with them. Clyde Thompson may have given them to them, but I started recording...I had a little wire recorder, and I got started getting that done but it never really....

JG: To my knowledge, we don't have . . . we might have some transcripts, because I know in some of the interviews we have, Clyde Thompson conducted the interviews.

AT: Well, they probably came off of those wire . . . do they have them out at the Forest History Society, do you think?

JG: It's possible. We have transcripts from what . . .

AT: If they are those brass wires, they're mine. (JG: Okay.) That was before we had tapes.

JG: Right. No, I'm pretty sure we don't have the wires, no, but I have seen some transcripts...

AT: Well, somebody's got them somewhere.

JG: Okay. But, the Forest History Society did some interviews in 1954. They came down and interviewed Fannie Farrington, Dred Devereaux. I think they got Clyde Thompson, too.

AT: Well, you know, those could be the same ones. I don't remember the Forest History Society being involved in it, but it may...

JG: His name [the interviewer] was John Larson.

AT: It may...that's familiar.

JG: It's when they were in Minnesota.

AT: It may be that...I got them to take it to them. I can't remember everything. But, anyway, I was very disappointed we didn't go any further than we did. I don't think we got Eddie Farley, or Wilbur or any of those guys. Boy, we had plenty of them living then, and they loved to talk the stories, you know, and the stories were all good.

JG: Well, old Charlie Harber knows some good ones. He was telling me a funny one the other day about old Titus Mooney, the log train engineer. (AT: Yeh.) Said that the Company, this was back in about 1913-14, he was out at Walkerton, and he was a bull puncher, and they said, "Well, we need you to engineer the locomotive." He had been fireman for a while. So, they wanted him to work on Sundays, and his wife didn't want him to work on Sundays. Of course, you'd have to hear Charlie tell the story, but he said he got up in that engine, had it steamed up and ready to go, and his wife got right in the middle of the tracks, wasn't going to let him go. Charlie said that his Dad said, "Titus blew that whistle at her just like he would blow it at a herd of cows, and he took off, and when she jumped out of the way, he took part of her skirt on the front of the train!"

AT: [Laughter] On the cowcatcher, it's what they used to call that. There's a lot of good stories. Have you ever done a story on Dred Devereaux? (JG: Yes, sir.) Did you have the story about when he got mad at that guy that was up there putting a roof on the fuel plant?

JG: No, sir. I think that was in The Cornbread Whistle. I didn't include that one since it was already published.

AT: He fell to his knees, and he said, "Lord," he was very profane, he said, "Lord, God, please let me live 'till five o'clock when that son of a bitch comes down, and I can fire him." That's a true story.

JG: Old Charlie Harber tells those. He was a pasture rider, and he said you could hear Dred Devereaux for miles through those woods. He said he was chewing everybody out and said there wasn't a thing in the world that he wouldn't have done for all those guys. He told one story that he got so mad at one of the young men working for him and fired

him. So, he didn't show up to work the next day, and that evening when Dred Devereaux came into town, he ran in to the guy over at the Commissary, and he cussed him out. Said, "Why weren't you at work today?" and he said, "Well, Mr. Devereaux, you fired me yesterday." He said, "Well heck, that was yesterday!"

AT: [Laughter] Boy, he was a great guy. We were sitting on the front porch of Mrs. Hogue's boarding house. I would love to put one back there if I knew somebody who could run it. She used to serve two or three kinds of meat, all fresh vegetables out of her garden or somebody's, and it was seventy-five cents back when I was going there regularly. It was just absolutely marvelous. We'd sit out on the front porch in those chairs, swap stories and talk before it was time, and then, afterwards, if we hadn't used up our hour. I had just hired all those young engineers, Joe Denman, and John Booker, and Johnny Musselwhite. I had three or four. Our mill was falling down. When I went down to Diboll that son of a bitch was about to piss fire. Excuse me. I forgot you had that on. So, I brought in all these engineers, and we did a comprehensive, what was then the most modern mill in the country, and people from all over the country came to see it because we had automatic sorters, and we had cranes. Things we had learned just here and there all over the country. We hired some real engineers and an engineering firm, and Joe Denman was the pick of the litter there, and John Booker right with him. Stubby was right after that, and John, and Bobby Musselwhite, several others. But, Dred Devereaux was sitting there beside me, and he says, those trucks were going by, here came a couple of those engineers in one of the cars. Dred says, "Arthur, how much are you spending on this modernization program on that old mill?" Dred was in charge of construction in those days. All they did was patch, and I said, "Well, Dred, the big project is a million and a half." That was a lot of money in those days. He sat there a minute, and he says, "Arthur, tell me something. Why in the world would anybody who could get a hold of million and a half dollars put it in a damn sawmill?" I said, "Well, I'm trying to get this mill up to where we can pay people a living wage, and if we get it automatic enough, we won't have as many employees, but we will be able to pay them so we can be proud of it." And, everything we did was for that reason, really, and, of course, it made us money, too. The federal government had passed a law mainly for the people out West. They never did a damn thing for us here. The Forest Service out West was controlled by this thing, and where we had to bid on every foot of timber that we bought from the government, high bid got it, and that's still the way it is, although they're about to quit selling it, which is all right with me. It will just make our timber more valuable. It's kind of hard on those other mills, though. That's what I worry about. But, anyway, they had a program that was designed for the West, and if a mill could show that it was necessary to the support of the community which was totally dependent on that business, that they would set aside so many million feet a year, and you got that. And, it was done on some sort of an appraised value, but they never did pay like we did, out on the West Coast. Never really treated us fairly down here, and, if that was fair. I mean, they didn't do what they did out there. Anyway, so I said, "That would be great." We were kind of short of timber then because we'd cut so much of our timber during the depression to keep feeding our employees, and we...somewhere I've got letters where my Dad wrote to Bewley's Mills, "Please, would you give us credit for another car of flour so we can distribute it to our people, and we'll pay you next month." And, like that. Anyhow, I put

on a full court press on that and tried to get the Forest Service to do it. My point is they were shocked because they never thought about a southern company being under the same law as the West Coast. Well, anyway, they hurt my feelings. I had just gone to Diboll and the mill was miserable. Those dolly ways were elevated. You've seen pictures of them. (JG: yes, sir.), and they were rotten down, and it was just something. So, I put together a book that answered all the pertinent information and all that. And, when they wrote me back, they said...Of course, I was trying to prove that a lot of people were dependent on it. So, I put down all the people that were dependent on it, see, and, they wrote me back and said, "You are so inefficient that there is no reason for us to allocate any timber to a mill that is obviously going broke." Words to that effect. I just tore my britches by stating a full load. That's when I just got mad, and I said, "We've got to do something about this," and that's when we started, and we became the model sawmill of the country, of course. Now that one was obsolete, and they replaced it with a more modern one. But, those were great days. We all had a wonderful time. We worked on Saturdays and Sundays, and when they had...my cousin, Henry, died in 1948, I believe it was February, and I had just taken a leave of absence to go and run the new, then prospering Temple Associates which I had formed in 1939 or 1940. 1940, I guess. I had my own businesses, and I made more than I did. I wasn't paid nothing here to speak of or very little. And, so, they came to me and asked me if I would go down there and take that job. And, I said, "Well, I've just gotten a leave of absence, but I think I'll just run Temple Associates. We're making good money, and frankly, I can't afford to work for the Company. I got two kids..." and so forth. Dad said, "Well, we're going to pay you ten thousand dollars a year." I said, "Well, now." I said, "If y'all will agree that I still have the right to run my own businesses, well, I'll do it." And, it's hard to believe, but ten thousand dollars looked like a lot money to me then. I was making a hundred, probably a hundred and forty dollars a month then, and that was in '48. Of course, I made money on the side with Temple Associates. But, those were wonderful days, and Joe Denman will tell you. Have you ever interviewed him? (JG: No, sir.) I'm going to tell you what, now you're just missing it if you don't do it. (JG: I need to get him.) Joe's in good health, and he's prospered, and he's retired, and there's nobody except me that has the affection for the people of Diboll that we do and in what we did, because we took nothing, and by just getting people to work week-ends and everything else, we rebuilt both these operations and then put in other operations like gypsum board, particleboard, and all those things. Fiberboard, and put in the wood flour business, but it went out. We should have stayed in it. They got out of a lot of things I put them in, which I think is dumb, but that's their business. I'm not running it. We had a creosote plant at that time.

JG: That was the same time as the box factory, 1950, 1951. (AT: Yeh.) When did that go out?

AT: It went out when the government found that creosote was such an environmental problem, and hell, we were faced with possible lawsuits and everything else over it. It just wasn't worth it. It never did make that much money. It was all right. Then, we had the laminated beam plant. I took them out of that because it was obvious that that was really a...every beam you built had to be designed individually. It just wasn't a high enough volume business to amount to anything. But, we've been in lots of businesses and

had fun in all of them. And, that...our bunch that used to meet down there and work on weekends or over at Pineland. We'd stay over there. But, we've gotten up and planned in the middle of the night, and everybody just had fun. We had good times. Of course, it was more fun to run a business in those days, I'm sure. Not everything is litigated. You know we had one person in the personnel office handled it just fine. We had more employees probably than we have at the mills now. And now, I think, we've got about forty.

JG: Human resource people?

AT: Yeh, they call it human resources now. In those days, it was a little less pretentious. But, it was great, and we prospered.

JG: Tell me about...this is I guess more about your personality, but you were twenty-eight years old when you came down to Diboll.

AT: I started working running a lumber yard. But, first I worked up in Paris, Texas, and after a year they built this lumber yard in Lufkin and sent me down here as assistant manager, which was really the bookkeeper, and help load trucks. And, it prospered. It became the best yard we had in the whole state. We had forty-one yards at one time, and it was the best yard in the state, and they never could understand it, but we had all the business. Then, when they moved me down there in '48 when Henry died, well, yeh, I was twenty-eight. No, I wasn't twenty-eight, I was twenty-seven, but, I was almost twenty-eight. My dad gave me one good piece of advice. He said, "Son, you're gonna see a lot of things you think need changing, and that's probably true. But, for a year, I don't want you to change anything of great consequence, and then only with great care." Because, we weren't making any money then. It was really kind of pathetic, and we'd just come out of the depression. The war saved all of us, saved the country, the world war. So, I had all these great people like Eddie Farley. You hardly ever hear his name. He was one of the great heroes of the Company. Clyde Thompson, who held the Company together at a time when he wasn't in charge of it. Mr. O'Hara and Mr. Strauss were co-managers. Why they ever did that, I'll never know, but [it didn't work out. ---*edited at interviewee's request*]. They're nice people, but all they did was fight and back bite each other. Eddie Farley was a shipping clerk, but he was a really good guy. Had good people in the mills. Marvin Hamner. Lot of good old timers, and then I hired all these young people, and the young people were pushing all the time, and the old people were saying, "Well, wait a minute," you know. We'd have sessions where we just...I encouraged them. I'd take the wrong position a lot of times just to get them to argue, but when they got through, we did good things, and we always, and I think it's still true today, and I hope it is, we always loved our people. When the unions tried to take us over, hell, they didn't get anywhere because you can't fool people about that. They know how you feel about them, and you can brag on all you want and all that synthetic crap, but they know whether you like them or not, and they stayed with me. I told them I wasn't against unions, I just wanted to be the head of the union. I figured I'd get more out of the Company for them than some foreigner, and they stayed with me, and we've had a very happy situation. Now, there's virtually nobody down there anymore that...then, when we

created the Foundation, it was to help our employees, the community in which they lived, the communities in the counties in which we were the largest landowner or a big landowner, which is thirty-three counties in East Texas, and now over in other places, but mostly here. But, it was created to take care of them and the communities in which they lived, and it has been absolutely fabulous. I don't know the exact number, but a couple of years ago, I think it was a hundred and sixty-five million. We started with twenty-five million, stock, that my Aunt Georgie gave for that purpose. I asked her one day, we were riding down here. Have I told you this story?

JG: You haven't told it to me. No, sir.

AT: Well, we were riding down, Temple Webber and I were driving down, taking Aunt Georgie. She was a sweet old lady, but she didn't spend. She was pretty wealthy for those days. She didn't spend two hundred fifty dollars a month on her and her family. She just never...but she'd give people things. She never was...well, the whole family's been that way. They're as stingy as hell with themselves. Don't any of them own yachts. Well, I've got one cousin that does. But, the first three generations were taught not to adorn themselves, and it stuck, and we're trying to teach it to the next generations, and we're doing it. But, I said, "Aunt Georgie, you're getting up in years. I want to talk to you about something that is difficult for you to talk about, I know." I said, "You're a wealthy woman. You've taken care of your...you've set up trusts for your two children," which were mongoloids, incidentally. Very unusual to have two in one family. I said, "Have you ever thought about what you ought to do with your estate when your time comes?" "Oh, mercy, I don't want to talk about that. I don't have any money. I don't want to talk about that." I said, "Aunt Georgie, you've got to talk about it because it happens to all of us, and we just need to talk about it." She said, "Well, Arthur, I guess I'd always just figured everything I have come from the Company, so I'd just like to give it back to the Company." I said, "Well, that's sweet of you, Aunt Georgie, but that's not something you can do. I don't think that would be the thing to do, if you would pardon my saying so, but what I was hoping you'd say is that you would like to take care of, do something to help the people who made us successful." It was pretty tough times. She knew about them, and she said, "Yes, that's what I would like to do." So, we drew up the trust. Temple Webber and I got Ward and others to draw it up. She put in what I think is about twenty-five million. I'm not sure of the exact, but it was around there, in stock, and we've given away upward of a hundred and sixty million dollars. Each year now, we've given away thirteen to fifteen million dollars, and we've got a net worth of about three hundred and thirty million dollars after giving all that away. So, that's a good story.

JG: It is. It says a lot about you managing it, too.

AT: Oh, no, well. Fact is, a monkey could have managed it the last few years. The Stock Market has been so strong. But, anyway, it's been a marvelous thing, and it's helped perpetuate the bonds between the Company and their employees which are important to me more than anything. But, you know, like everything else, even though you're building an archives and everything, the story will disappear, but it was a great story when it happened, and I give you my word of honor, none of the people I'm talking about back in

those days worked for the money because there wasn't enough of it to work for. Nobody got paid much. As I told you, when I went there, I got ten thousand dollars a year, and there wasn't any such thing as a bonus, and there weren't any stock options, and there wasn't any retirement. Any. All of that stuff has been modernized. They're very generous with their people now, at least I know they are to the top people. They're too damn generous to them as far as I'm concerned. But, anyway, that's the story, and that's just a little background for you.

JG: Ward Burke and I have been working on that and talking about the history of that foundation. I was asking him about . . . [interruption by secretary]

STOPPED TAPE

JG: I came across something in "The Buzz Saw" on that, "Do it Right, but Do It Right Now" slogan, and you came up with that early on when you came down. (AT: Yeh.) Can you tell a little bit about that?

AT: I don't think I invented that. I used to have a habit of saying, "Damn, don't tell me you're gonna do it, go do it" and "Show me, don't tell me." Jake Durham was the editor of the "Buzz Saw," and he's the one that coined that "Do it right, but do it right now," and made that first one [a sign] for me. Joe Denman, a lot of them have them now.

JG: We'll see them [the signs] in pictures of the plant, and what they call "project one," the rebuild projects that's all over the plants. Those...

AT: I may have developed it, but I really think he deserves the credit for that. It's been effective.

JG: Okay. Like I said, I'm always thinking of something to ask you.

AT: Well, make notes, and then from time to time, I'll be glad to answer any of them. I'd like to because my memory is still pretty good, and it won't always be. There's a lot of people...now, Joe Denman knows everything from 1951 on, and he's your best source other than me. But, there's a lot of people that have fictitious ideas of how different things happened down there. Diboll Day. I just called the man and told him to have it. We needed something to pull the people together, to give them to do. And, hell, I invented that. There ain't no question about that. Of course, I didn't go do it. I think I told Joe Denman to do it.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

JG: Continuing the first tape talking about Diboll Day and the origins of Diboll Day. I think Joe Denman said that he and two other people, I can't recall their names off hand, but it was in the context of him talking about the Antlers Hotel. He said it was a gathering place for the community, and he said that he and these two other people came up with the idea one morning, just over coffee.

AT: Well, I don't want to take anything away from him. He's the guy that did it the first time, but the reason it was done was because...

JG: But, the spirit of it is what you had wanted all along.

AT: I wanted to get some kind of an activity going that would give people a real opportunity to participate. The idea of a paternalistic company that gives everything to everybody...if anything was given in Diboll, it was the Company, and, hell, people needed to have some responsibility. That's the reason we sold the houses, because...if they were paying ten dollars a month for a four-bedroom house they thought they were being robbed, and we were losing our fanny on them. So, we sold the houses for very little to them. I didn't give them to them. They said in the paper that I gave them to them. That's not true. But, I mean I damn near gave them to them, but I wanted them to pay something for them so they would appreciate them. They tore down all those little picket fences that were rotten down, and we got pavement. There wasn't a foot of pavement in 1948 except the highway that went through here, and we've got every street probably just about, I think every street is paved in Diboll now. But, hogs were running in the street. That's true.

JG: Kenneth Nelson's interview, when he was talking about...I think one day when you sort of discussed the idea of getting people to buy their homes, and he said, "Well, Mr. Temple, why would we want to buy our houses when we're only paying such and such per month to rent?"

AT: I don't believe anybody ever said that.

JG: I believe that's what he said.

AT: They all thought they were paying a big rent. Now, some of them paid eighteen or twenty dollars, but they had decent houses. A lot of those old shacks, they looked like shacks, but they were pretty damn nice. They weren't...I wasn't proud of them. But, about the only way you'd get the thing done is to get them in the hands of individuals. We were running like a socialized deal down there. We had the doctor. You paid a dollar...you paid seventy-five cents a month if you were an employee, and you paid a dollar and a quarter, I believe it was, if you had a family, and that took care of all your medical, and they drove the doctor crazy, calling him out every time they had a hang nail. And incidentally, it worked pretty good, too. I know when my first daughter, Chotsie, was born, Dr. Clem was the Company doctor, and I took her down there. The total cost, pre-natal care, delivery, and post-natal care was thirty-five dollars. That was pretty good.

JG: Thirty-five dollars? I've got you beat on that. I cost seven dollars.

AT: Where was that?

JG: In Hawaii. My dad was in the Navy.

AT: Oh, yeh. I can tell you what, it was something, and it was good medical care. Then, we built the clinic behind the office, and gradually they perfected it, brought everything up to standards. You wouldn't believe how Diboll has changed in those years, and it wasn't just me. It helped that I was for it, don't get me wrong. I'll take my share of the credit, but I'll tell you the people, Stubby, and Joe Denman, and John Booker. All the others, all the old and young, too. Very few of them bitched. But, generally speaking, when it came to integration, we did it when the subject first came up seriously, and we integrated the schools. Everybody said, "Oh, it's going to be hell." I made a couple of talks, and others did, I think. Told them how proud I was of the way they were accepting it, and as a result, they made me proud, and they were exemplary. We've never had a problem of any magnitude. I'm sure there have been incidents that I don't know about, but they knew damn well we weren't going to put up with it. In those days, see, the Company was nearly the law. We didn't want to be, but I can't tell you how many divorces I've granted. A colored couple would come in. They were going to split, you know, and they would come in and talk to me about it. I said, "Well, y'all own any property?" "Yeh, we've got...this, that and the other." I said, "Well, tell you what y'all do. Y'all go make a list of everything you've got, and you bring it in here, and I'll divide it up fairly for you. We'll get it settled." Of course they weren't married in the first place, probably. It was common law.

JG: I haven't heard that one.

AT: Oh, yeh. Lottie and I granted divorces. Saved them a lot of money.

JG: Did you marry anybody?

AT: No.

JG: Just divorces.

AT: No. There was plenty of them needed marrying. But, it was great, and good people. God, Almighty!

JG: Tell me, you were talking about the Company being the law, and I believe Henry Temple brought in Jay Bowen. (AT: Jay Boren.) Okay, Boren. I hear it pronounced both ways.

AT: Jay Boren. B-O-R-E-N. That's it. Man, he was the...he became a Texas Ranger. In those days, a Texas Ranger could be appointed by the Department of Public Safety and gave a little more authority, and you never did live in a really redneck, tough sawmill town, but I'm going to tell you, when I went down in '48, that was a tough mother, and Jay Boren didn't have any trouble. I'm sure he was pretty rough some times. But, he'd be riding, taking a prisoner into...somebody, taking them into Lufkin, we didn't have a jail before the city hall was built, and he'd be taking them in there, and they'd take his gun away from him, and he'd have a hell of a fight, you know. So, it got to where he'd just hit

them up side the head with his gun and never did, that I know of, kill anybody or hurt anybody bad, just...but, it was tough, and if any people who say you didn't need to do that kind of stuff, I'd like to know how, because I know one thing, we didn't have much crime. If something came up missing, of consequence, I'd call Jay Boren and tell him the story, and I'd say I want you to go and find out what happened to it. He'd be back in three or four hours with the guy and what had been stolen from me, because he had informants here. That's the only way police know anything.

JG: I've seen photographs of him, and he seemed to be a pretty small man.

AT: He was small, but he was tough as a wood hog.

JG: I've heard some comments about him, and they said...well, he didn't need size as long as he was wearing that pistol.

AT: Well, that's right, but I'll tell you what, he wasn't scared of anybody. He was something. He's dead now. We had a lot of good...old Charley, whatever his name was, was down there before you came. He was good. He was an ex-ranger. He was really good, but he was sort of a gentle guy, but he didn't have the tough toughness. Jay Boren used to call the bad actors "tush hogs." He said, "He was a real tush hog." The later people in the city today don't have the tush hogs we had in those days. But, we didn't have any trouble. He didn't have to do that very often, but he never did anything real bad. If somebody tried to take his pistol away from him, he'd hit him up side the head with it and calm him down. I know he did that. I used to tell him not to, but it didn't do any good. But, he was a good man. He kept law and order, and there wasn't any question about it. People just could not worry about law like they have to now.

JG: Tell me a little bit about Diboll being incorporated. Was there an election that didn't pass the first time?

AT: Oh, yeh. I called Ward Burke in, and I said, "I think it's time we consider having a city government, and I would appreciate it if you would take a look at the laws and tell me what we've got to do." At that time, you could either form a village which is a different type of organization or an incorporated town, and after, we were tempted to go the village route, but after a little while we decided we'd just go and incorporate the town. Which we did. We had to do the surveys and all that kind of stuff, and then we had to have an election to, I guess to vote it in. Then, we elected officers, many of them, mayor and so forth. Clyde Thompson was the mayor for years and years here.

JG: But, was there an election that didn't pass, and then there had to be a second election?

AT: Well, there was...no, no. I don't think so at that time. I'm pretty sure on it. Back before I went to Diboll, they may had an election, I think, which may or might not have passed. I think it passed, and they were incorporated, but they never implemented it, and

it just didn't...I don't know whether it didn't pass or whether it wasn't implemented. That was before my time, but...

JG: Probably a township classification under a different law, and the law probably changed or something.

AT: Could have been, could have been. But, I think they had incorporated, but then it didn't work or something. They didn't follow up and do it right. We did it right. We elected commissioners and that sort of thing. It worked out real well because it was all part of the program. See, when I went to Diboll, the Company had to do everything. Everything. They were the only ones that contributed anything. Nobody thought they were supposed to do anything, and I thought it was the key...I've always thought you've got to give people some responsibility. So, we started matching and helping, and in very few cases did we put up all the money unless it was something you just had to have every year. But, it's just like the library. Hell, I don't think anybody ever gave much to it except the Foundation. Lumber Company, I guess gave something, and a few small contributions. Sure, there a lot of people, individuals. But, it's more meaningful to people if they participate in things. They value what they pay for, that's the reason I wanted to phase it out, even though it didn't amount to a damn thing. We sold a lot big houses for eight hundred dollars and lots.

JG: Tell me a little bit about the Federal Housing, some of the....

AT: Well, we just decided the only way we could take care of the elderly housing, and also the...we needed houses to rent, and I didn't want the Company to get back in to that business. So, I called Stubby in, and I said, "Stubby, we got these..." I was familiar with the government's programs because I had been a builder in the past with Temple Associates. I built a lot of housing projects all over the state, in Texarkana, well, two in Texarkana, one in Baytown, and lots of houses in Lufkin. A hell of a lot of houses. So, I called him in and said, "I want you to see what government programs are available in the public housing or something where we can get some decent housing and tear down all these Goddamn old shacks around here." Which we did, incidentally. That was to eliminate all that crappy stuff over in the colored area which I never thought needed to be separate, and then Red Town down where Mrs. Grumbles lives or down on the way to the park, down by the Baptist Church there. There are a lot of those old shacks that have been fixed up a little bit. But, anyway, we tore down a hell of a lot of them and sold them all to people to move them. Ben Anthony came down and did that trick. J.D. Winder was the engineer I hired to survey it all, the whole town, and he was good, and that was such a good program, and we were lucky. We got Mr. Wood as the administrator. I didn't hire him. I don't know. Stubby may have hired him. The City hired him actually, but Stubby was head of the committee at that time. I'm sure the city records will tell you when that was all done. But, we built low-cost housing, apartments and things. Mr. Wood and Margie Harrell, who is an angel, brilliant, smart lady. You know Margie, don't you? (JG: Yes, sir. I do.) She's wonderful. Anyway, they had classes where they let people move in, told them how to take care of the house, how to take care of the screens, don't punch holes in them, this, that, and the other. And, by God, she whipped that.... She'd kick them

out if they didn't do right. They got it well organized. Better than it is now, really, because then they could enforce more discipline than they can now. But, Mr. Wood was very good. After we did those projects, he was called all over the State making speeches about what we've done, and he deserved a tremendous amount of credit for that. Then, we did the elderly housing which was just below my house there. And, it's a fine thing now. It...they just pay a certain part of their income, and most of the people there don't pay but about a hundred and fifty dollars a month, counting their utilities.

JG: That's where your Fair Acre Ranch was? Is that what you are talking about?

AT: Yeh. Of course, Mother put up the money for that day care, the original money for the day care center, and then, I gave them the property for the nursing home. We built it. My partner and I built the nursing home, and then we sold it later. Operated it for years.

JG: Your partner?

AT: R.B. Thompson. He and I were in the real estate business up here and around in different places. But, we got in the nursing home business, and we put in some two thousand rooms, or beds they call them in those days. We later sold them to some people from California, but the idea was to fill in the missing links, what we needed to make the community. Of course, I got them to start the newspaper after "The Buzz Saw" crapped out. Latane always takes credit for that, too. But, he did a lot of it.

JG: What? Starting or ending it? (AT: Huh?) Starting or ending "The Buzz Saw?"

AT: Well, "The Buzz Saw" died.

JG: How did it die?

AT: I think Jake Durham died?

JG: But he left and went to the papermill, I think, and Paul Durham took over, but he was really young. (AT: Yeh, he was.) And, just a few months later is the last issue that we have. I don't even know if there is an issue that says, "This will be the last issue."

AT: Well, it died, and then I just felt that we needed an independent paper even though it was owned by the Company. If we ran it right and didn't interfere with it too much, it would be of use to the public...to the people of Diboll, and we always have tried to stay out of their policy matters and let them run it. I was publisher for a long time. But, Latane was one of the guys that was a guiding star, but I'm the one that told him to do it, and it's been a good little paper.

JG: Pretty much the same thing with the Pine Bough Restaurant?

AT: I built that. Oh, yeh. When we closed down the Antlers, we had to have a restaurant. I just always thought a cafeteria that could sort of double as a restaurant at night would

be good, and it....We got Mrs. Davis to run it, and she was just wonderful. It was a place that people would drive out of their way to come to. It was really good when she ran it. After she died, well, there wasn't any way to get somebody in there that was another Mrs. Davis. I don't know whether we did it after the Antlers immediately or after Mrs. Hogue's closed up.

JG: I think the Pine Bough opened in 1956 and the Antlers burned in 1954, but it may have closed in 1953.

AT: Well, that would be about right. We got an outfit out of Houston that was supposed to be great restaurant designers to come up there and design it.

JG: That was all part of the Village there that Joe Denman and...

AT: Yeh, that's when we built the Village.

JG: But, I'm sorry. I interrupted you. You were telling about this group out of Houston.

AT: Well, they came in and designed the restaurant, put it in, and got it going. It was a great institution. I wish we still had it. People would drive down from Lufkin all the time and up from Corrigan and Livingston, and people from Houston would always plan to stop there for lunch.

JG: I've heard all kinds of stories. A.J. Foyt ate there and like a week-and-a-half later won the Indy 500.

AT: We had a lot of famous people there.

JG: Bette Davis.

AT: Jack Dempsey.

JG: Mr. & Mrs. Robert Taylor of Hollywood. What do you think now about all these offices...

AT: Incidentally, something about Diboll. Tex Beneke. Remember that name? He took over Glenn Miller's orchestra. There was an article about that this weekend in the Lufkin paper about Tex Beneke dying at 87. Tex Beneke married a Diboll girl, and it's something that somebody ought to write up in the paper, and I can't think of her name, but I remember that he and she came to Diboll when we were officed over where the...across the street from the old office in a house there. I remember, she had a little bitty poodle dog, and I had a great visit with him. She brought him home to see where she came from, and I used to know her name, and her mother...with this thing going, I better not tell that story.

TAPE STOPPED

JG: Tell me a little about E.C. Durham.

AT: Great story there. E.C. Durham ran the railroad. (JG: TSE railroad.) TSE, the common carrier, and, of course, they ran the log trains, I guess, or supervised it. Kept up the repairs or whatever. But, E.C. Durham was married to a sister of Temple Webber's. You know who Temple Webber is? (JG: Yes, sir.) Temple Webber's father was a Webber. Ben Anthony married one of the Webber girls. They were beautiful girls. There were four of them, I think. Absolutely beautiful women, and ...but they all had a drinking problem. Jake Durham's mother was a Webber and that was E.C. Durham's wife.

JG: Mary, I think, was her name.

AT: Yeh, and she was beautiful. Lura was the daughter, and she was a beautiful girl. She was the daughter of E.C. Durham.

JG: There was Jake, E.C. Jr., and Lura, right?

AT: No, there was Jake...yeh, that's right. Ed was E.C. They lived right across the street from the library. You know what I called the "library." (JG: Yes, sir.) All right. I would go down there in the summer with Dad when I was thirteen or fourteen years old, and I...the windows were up. We didn't have air conditioning. Lura could play that piano by ear, and she had a piano, and she was across the railroad tracks over there, and I would listen to her play that damn piano all night. But anyway, they were brilliant people, all of them, including E.C., and the Webbers were all brilliant, and E.C. never made a lot of money, but he became very wealthy. That's an interesting story. His folks were originally from up around Longview, and they had a black man who was a manservant around the place. The Durhams weren't wealthy. When the black servant died, he left, I think, I want to say, forty acres to E.C. Durham. They brought in an East Texas oil field, and that was right slap dab in the middle of it. That is a true story.

JG: Charlie was telling me about that the other day. (AT: Was he?) Charlie Harber.

AT: Well, he's a good source. That was absolutely amazing, but E.C. was thought to be very wealthy at the time. I doubt that he was ridiculously wealthy, but he always had money when nobody else did during the Depression.

JG: I think he retired during the Depression. (AT: Yeh, he did.) In 1937 I think he retired, went up to Shawnee Prairie, and started raising Brahman cattle.

AT: He bought a ranch out there, and I used to go out there and visit him and go riding with him. He got me interested in cattle, actually.

JG: I hear he had some good cattle.

AT: He did. Brahmans. They were good cattle, but they...

JG: Is that what you raised on your ranch? (AT: No, I raised...) Or Hereford?

AT: I raised polled Herefords and registered short horns. That is not a good way to make a living. But, E.C. was a great story teller and...

JG: He was a fairly well educated man.

AT: Oh, yeh. Fine gentleman.

JG: He was over the school board.

AT: Gentleman of the old school, and I would always go down to his ranch, usually on a weekend but sometimes otherwise. We'd be sitting there having a...he'd always like to have a drink in the evening, a highball. So, we'd be sitting there having a highball, and there would be three or four of us. He had a good cook, and he was a good judge of prudence, and he was a gourmet. He would have us down. We'd have steaks. Incidentally, Diboll steaks is another story. Have you ever heard about them? They were the famous steaks. (JG: Diboll steaks?) Diboll steaks. Butch Cruthirds was a butcher at the Commissary. I'll tell you that in a minute. We'd go down there, and he'd have those Diboll steaks, and boy, they were good, and other things and usually start off with what he referred to as potato soup, but he called it "potato potage." So, we...but when we were having a drink, he'd get...he'd got a gut, and he'd get up and come over there. I'd be sitting with my legs crossed. He'd come over and touch his toe to the bottom of my foot like he was kicking my foot and say, "Well, there's nothing that an old country squire enjoys as much as having his city friends come down to visit him." That was always in the discourse.

JG: You know, on his death certificate, I haven't seen it, but I called the Angelina County Courthouse and was getting some death information, and they tell me that on his death certificate it says E.C. "The Squire" Durham.

AT: Well, that's right. Everybody called him "Squire."

JG: That came from just a country squire?

AT: We just called him "E.C.", and later, after he did that, we called him "Squire." (JG: Squire Durham.) He was great. Great friend of mine, and he was one of those older people that...see, I was very young then. I don't feel like I was ever young. He would...he always liked to have me come down and visit him. We bet on the horses together. We'd get up...he had a room up in the Angelina Hotel. 751, I think, or maybe it was 571, but four or five of us would go up there in the afternoons, and we'd get the racing forms, and we'd pick out our horses, and we'd call a bookie in Houston, place our bets, and he'd...we'd got so friendly with him that he'd let us listen to the races on that telephone. Couldn't have any TV or anything. But, we made a lot of money up there, and so did he,

and Hulon Medford from Lufkin, had the Ford dealership, Philip Leach's daddy. All my friends then were older fellows, nearly. They're all dead now.

JG: You were quite young.

AT: Yeh, but my first wife always told me, said "You're going to be sorry you're running around with all these older people. I know you like them, but one of these days, they're all going to be gone, and then you're going to be lonesome."

JG: Did you know J.J. Ray, Jr.?

AT: Oh, yeh. So well. He lived at the hotel.

JG: That's what he was saying. Charlie told me that he and E.C.. Durham were pretty good pals because J.J. Ray, Jr. ended up working for the Texas and New Orleans Railroad. So, they talked shop quite a bit, about the railroad and stuff.

AT: I never knew J.J. when he worked at anything. He was always in the coffee shop. He was going with a girl who worked in the coffee shop that's what it was. So, he was pretty close around there all the time.

JG: I know J.J. Ray, Jr.'s daddy who Rayville is named after I guess. (AT: Captain Ray.) Captain Ray. Was he a captain in World War I or Spanish American War?

AT: I have no idea, but I'm sure...

JG: I'm trying to find out some more information about him.

AT: I think Ward...I imagine Ward could tell you, but I can't.

JG: I'm trying to find an obituary or something that will determine, give more information about him.

AT: There ought to be one. That would be in Trinity County, you know.

JG: Charlie tells me that he was related to L.D. Gilbert somehow.

AT: If he was, I never knew it. I knew Dan Gilbert pretty well. He was...we'd pick him up every day during the Depression. Dad would...they didn't have enough business to keep them there in the afternoon, so they would leave the office and go play golf. So, they would stop by and pick up Dan Gilbert. Gilbert's the one that nearly broke the Company. He'd run in to an expansion mode during the late twenties and early thirties and spent a hell of a lot of money, and when the Depression hit, we didn't have any. We had to sell off a lot of timberland.

JG: I've assumed that is who Gilbert is named after, there on the river on the Angelina County side. (AT: Yeh, yeh.) What about Neff? Is that named for Governor Neff? Pat Neff?

AT: It could have been. I don't know.

JG: Then, Walkerton, I guess, was named for Watson Walker.

AT: It was. There's no question whatsoever. See, the Walkers were kin to the Temples, and they were fine people. Watson Walker is still one of the most admired people that ever was officially Diboll. He was very strict and proper person, but he had good judgment, and he was kind.

JG: I guess he was manager...

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE

AT: ...but he ran the Company. If it hadn't been for him, there wouldn't have been any company then for me to pick up. Good fella.

JG: Of course, you probably know a lot of people think very highly of you. Eula Burchfield talks about you all the time, and we talked about those early days when you came to Diboll in the late forties. (AT: That was great.) She said that...(AT: Who did?) Eula Burchfield. She said that, she meant this in a highly complimentary way, but said when you came that you said you were either going make it or break it.

AT: That's not true. I thought I was going to make it. God knows I never did even worry about it. You know, I tell you what, the Kurths were always antagonistic towards me. (JG: The Kurth family?) Yeh. We had a battle from beginning to end, but we wound up friends. They were very jealous of what we were accomplishing, and...

JG: That the old school (AT: Yeh.) and the new person? (AT: Huh?) You being young, do you think that had something to do with it?

AT: Oh, yeh. Well, they just were...kind of came to be when the family moved down here, and they resented us, I guess, of what I don't know, but it doesn't matter. They were antagonistic to me, even though we made the paper mill possible. We'd never get credit for that, but Dad did that. But, anyway, they...what was I going to tell you, damn it.

JG: About the Kurth family not getting along.

AT: Well, yeh, but I was going...oh, Joe Kurth, or somebody, one of the Kurths, put out the story around town that this young fellow is spending money, and he's going to break that company. They had it out.

JG: Talking about you?

AT: Yeh. Everybody thought I was going to break it, yeh. We gave those people some pride, too. That's what we did. In those days, people looked down on sawmillers because they were poor. No question about that, but they did the best they could, and we put up signs all over the place. See, this is Latane's pure idea, but it worked. It's on all the entrances, "From seedling to siding, produced by the best sawmill men in the world." Everything we did, we tried to give them self-respect, and part of owning their own homes was that. Part of it, not giving the whole thing on a project. Diboll Day was a part of that. Turn everything over to the people and give them some responsibility, and they were proud. Now, we're not as careful about that as we were then, but, in those days, I had absolute rule. Unless it was just something that was almost unavoidable, we just didn't do the whole thing. We'd maybe do the majority of it.

JG: Talking about...I'm sorry. (AT: Go ahead.) You were talking about signs. At different times, there will be a billboard that says "Wood capital of the South" or "Wood capital of the world" or "Southwest," and it seemed to change about every two years. Different, I think it went from wood to forest products. "Timber capital..."

AT: That was Latane. Latane was real good at things of that sort.

JG: I think that Paul Durham in a newspaper article one time referred to Latane as the Company's chief publicist.

AT: Well, he was that. He knew that...one of the first things that Latane ever taught me, and he was a little older than I was, but he said, "Arthur, if I was wanting some publicity on that project up in Texarkana," he says, "If you will write a good newspaper article and put it in the hands of your newspaper, they will print it every time, if it's got any news value at all." I said, "Well, why would they do that?" "Because they're lazy, just like the rest of us." They'll take anything you hand them, if it's true, you know. Can't take advantage of it, and it's absolutely a fact. If you want to publicize something, if you'll get somebody to cover the why, where, what, and how, and all that, and when in the first paragraph, you can write anything you want in the rest of it.

JG: Yeh, we've got a few letters of your father's that were like carbon copies to you from like 1946 through about, well maybe a little earlier than that. Sometime, the mid to late forties. Two folders of them, and your father makes reference or writes to Latane a few times and makes reference to you, asking Latane to set you straight, keep you in line. One time, I think you had gone to visit him, and your father had written to Latane and thanked him for...your father apparently could tell that he had put some good ideas into you...or something like that.

AT: Latane had a great influence on me. He was a wonderful person. I miss him. But, the main thing that was different in those years, from 1948 to the time we sold out to Time, and I guess beyond that, was that while we were building all those things, which we had to do, we didn't do it for fun, but we had more fun than anybody. It was just fun doing it, and I can remember many a night when we couldn't get that damn mill over at Pineland

in to run that flooring unit that we put in, which was a beautiful unit. Joe and I stayed up there, and John Booker stayed up there all night long on the night shift pranking with that thing. Finally, we got it running. It wouldn't...it would kick the damn lumber out crazy, and nobody...old man Rasbeary was the foreman, and he couldn't figure it out, and we couldn't see why it wouldn't run, and we went down there and stayed all night and finally got it worked out.

JG: Was that hardwood flooring?

AT: Yeh, hardwood flooring. We were a big hardwood flooring producer.

JG: When was that? In the sixties, or the fifties?

AT: Must have been about...yeh, the early sixties. But, then we got out of the hardwood business, and there wasn't any reason being in to flooring.

JG: What do you think of all the Company offices now in what used to be the Village, the Pine Bough, and Timberland Theater.

AT: Well, I think it's fine, but I think that new front they're applying is very attractive, but I...they built it out of cypress, but what they don't realize is that it's not all heart cypress, and they're going to have one hell of a maintenance problem. I would have never done that.

JG: Where would they have gotten that cypress? Was that from Temple land?

AT: Oh, I saved that when we closed down the hardwood operation years ago. I put it under a shed and said, "Don't let anybody have this unless I sign for it."

JG: Did you sign for it this time?

AT: No, I was gone. I'm gone, man. I don't want anything to do with it. And they don't want to hear nothing from me.

JG: Did that come from your lands? The Temple land?

AT: It came from the Company land. Yep. We've got some little cypress and all that. But, we saved that...all that time, when I thought we were going out of business. You know the thing about cypress, it's very hard to dry properly, and we just stacked that up and air-dried it for forty years.

JG: Was it cut at Pineland?

AT: Yeh. But, we used a lot...I used some of it on my house I built over at Rayburn. It's nearly all cypress. Paneling. We used it on things we'd build for the Company, you know

like.... We'd used a lot of it, I think, at places like, maybe North Boggy. Mainly, I wouldn't let people use it because I wanted to keep it.

JG: And now that you left, they went ahead and used it.

AT: Well, that's all right if they used it, but I don't think I would have built all those wood fronts. They're going to be very expensive to keep up. Same thing on the new office up on the north end where the furniture factory used to be.

JG: Yes, sir. The 700 office is what they call it, or 800 office.

AT: What do they call it?

JG: No, not the 7...yeh, 700 is what they call it, I think.

AT: 700. All right. I didn't know that.

JG: But that's where Human Resources and a few other departments are.

AT: That's really a nice office building, but God, they spent a fortune making it, I think. But, it's nice.

JG: And I guess that's Temple Associates...

AT: The reason I don't like all those offices all over in town is, it's overhead. Now, I don't believe in splurging on overhead. It makes it easier for people to go play golf, but it doesn't put money in the till that you can do a lot of good things with.

JG: What do you think about the new hotel? The Best Western Hotel coming in?

AT: I'm amazed that they could put it on that little postage stamp of land. I think it's too damn close to the highway, but I think it's very attractive. I don't know where they're going to get the business, unless they get it contracted with the bus companies or something. I noticed a bus could park there and probably put people out. But, you know, I don't really think many people are going to spend the night in Diboll with no entertainment or nothing to do.

JG: We'll have an archives building to go to.

AT: Huh?

JG: They'll have an archives building to go to.

AT: Well, that will help, that will help, but, you know, they'll drive on up to Lufkin. That's been the hardest thing about...I've always tried to get stores and shops at Diboll and other businesses. When I first went in there, well, of course, they said, "Nobody

would put a business in Diboll because the Company won't let them." Well, hell, I wanted them, and I built that shopping center. But, the truth is that people like to have an excuse to drive up to the town, and women can get the same thing at Brookshire's there they can get up here, but they'll drive up here to Randall's or Brookshire's and so forth. However, they do a good business. A lot of people that don't have the time. But, that's the hell of it, you understand what I'm saying, the women like having an excuse to take a little drive. Now, maybe if this gas gets high enough, they won't.

JG: It keeps going up, doesn't it?

AT: But, I think they did a great job on that little motel. I'd just be amazed though if it can be financially successful. I hope it is. I started to build one there years ago. Even drew the plans up. In fact, we were going to build where the new office is. It would have been a beautiful location, but...

JG: I think there was also something in the newspaper at one time, across from The Pine Bough, there was going to be a hotel. This was in the early sixties?

AT: Well, this wasn't across from The Pine Bough, it was where I was talking about.

JG: That's the one you were talking about.

AT: Where we built the office building. It was going to be pretty. It was going to be sort of a legacy kind of deal. But it didn't make any sense. Naturally, we didn't do it. Stubby drew those plans.

JG: In the mid-seventies, you started planning Crown Colony?

AT: Early seventies. Yeh. We had to do that to...well, number one, Lake Myriad Country Club in Lufkin, now the Lufkin Country Club, was a nice little course, but it was right in an area where the little black kids would run out there and cuss the women when they passed by, and they'd go out and steal their golf balls. But, mainly, it was they would get behind that fence and holler things at them, you know. It was obvious it wasn't doing any good, and it wasn't that good of a course and so forth. When we became a national company really, well, we had to attract a lot of people from away from here, and the amenities were inadequate, and we set about to...we tried to strengthen the health deal and the school deal and the library deals and the other amenities, including the Country Club. The Country Club has, of course, done it in spades, and then, after we did that, we realized that our employees down there really couldn't afford to be members of Crown Colony, you know, the working guys. A lot of them like to play golf, so we built that one for the City down there and gave it to them. And that's a hell of a good course, and we're beginning to get some recognition. I've got some people working on trying to get it noticed, and I think it will be...well, it was rated...one of the holes was...something that was rated.

JG: I saw something in the news.

AT: It was rated twenty-five or something of that nature. That's good, because Texas has got a lot of good golf courses. But, all those things made the area better for people we had to bring in here, and, you know, it wasn't that damn easy to bring somebody from Chautauqua, New York to come live in Diboll in those earliest days. But, it's been very successful. Then, of course, Rayburn Lake was built, and that's been a nice thing to have right here. But, the main thing we have in Diboll is a lot of damn good people who have been awful good to me and my family. I wish Stubby was still living. Boy, he was the greatest guy. You know, they give me credit for this golf course. I had the idea, and I put the idea together, but Stubby went and built that damn golf course. He built it for less than a million dollars, and you couldn't build one hole for that now. Jack Nicklaus gets more than a million and a half for designing one. But, anyway, they did a really great job on it. Stubby did that. He deserves...I'm going to the directors of the Club and tell them whenever they put that story out to take my name off and put his on, because he deserves the credit. He was just...

JG: Is that the Diboll course you're talking about?

AT: No, I'm talking about Diboll and Crown Colony.

JG: Oh, he designed Crown Colony also?

AT: He didn't design it, no. He didn't design either one of them. He hired the guy that did it, but he drove a hard bargain, and he built it for pennies on the dollar. It would cost you about twelve million dollars to build a golf course like we've got here at Crown Colony now.

JG: Just so I understand, he did not only the Diboll golf course, but he also bargained and hired the person that built Crown Colony?

AT: Well, he supervised the building of Crown Colony. He hired the architect, the golf course architect, Bonny, Hagey, & Devlin, and then, he supervised and got the tractors and everything out there doing the work, and I'll tell you, he fought it through, and he doesn't get a damn bit of credit for it. It makes me so damn mad I can't see, and believe it or not, I've tried like hell to do it, but they always want to put my name up there like I did it, and I didn't. I decided to build it. I got permission from the...Time, Incorporated to spend the money, and I put together the basic membership, "Fifty First Fifty Founders." But, then I turned it over to Stubby, and, hell, he did that; did all the great things. He got the Pro-Am here. He got all these tournaments and things that have given us so much favorable publicity. Everything out there. He was the first president, and he was good, and Stubby was the kind of guy...he and Joe Denman, really, are the two guys, if there was one of these civic projects that, like the housing thing, well, Stubby was the man on that, and I'd go in and say, "Stubby, I want to do so and so." I'll never forget, he said, "Arthur, this takes so damn long. It takes a year, year and a half to get one of these things through Washington, if you can get it through." I said, "That's simple, Stubby. What you do, let's keep about three projects going before them. We work up one project

and apply for it. We work up another project. We think of another project, and by the time this one comes...the last one comes out, the first one will be ready.” He...so, that’s what we did. We just kept something going all the time, and if we got it approved, OK, and if we didn’t...that’s the same thing that’s true of the company, Time. We were worried that they wouldn’t approve that golf course, but that was the easiest job I had. They said, “We think you ought to have it.” Of course they wanted to play golf, and they did. But, Stubby was really a genius. I can’t tell you the things that he drew the plans for down there.

JG: He had an engineering background?

AT: No, he was an architect. Yeh, all the guys I hired early were either engineers or architects. Well, when they get around to hiring people for sales, they got them from different schools. They recruited from different schools and got people they thought would be good in sales, and, well, Harold Maxwell came from that program, and he’s good, but he’s, of course, not doing sales. He’s general manager over the Diboll operation or all the wood products.

JG: But he came up through sales.

AT: Yeh. Well, that’s the way we brought him over here. I think he was in sales. I’ve forgotten now. But, all those guys, Jack Beene, and all of them. Nearly all of those guys were recruited at A&M. Of course, Joe Denman didn’t want to hire anybody except A&M graduates.

JG: I think you hired...I came across in your files that we have down there, a copy of a letter, I guess Joe Denman has the original, but you had written it to him in May of 1950, and apparently it was right after a job interview, and you had mentioned that you had also hired Bob Musselwhite, so you would have a first-rate team, and you were telling in the letter that you were moving all the photostatic machines and blueprinting machines above the Commissary, and said that you were going to have a “first-class set up in a country kind of way,” for Joe Denman.

AT: Well, that was the way it was. Oh, it was hot up there.

JG: I remember the story of you telling about the time he pulled his clothes off.

AT: Oh, Joe used to go and take off all his clothes but his shorts. I tell you, Joe Denman is so good. God, he’s good. But, all the things I get credit for were really done by people like that, and it’s embarrassing to me they give me credit for it, and I know who did it. I had all the good ideas, I think, but they all take credit for, but now getting it done, they did it.

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