

JOE BOB & ANNIE HENDRICK

Interview 61a

June 11, 1985, at their home in Diboll, Texas

Marie Davis, Interviewer

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ABSTRACT: In this interview with Marie Davis, Annie and Joe Bob Hendrick reminisce about their lives in Diboll. Mrs. Hendrick recalls growing up in Manning and Diboll and Mr. Hendrick discusses working for Temple at the sawmill and helping with community projects. Mr. Hendrick volunteered to landscape much of the town, planting trees for the bicentennial and beautifying many city, company, and private buildings. He also discusses the failed unionization of the plywood plant and the sawmill fire.

Marie Davis (hereafter MD): Today I am talking to Annie and Joe Bob Hendrick. They live at 102 Hendrick, Diboll, Texas. Today's date is June 11, 1985 and my name is Marie Davis. Annie, when were you born?

Annie Hendrick (hereafter AH): I was born in 1913.

MD: And where were you born?

AH: Over in Manning, Texas which is another little sawmill town.

MD: Did your father work over there?

AH: Yes, he was there for 10 years. Originally he had come from Diboll. He was married here in Diboll around 1897 and they lived here and had five children. He moved from here and went to Manning and stayed around 10 years and five more children were born there and I was one of them. Then he moved back to Diboll and got the same job back here.

MD: And what were your parents' names?

AH: Clabe and Roxie Bateman.

MD: Okay. Can you name all of your brothers and sisters?

AH: Oh yes, there were ten of us. There was Harris, Cloyce, Erma, Charlie, Clabe, Jr., Shelton, Gordon, myself, Helen and Molly.

MD: And how many children do you have?

AH: I have two daughters.

MD: And their names are?

AH: Joanne and Betty Hendrick.

MD: Where do they live and what do they do?

AH: Joanne lives in Houston; she has a good job with a chemical company, Merrichem, which she is office administrator for the company and Betty teaches high school English out at Randolph Air Force Base near San Antonio.

MD: Joe Bob, when were you born?

Joe Bob Hendrick (hereafter JH): In 1910.

MD: And where?

JH: In Cherokee County, Alto, Texas.

MD: And what were your parents' names?

JH: Frank and Rosie.

MD: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

JH: Well, I have five full sisters and brothers and two half sisters.

MD: Would you like to name them?

JH: Yes, I'd name them. There is Moline, Loreen, and E. F. and Rosie, that was my full sisters and Evangeline and Marceline are my half sisters.

MD: And when did you come to Diboll?

JH: 1935.

MD: 1935, okay. And had you worked for Southern Pine before you came here?

JH: A short time, I worked on a bridge crew with Mr. Devereaux at Fastrill.

MD: So, you didn't live at Fastrill, did you?

JH: No, we had a farm about 6 or 7 miles from Fastrill and I played baseball up there and got acquainted with them, you know, up there. I was up there quite a bit.

MD: Then you knew a good many of the people who lived in Fastrill at the time?

JH: Practically all of them.

MD: Yes, there weren't too many, were there? When you moved to Diboll, you and Annie married after you moved to Diboll?

JH: 1936.

MD: What work did you do here after you moved?

JH: Well, I worked in the dwelling department; they had a repair crew and I worked for well, at first I worked at the mill at night for a while and then I went to work for Mr. Louis Landers in the repair crew and then I transferred over to the shop.

MD: And that's where you spent most of your time until you retired?

JH: No, I worked there until I went in the service and came back. They put in a sorter, an automatic sorter, and I helped construct it there in the shop and I transferred to the sorter when they put it in operation.

MD: And what did the sorter do?

JH: It would sort the lumber to the different widths, lengths and then we had a stacker there that stacked green lumber, you know, before it goes to the kilns.

MD: Did you have any good experiences at Fastrill working for Mr. Devereaux?

JH: Quite a few. I think any person that worked for Mr. Devereaux has some experiences. He was quite a character. I just wish you could have interviewed him on this program.

MD: Oh I know it. We have one interview from him, a man came here and I think it was '64 and did an interview with him. So we have that, that we can use.

JH: Is that right?

MD: Okay. Annie, since you have lived here so long, can you remember anything special about Diboll back in your younger days?

AH: Yes, I really can. In my 66 years that I've been here I have seen Diboll grow rapidly in that, say from outdoor toilets to pit types and indoor toilets. I've seen dirt streets, red dirt to our good streets we have now. When I was young growing up, we didn't have any kind of entertainment here for young people. A group of my girlfriends and me would get together; we formed at one time a bridge club. We had a little bridge club. On Sunday afternoons we would get together and go walking, mainly up and down the railroad tracks

here. Then occasionally there would be a Chautauqua come to town and we would attend that. Then later when the first movie theater we had was in a two story building over near the colored quarters and, of course, that was every Saturday and that was our matinee day to go to the movies.

MD: Did they show silent pictures or were theyí ?

AH: Oh yes, of course. They were all silent pictures then, they surely were.

MD: Who ran the picture show, do you remember?

AH: Well, no I don't remember, I surely don't. That's about all I can remember.

MD: I think the railroad track must have been the favorite place for everybody.

AH: I think so, too.

MD: Walking up and down.

JH: Walking up and down it.

MD: That is really something, I think. Okay and where was the school when you went to school?

AH: Well, it was up here where the elementary school is now but there was of course, there is an old building standing there now that was there then. I went through high school, through the 11th grade here in that school. We had, of course, we had chapel, once a week we had chapel. And, I remember Mr. Stegall here. He would always open chapel with prayer. He was a realí he was a real conscientious man. He really had the pupils' interest next to his heart.

MD: And you have always gone to the Baptist church?

AH: Yes, I made confession of faith when I was about 10 years old, we had a big tent meeting here and I was one of about 125 that was baptized down here at Emporia pond, which was the millpond. There used to be a sawmill at Emporia and that is where we were baptized.

MD: Do you remember any special preachers?

AH: Oh yes, I do. I remember most all the pastors that we had.

MD: Which ones did you have the longest, do you think?

AH: We had Bro. Marvin Smith, I believe about 10 years.

MD: That is what I was wondering about.

AH: He was here when we married. Yes, and of course, Diboll is full of special people back then as well as now. One couple, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Hogue stands out in my mind. They are very special to me because we boarded with them when we first married. They were just like second parents and we just loved them and they loved us. We just loved them so much. I think almost everybody has a favorite Sunday school teacher, which I did. Mrs. P. M. Allday, one of our neighbors here that was a favorite Sunday school teacher. She was such a good Christian woman and, of course, Mrs. Farrington has been an inspiration to me and to everybody who knew her.

MD: What did your father do?

AH: He was a plumber here. Now when he was younger he got his arm cut off, left arm, cut off in the sawmill and back then they didn't have insurance or anything. But he got the promise of a life-long job with the company and, believe you me, they kept that promise.

MD: Well that is great.

AH: They gave him his same job back after he moved from here and came back, he got his same job. And when my father died in 1934, my mother went up a few days later to take care of his funeral expenses and this company had, (crying) they were all paid, the company had paid them.

MD: Well, that's good; they have done a lot of good for people.

AH: Yes, they have and they still are and I still say Diboll is the place to be, I think. And it's where I plan to spend the rest of my days.

MD: A while ago we were talking about the conveniences, the toilets do you remember when they got, when most people had indoor plumbing? Was it in the '40s by the time everybody had them?

JH: I believe it was around '40, somewhere along there. It was a short time after I came here, I'd say four or five years. They started, when they started building new buildings, well they started putting plumbing in. Of course!

MD: I was reading, have you all seen that publication that came from the American Lumberman, I believe, this book? It had a list of all the people who worked, I mean some of the people who worked here in 1908 and I saw your father's name in it.

AH: I think he started to work here about 1897. That is when he came to town.

MD: So he was here near the beginning, wasn't he?

AH: He surely was.

MD: Annie, someone was telling us that your father ran a cannery during the Depression?

AH: He was in charge of it, yes. This was put in during the early thirties, I believe, and he had charge of it. This was put in for the purpose of giving work to men who were on relief. It wasí they had these gardens, put in these, what they called òcommunity gardensö and these men who were on relief would plant the garden, would work it and then gather the produce. Then it was brought to the cannery to can for these people and they were, they got the food that was issued out to them later. Now that was, Mrs. Ray Kimmey was the first lady who had charge of the cannery and about 1932, I believe it was, she was unable to work that year. So my daddy, who had charge of the gardens put us, Erma and me into work there. We, it was such long hours and it was a hot job and we would go to work early every morning. I remember we had a pressure cooker that held 56 no. 2 cans and we would pressure that many at one time. By the way, Mr. Henry Temple, he wasn't living here at that time but we had special orders to fix him corn and tomatoes together.

MD: Oh, is that right?

AH: We had to take each ear of corn, split each and then we shaved it off and that was a little special order for him.

MD: Now would they plant the garden on company land?

AH: Yes, we had two huge gardens that my daddy worked and then there was plots that the company put out in sections, over where the high school is now. They fixed it off in plots and anybody could go there and get them a plot, you know, as individuals to work it to raise food for their family.

MD: Now would it cost them anything to have it processed? Or do you know?

AH: Well, no, we didn't process it. You mean at the cannery?

MD: Yes.

AH: No, this was just for the purpose of the people that were on relief. They, however, we did, I think, a few times do for individuals but they would furnish their own cans and produce and it was rather easy for us.

MD: Oh, this was just done for the people who needed the food and it was given to them.

AH: That is right.

MD: Well, how did you get paid?

AH: We got paid in canned goods. (laughter)

MD: Well, good. At least you wouldn't go hungry.

AH: I think it was a third.

MD: And you could sell that if you could find anybody to buy it?

AH: No, we used it ourselves. The other two-thirds was stored up in the library, the old library, and then it was, people would go there and it was given out.

MD: Was this done by the company or by the government? I guess the company furnished the building?

AH: Yes, the company did but I think now, the government did have, what did they call it, W.P.A.?

JH: It was government sponsored. I guess that was about the first government sponsored outfit or program. It was during, right at the first of the Depression.

MD: Joe Bob, people around here call you the "Johnny Appleseed" of Diboll. When did you get, how did you get interested in landscaping and plants?

JH: Well, of course I grew up on a farm and naturally I like to see things grow. After I came to Diboll they had put in a new plant over there. They had about 15 acres that needed grass put on it and trees planted. Mr. Temple, he always liked to see things

MD: Is this Mr. Arthur Temple Jr.?

JH: This is Arthur Jr., and anything that I was willing to do, why, he was willing to sponsor. We take men out to the hardwood, sawmill out on 1818 and it looked like about a mountain of oak sawdust and we'd take a head-end loader out there and a large truck and I had a man that didn't do anything but go out there and haul that in. I would take my men and we would dump it in piles and we would spread it over this area and we put San Augustine grass out there. So, that's what got started and I kind of branched out around town here. People wanted things done and I was always willing to do it. And, so when the churches, when they built the Methodist Church and the Baptist Church well, I fixed the yards there. When they built the library I fixed the yard up there and then in '76 they wanted, they decided they would get some oak trees for that 200 years.

MD: Bicentennial?

JH: Yes, and I had retired just about a week before they got those trees in so they got me to do the work here in Diboll.

MD: Well, tell us something about that. How did you go about where to put them? Did you have someone to do the planning?

JH: Well, we hadí there was a crew of young people from A&M came down here and looked over the place and made a drawing of where the trees should be put. Of course, there's a lot of them we didn't put there because of the high lines and things like that. But we had to decide what kind of trees to grow. They suggested red bud or two or three kinds. We had tried that two or three years before. Mr. George Johnson had put out trees up and down this row a long time ago, during wagon and mule days, you know. And they didn't grow so I suggested we put live oaks. (Note: these are called Liberty trees) Of course it was a bunch of ladies that had started this program and Ellen Temple was the leader of it. Of course, she contacted me and I told her at first I didn't believe I wanted to and she saidí and then I got to thinking and I felt like I could do it as well as anybody else around here, you know. And I've always been like this, whenever I do anything I try to do the best of my ability. So I got with her and we went and staked all these places out and the part about it was realí it wasn't a realí well, I don't know what you would say, but we ordered the bushes and they came in and they weren't the right size. We got them from Fred Walker and he unloaded them down there and they just weren't what we ordered, you know. So I called her and we went up there. He had to take them back. We went down to Floresville and bought, well, we bought 200 and they shipped them up here and we started putting them out. We got a machine that would dig a hole for us. They come and let me have two or three men and we started putting them out around here. It didn't take us too long. You know, it's funny about that, we put out 200 and we didn't lose over 6 or 7 of the whole thing.

MD: Is that right? That is good.

JH: Now since then they have built some buildings, and they had to move a few that they had to destroy but I think it was 6 or 7 out of the 200.

MD: Now, where did you get the money to buy the trees?

JH: The city financed it but, I believe the Booster Club paid part of it but the city was really responsible for it. The city and, after we got them put out they wanted to know they said ñow we don't know how we are going to be able to handle thisö said ñDo you want to look after them or do you want us to look after them?ö So I told them I don't want to have anything else to do with them because I don't have any machinery or anything, you know. But since then I have, you know, pruned them, trimmed them up, up around the elementary school I've trimmed them. Some of them across the highway over here, they need pruning and it's really the school's job. It is on school property but they haven't trimmed them this year. After we got those in, well then the company wanted, they bought 200 and I put those out. They are put out over on the company'sí back by the mill over there. Well, the first year I started putting out trees, Mr. Temple bought 250 live oaks and they were just in gallon cans. He wanted them put out back of the office, back up on the

company's property there, and I took a couple of men. Of course, some of the ground had, had to dig holes and fill in with good soil, you know. And we put those things out and we expected at least half of them to die and nearly all of them lived. Well, after they commenced to grow up they were too close together, you know, so then I got in there when they needed some around on the outside and even down here, I brought some down here, these I've got here.

MD: Oh, is that right? And they lived?

JH: Yes, after, although they just were bare root. And then, out from Mr. Temple's there on the highway there on the west side, all of those up and down that side are some of the same ones. I took 29 one fall and put them out and 28 of them lived and they were pretty good size bushes. Of course, now they are trees.

MD: Would you say you are more proud of that project than any other you have done?

JH: Well yes, I believe I was because

MD: They will be here for hundreds of years.

JH: I've always said "Mr. Temple when they are gone our monument will be here."

MD: Yes. Can you think of any other projects that you have done?

JH: Yes, there's one other that I did right after I retired. They were building a new office here and on each side of white oak creek there was kind of, there was almost a jungle in there, and they went in and cut the switch cane and stuff off of it and that summer they got me to go down there and landscape it. They told me to get some dirt to put in the low places in there so Mr. Sweeny told the contractors hauling dirt, said, "Haul him 8 or 10 loads of soil in there." He started hauling soil and we got to 50 loads and I was still needing soil. He said "Well, Jack said just to haul 10." I said, "Well, he told me to fix it and we going to fix it like it ought to be." So after we hauled the soil in there and we got some dozers in there and spread it out and then I got some men and we leveled it off. We seeded it with centipede and they put me some sprinklers down there so we could keep it watered and it did real well. It's looking good. You'd notice how it is down there.

MD: Oh yes, it is pretty through there. It sure is!

JH: And it was something. You can remember how it used to be, you know, it was all switch cane through there.

MD: It used to flood through there. Sure did and I couldn't walk to school some days. Do you still do much, what do you do now as far as landscaping? Do you take care of anything now?

JH: About the only thing I take care of is Woody's place out here at this dental clinic. I do that because if I didn't do it, well I'm afraid it wouldn't get done and my place looks better by that looking good out there, you know.

MD: Well now, don't you work some at the library?

JH: I work up there, but you know I worked for years and years looking after the place up there. So finally I gave up on it and they said "well, we need to find us somebody to do that" and I got L.B. Dominey and I showed him what I knew about it, you know and helped him. I still help up there, you know, and things like that. I've always been like this, when somebody needed a tree pruned or something or some advice I was always willing to go and show them what I knew or help them on it.

MD: Uh-huh.

JH: Oh yes, there is one other project I did. It was down at the nursing home.

MD: Oh, uh-huh.

JH: When they built that why they got me to landscape that. There was a part of that area they wanted solid grass from the walk back to the buildings in there. I remember a few days there was a fellow came by and said, "That's the first instant yard that I ever saw put in." We hauled a lot of grass down there though and did a real good job on it.

MD: Then you have done most of the major landscaping in town?

JH: Just about, there are a lot of yards here that I well the last one I did was Virginia Nelson's. She always liked a nice yard but she had a problem with her grass up there and she decided to put centipede in there.

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JH: I told her that if she could get some soil hauled in that I would come up there and help her out on it. Of course, we had already fixed the upper side of the library yard with centipede. We found out it did real well, you know. So she did what I told her to and got some soil hauled in there and we went and got a couple of boys and raked it down. Then, of course, when you put out centipede seed you've got to till it to get the soil soft where the seed has to be about a half inch deep in there and covered, you know. We did it for her and she has a nice yard there now and she is proud of it.

MD: Yes, it really is pretty.

JH: The good thing about centipede, it doesn't have to be mowed like San Augustine.

MD: Yes.

JH: It doesn't grow up that tall. A lot of times it will go a month or two without being mowed.

MD: Well that is good. Do you especially remember any of the people you worked with?

JH: Yes, I really do. The man that ran the kilns was Mr. Strickland. He was a real Christian and our departments were right side by side. There was E.P. Ramsey, he ran the take down and he was a real nice fellow. Of course, down at the shop, Red Stivers, he was the shop supervisor down there and he was a nice fellow. Of course, everyone remembers Mr. Hamp Byerly; he was something here in Diboll. He was a tall fellow. He was a saw filer and, I guess he had special privileges. He would come out on the plant with his collar, dressed up like he was going someplace and he was, he was going to work. He would put on his work clothes and then at noon well he'd dress back in his dress clothes. He may go up to town maybe one time a day if he felt like it. I remember one time a very particular my department was right there next to the mill and I was there working with the boys one morning and Joe Denman, he and Mr. Byerly met there. I don't know what was the cause, what started it, but Joe was getting after him I think about leaving his job or something. I remember Mr. Hamp told him, said "Joe I want to tell you something, I forgot more about saw filing than you'll ever learn." And if it had been Joe was assistant manager out there. And the part about it, Joe held his cool and he said "well, Hamp you're probably right, I am learning and one of these days I'm going to make them some money." I remember after that we were having a supervisor's meeting and Joe brought it up. He said, he got up and said to Mr. Temple, about the way Hamp was doing out there and Mr. Temple said "Joe, I want to tell you something, Mr. Byerly is my baby, you just leave him alone." And he was that way until Mr. Hamp retired. I think he had an agreement with them. He wasn't on a salary but he was maybe 10 hours a day or something like that that they would work him. There will never be another saw filer that knew any more about filing saws than Mr. Hamp, or one that dressed up like he did when he came to work.

MD: Do they still have saw filers?

JH: Oh yes, C.P. Carter, he took Mr. Hamp's job and he was a real nice fellow. We got well acquainted with each other. And, C.P. one night was coming back from 94 and ran into the local, the TSE local that was going to Lufkin and got killed.

MD: Did you ever ride the TSE?

JH: No, to tell you the truth I never did. I don't think I ever did go to town on the TSE.

MD: I'd bet Annie has.

AH: One time; it was fun. (laughter)

MD: Yes.

JH: I rode a hand car. I worked for Mr. Devereaux a while after I came in here and we would go out on the track every day on thoseí on the motor car and you'd always pull another car to carry the tools and things in. One morning we were going out and Mr. Devereaux wasn't going to go that morning so we was going to let Cecil Hogue be in charge. We was going on the car and start out over there across the pond and the switch was thrown and we didn't notice it and so we ran through the switch and derailed the car and threw all the men off and got some of them skinned up. Mr. Devereaux gave us two days layoff for it.

MD: That didn't please him too much. (laughter)

JH: No! (laughter)

AH: Speaking of Mr. Devereaux, do you remember the time he dug those two trenches about 10 or 12 inches deep on each side of his house to keep, to slow cars down?

MD: Across the road?

AH: Yes in front of his house to slow the cars down to keep the dust from rolling in.

MD: Now that was before it was paved.

AH: Oh yes.

JH: I remember, used to right along there where his house is, cars would bog down there in that road there in wet weather.

AH: In dry weather it was just red dust, but that was so funny.

MD: He dug the ditches across the road?

AH: On each, you know, just took in his house. Of course the cars had to slow down; they couldn't go fast in front of his house.

JH: I remember one time he was, I came up there to help him on his yard. He had a bunch of trees in front of his house and naturally grass and stuff doesn't grow well under trees and Etheldred, that was his daughter, came up there and she was out looking at it and she was telling me how to do the work to make the grass grow and, Mr. Devereaux was standing there kind of behind her shaking his head this way every time she'd tell me something. (laughter) She was telling about digging it out, getting some cottonseed meal and putting down there and Mr. Devereaux standing there kind ofí I know she thought I was the silliest thing laughing. He didn't want to do it and she was telling me how to do it. (laughter)

MD: Well how longí about when was your first project here, about what year? In the fifties?

JH: Im just trying to think what year weí the mill wasí it was right after, see right after I came a lot of that construction burned over there and when they built it back they built for the take down and all. There used to be, they stacked all this lumber in sheds down there, you know, piled it up in there and would take it out to dress it. And, Im just trying to think. It must have been about 40, right after I came back from the service around 46 or something like that. Of course, after they built all these new buildings over there they had some turn pulls over there and they pulled down a little hill and the ground was all clay in there. And they had a big hardwood yard back over there; just stack this hardwood on stack bottoms over there.

They got all this where they put concrete roads through there and so when they put the soil back they put about 2 or 3 inches of soil in there. So, they got, Schinke was here at the time and they got him to come over there. That was about the first bushes they put in there and they putí had Schinke put out arborvitae and cape jasmines around the edge of the drive. Well, anybody that had grown anything would know that anything in that clay, those things just wouldn grow and they died. Mr. Temple accused me of cutting them up and there were some arborvitae down there they had put out that stayed there about a year and of course they had to dig a hole in the clay and when you plant anything in clay it like planting in a bathtub. If it doesn have a place for the water to run out, why, it not going to live.

MD: It got to drain.

JH: And I dug those bushes up and they had planted in burlap and the roots hadn ever come out of the sack. And, it was just really a flop. From then on, well, I got to putting them out around and putting them out like they should be put out. And Mr. Temple his shed had a large storage shed but it didn have, the walls didn come all the way down to the ground and he wanted some shade trees put around to keep the wind from blowing rain in there. And, he sent a fellow, he had a fellow there named, a forester here, I can think of his name right now. Anyway, he came out there and we were real good friends and he told me what Mr. Temple wanted. I said Ill tell you what Im going to do now. Im going to dig some holes and let you see what is down there. Because at that time we had some San Augustine grass out there and about 6 inches why, it was down in the clay. I am just trying to thinkí Jack Mims is who it wasí and he had run a nursery up at Frankston before he came down here and he knew his job. So, I told him, I said, Now Jack, once we get theí what well have to do, well have to take a turn pull in here and dig out the place about 6 or 8 feet wide and take all this old clay out of here and put some good soil in here. And so, he told Mr. Temple and Mr. Temple said Oh, I don want to make a major project out of it. I said, Well, that the way it got to be. So we never did put any trees out there but we didí and in time they used a lot of the ground putting new sheds on there. But he was a fellow thatí he also told me about balling this shrubbery. He said, Youve got to take, when you ball a plant you have got to have some

soil that has a little gumbo in it so that when it gets wet it will stick and ball.ö You know sand won't ball of course and then you put the bag around there. Mr. Temple and I was working down at his house one day. I worked down there several years, three or four different times. He would work, I would work maybe a year or two and he would get him a regular man down there and the fellow wouldn't do what he was supposed to do and he would get me back down there. Well, one day he was talking about some balled and burlaped and I told him how, what Jack Mims told me about it. And he said, öOh, what they do is get that same soil that they get those plants out and ball it.ö And I told him that Jack said they didn't do it, of course I said it in different terms. We had a lot of arguments. But Mr. Temple is a real good friend of mine but I have never been a öyesö man to anybody. So, if I wanted an accommodation I would go to Mr. Temple.

MD: Yes, he would fix you up.

JH: Yes sir, he is real nice.

MD: What about Mrs. Katherine Temple. Didn't she do a lot for the town?

JH: Oh, a lot of wonderful things. In fact that is another project. When they put that day care center down there, why of course she was one of the large sponsors of that, you know. Of course, I volunteered to put the landscaping down there, you know. We did, we went down there and put grass out on it. Of course, some other outfit put some bushes on the inside of the yard there.

MD: You probably took them up!

JH: No, what they had were all right but I didn't put in anyí see they had pecan trees down there and all they really needed on the outside was San Augustine. So we did that. I want to tell you one other incident that happened. Mrs. Purdy built her house down there and of course, we loved Mrs. Purdy because our kids went to her.

MD: Yes.

JH: She taught them music. She built that new house down there; of course, it was after her husband died. I went down there one day and I saw that she was going to have to have some grass down there, you know. And she didn't even know that we were coming down there or anything. I took a fellow and went down there and we fixed her yard for her. We put San Augustine grass out.

MD: Well, that was a big help.

JH: She remembered it.

MD: Oh yes.

JH: She remembered it. But we always told Mrs. Purdy she always had too much shrubbery in her yard. People were always giving her stuff. We would always say that when she got out of her car and set that plant down, that is where she put it out. I used to mow for her down there, but it got to where you just couldn't mow. There was more going around than it was mowing and finally one day, Paul Durham had a bunch of trees out in front of his house, pine trees and they got down low. You couldn't hardly see down there. I said "Paul how about me coming down and cutting those branches for you down there." Now this was all free.

MD: Yes.

JH: In fact nearly everything that was done nearly was always free. So I got down there and cut those branches off so he could see from the road down there, you know, and Mrs. Purdy said something about cutting hers. Of course, I had a power saw and I went over and cut no telling how many loads of stuff out of her yard. I told her, I said "Mrs. Purdy, I will cut the stuff down if you can get somebody to haul it off." And she said "All right." And I trimmed some of that stuff where it had got down too low where it would look all right. I always found out that most people don't do right by their trees. They don't trim them up at least where they can mow under them. If you trim a tree, it is going to make the tree grow. So, I got a chance to really cut some of that stuff down.

MD: So you took it. (laughter) We know that a lot of the sawmill towns aren't any more; they have gone by the way side. Why do you believe that Diboll has continued to survive?

JH: Well, conservation. Right after Mr. Temple came here he hired him a bunch of foresters and they select cut the trees. A lot of companies cut their timber too close. But, they had these fellows go out and mark the trees and they had a half a million acres of land. So, they claimed they could grow the trees twice as fast as they cut them. But it didn't pan out that way. After they put this plywood plant in over here, they were cutting a lot more than what they were growing. I talked to some of the foresters about it, people that had been out in there and knew what was happening, and they said that at the rate they were cutting, in five years they were going to be just practically out of timber. Of course they was buying timber all the time, you know. And so but, when they put the plywood plant in over here, it would cut as many again logs as the mill would. They were running night and day too. But, it happened that they closed the plywood plant down and that slowed up on the timber. Now then they have started this clear cutting and growing new stuff, new timber. And they also, they used to keep the large trees for seed, but now then they are using the small trees and their bringing the large logs in, and they getting nicer logs now. When I was out at the plant 8 or 10 years ago, it got to where the mill never got any logs but a crooked log or small logs. Now then they are getting real good logs and they have raised the cut out there at the mill many thousand feet an hour. But they modernize all the time, you know, to get more production and not have to use so many people.

MD: Uh-huh.

JH: And so, it's really paid off. The lumber industry depends on the market. Some years they do real well and some years they don't do as well but they have got a good management program, even from headquarters and all. They look ahead and they have a plan they set this, how much they will make with enough money to pay a bonus every year. It is a certain percentage and all the years that I worked here, after they started the bonus program, there wasn't but one year that they didn't pay it. And since then some years it's not as much as others, but they have always managed to pay a bonus.

MD: Do you think that helps the men to work better?

JH: I think so. I tell you, they had a merit system here one time. It is not as good as you think it would be. Some people can get a merit bonus a lot easier than others. It is hard for some. They may be working hard but they are just not in that capacity or job to be entitled to it. There was a lot of friction when they had the bonus. They finally got off that, which I thought was good. The main thing is, when we had this merit system, you would have to merit a fellow on what he did. They would always call me down there and tell me "you gave him too good a merit, nobody's entitled to that." And I would say "well, I think he is entitled to it." You know maybe I always thought more of my men than other people did. And to me they were doing the job they were supposed to do.

MD: Do you think the bonus system is more fair?

JH: I think so. Although we had the bonus system then too. But, it's not. I'd say the bonus is more fair to the salaried men than it is the working man. Of course they don't get, the working men don't get much out of it, but the salaried men some of them get big bonuses, on a percentage wise.

MD: Oh yes, on a percentage of your wages.

JH: The hour men maybe get two or three hundred dollars at the end of the year. It's nice because you can depend on it for Christmas, eleven months. Because they figure it up before the end of the year you see and they just pay a certain percentage on eleven months. I will say something else. The company has come a long ways and a few years ago they were going to have, the plywood plant was going to have a union, vote to have a union over there. I remember Mr. Temple. I went with him out. He had a cabin out at Hickory Hollow and I went out there and did the landscaping on that out there. He carried me out there. He was going to have a meeting that night. The next night I believe it was. He said he hated to see it, but he guessed they would go union. And I said "Well, Mr. Temple, I don't know about that." Of course, they were nearly all new people over there, you know. But he went over there and he told them, of course they had a union down at Silsbee, they had a union down there. I visited down there and they were not getting as much as you would think. And the main thing about a union job, you can do a certain thing, maybe two jobs just interlocking but you have to get someone else to do the other one. He went over there and told them, he said "I'll tell you what I will do, every time that

they raise one of these union jobs, you will get a raise. And we will bring the salaries up comparable to what they get.ö And he did that and you know they didn't vote it in there.

MD: Why do you think the unions have never been able to organize? Do you think the company has been fair or what?

JH: I think so. I think it has a whole lot to do with the managementí the people that are really in chargeí being frank with the people and friendly with the people. Now Mr. Temple he always said öAny man that comes down to the office and wants to see me, come in and talk to me about something, I'll talk to him.ö Now you take when the other people here that were managers, you couldn't even see them unless you would see them going up and down the road, you know.

Of course when he came here, he changed, the first thing he did he got to paying cash. You know, they used to pay coupons and things you know, draw stuff like that and he started paying cash and he just turned it around. Of course, times got better, and not only time but the times changed and we changed with it, you know.

MD: Do you all think that Diboll has been a good place to live and raise your family?

JH: I think so, of course I always said this, I always said this öI came down here and I never was able to leave.ö But it wasn't that way, because I grew to love the town. It's a place, where you know, kind of a family outfit. You know the people around and you get out here on the streets and not apt to get run over or something, you know. It's a nice place. I think the main thing is that the town is like it is, is because I say Mrs. Temple, Mrs. Katherine Temple and Arthur because he wants everything to look real good. He will put out a lot of effort and finance to do it. Like this year, he is putting out a bunch of crepe myrtles, you know. He does that nearly every year. Of course, the Garden Club they buy them. He doesn't spend all the moneyí up and down the road he probably pays that. I mean, but the city puts them out. But he gets them at a reduced price where people can buy them at practically a fraction of what you could buy them at a retail place. It is just a nice place to be.

I was thinking about the time the mill burned a few years ago over there. The effort the men went out there and put out to try and save the thing. And I was thinking about the time that Boggy Slough burned out there. The people shut the mill down and all the men went out there and worked for two or three days. It was just hot. They didn't get anything for it, only because they didn't want to see the forest burn. The ladies in town made sandwiches and carried out there. It was two days and one night that nobody slept.

MD: The woods were on fire?

JH: Yes, the woods were on fire. That is loyalty or they would not have done it. I know I was gone some place or another and I came back to the plant over there, and it was all shut down and I couldn't find no one around there. Finally I think Mr. Sage Ward was

there in the mill and I asked him what was the matter. He said that Boggy Slough was burning and they took all the men out there. Of course, we had a forest fire outfit, you know.

MD: Extra hands?

JH: Two or three crews of them, you know. We would go around fighting fires around in the woods, you know. That is before the forest service got like it is.

When the mill burned over there, well it was one Sunday and we looked over there, heard the whistle blowing, looked and saw that black smoke. Well, naturally everyone started running over there, you know. It was real cold weather and that fire had got so far along that there was a real strong north wind. Although they had a sprinkling system it wasn't doing any good. Of course, we all started pitching in. We had a lot of fire hose over there and we had little stands where they kept the fire hose, and we hooked them to the hydrants and started pouring the water on there. But the wind was blowing all these embers on down over on the other new departments over there, on the sorter and the take down. Especially take down, down there. Of course it would take 8 or 10 men to hold one of those hoses, you know. So one of the watchmen came by and told me that there was a fire started down at the take down. Well then we had to take the hose loose, no we didn't take the hose loose, we had it hooked over on the west side over there from the fire. We had to pull that across and around down there with the pressure on it and put it on that fire. And it looked like it was just going to burn down. But I pulled so much that I couldn't get my breath, you know. So, we finally got around there and then that night a bunch stayed out there. It got caught in there pretty bad. And I know they brought people some that got wet, brought us some coats and things and blankets for them you know. The next day Joe came by and told me how much he appreciated the work we did. I said "Well Joe, I just figured it was part of my job." They said that if it had burned, they never would have built back. But by saving that new project, part of the new project, the take down if it had gotten in the rough shed, it would have gotten everything down there. But by us saving that where they was taking down, they decided to build back.

END OF INTERVIEW