

Ward Burke
Interview 82a
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Megan Lambert, Interviewer
Retyped by Courtney Lawrence

Abstract: Ward Burke reminisces about his personal history and his dealings with the Temple Foundation. He recalls assisting, as a lawyer, Arthur Temple and Temple Webber through all the legalities of building up the Southern Pine Lumber Company. He also talks about mergers, liquor sale restrictions, and the effects of the Great Depression. Also mentioned are: Arthur Temple, Temple Webber, Arthur Lee Burke, Phillip M. Leach, and Georgie Temple Munz.

Megan Lambert (hereafter ML): Today is October 23, 1985 and I am interviewing Mr. Ward Burke today. My name is Megan Lambert.

Ward Burke (hereafter WB): Just what.

ML: Some leading questions, sure.

WB: Or, kind of what, or if you had just a glimpse of my background before you got into it it might, you know, it might make it a little more coherent.

ML: Yes, it sure would. The main points I would like to ask you about is reminiscences about Burke, about your school time in Diboll, about the different kinds of employment you have had in your lifetime and where you lived, anything you might want to say in a speculative or philosophical way about the growth of the timber industry in East Texas and specifically about the relationship between Temple Industries and the town of Diboll. And I have a whole bunch of detail questions if you, you know, are talking along and come to a stop I'll be real happy to go ahead with my questions.

WB: Well, I don't want to get into a, I don't think the personal history of people is too interesting unless they have done something significant and I don't consider mine significant but I can, if you think that is the place to start, I can begin with something about Burke and how my family got there and how I got to where I am. I will kind of make it brief.

ML: That will be great and if you don't mind telling us when you were born and where?

WB: Oh, that won't bother me.

ML: That's a good start there.

WB: Well, I'll just go ahead like I am talking to you then.

ML: That's the way to do it.

WB: Okay, my parents were Arthur Lee Burke and Eva Wynona McCall, the McCall's came to East Texas from Mississippi before and after the Civil War. My Grandmother McCall was a McCarty, Laura McCarty. And there are many McCarty's around Burke, still are. My Grandfather McCall, Daniel Bynum McCall, married Laura McCarty in Mississippi in 1875, they joined a wagon train that had in it McCall families, McCarty families and Arrington families and came to Texas. I remember my mother telling me later the Arrington's had a baby coming over here and they stopped. It died and they stopped long enough to bury the baby and then, of course, the wagon train came on to Texas. D. B. McCall and his wife, Laura, settled on 158 acres of land north of the Exeter building and north of the college and part of that land is still in descendancy, that's where they settled and built a log cabin and had nine children at home and all of them survived. My mother was the oldest and she was actually born in that log cabin with a dirt floor. Then about 1882 or '83, after the HE&WT [Houston East and West Texas] Railroad was built they moved to Burke. Burke was established on the railroad and was named after one of the engineers of HE&WT Railroad, who was no relation to my parents, my grandparents. My Grandfather McCall became the depot agent there and part of his children were born on this tract of land just south of Lufkin and part of them were born at Burke. Of course, all of them now are dead.

ML: Did they move there for the depot agent's job or for the farming?

WB: Yes, no for the depot agent's job. He farmed up here close to Lufkin.

ML: So he did both of those things.

WB: And I don't know whether he had any training somewhere in Mississippi before he came to Texas or not. At any rate he became the depot agent and served as the depot agent until he retired. Oh, I think sometime around 1925. Then my mother taught school, she was the oldest child and she died last; she outlived all the other children, lived to be 99. She taught school and rode horseback to teach out here at Fairview. That may not mean anything to you.

ML: I don't know where that is.

WB: Well, it's a little community out here east of Lufkin. But, anyhow she taught school out there and lived with a family named Gann and made \$25.00 a month. She... then in 1900 my Grandfather Burke, who was a Methodist minister, was assigned to the church at Burke. He had married a lady named Smith, Emma Louise Smith, the daughter of a plantation owner, first in Virginia and then in Missouri. She had had a college education before the Civil War, which, of course, was unusual. She could read and speak both Greek and Latin.

ML: Oh, my goodness.

WB: I never did know her but everybody talked about her because she was well known, a great reader of books. I still remember we had a big library in our house. Books and that was an important factor in the life of my family, plus the McCall's also had had the education in Mississippi. But my Grandfather Burke had no education. He married Emma Louise Smith and she taught him to be a minister and helped write his sermons. So they came to Burke and had other children and my mother met my father, Arthur Lee Burke, who was the son of James Dowing Burke and his wife, Emma Louise Burke. They married there in 1901 and then my father, Arthur Lee Burke and Daniel Bynum McCall went into partnership of McCall and Burke established a store there and they operated the store until my Grandfather McCall and his wife both died in 1927. My dad was killed in an accident in 1931. At that time, one of my aunts, Ina McCall who never married and who had been postmistress there for many years and had also worked in the store and the post office, was in the store. She continued to run the post office and the store until, oh, I can't remember the date now, probably sometime in the '50's. She had to retire and after that the post office was closed. I really tell you that so you can see what my background was. I was born the last of five children in our home at Burke. All of us were born at home. I was born there in January 30, 1916 and in 1923-24 before the present highway 59 or 35 either one was built, my oldest sister was teaching school in Diboll and she drove a T Model Ford from Burke to Diboll. My youngest sister, Louise, my brother after, next after Louise, James Burke and I rode in the car to Diboll to go to school down there and Oneta taught, that's the oldest, my older sister. We did that one year and prior to that the school at Burke had been a good school. It was part of the time such a good school that children would board in Burke and go to school at Burke. And it was quite a town before prohibition, my mother said it had four or five saloons and people didn't go out at night. You could hear people carousing at night, shooting off pistols and that sort of thing. I know my grandfather, who was the depot agent, had to meet the trains that came through there at night. The HE&WT Railroad, there were passenger trains met either there or in Lufkin at noon from going to Houston to Shreveport and also at night. He had to meet the night trains and he always wore a pistol for fear of being robbed, you know. He never was robbed but he was a good pistol shot. When we killed hogs in winter, he would shoot the hogs between the eyes with a pistol to kill them. Of course he was active in the Masons as was my father. In 1924 my father and mother were determined that all the children would have an education because neither one of them had finished grammar school: although mamma taught school. So we moved to Lufkin and my dad continued to commute back to Burke to run the store. Just to fill in without going into details, all the children went to college and all of us got degrees except my oldest sister. You know, you could go a year and get out and teach school and get a certificate and that's what she did, then she met the man she later married and started keeping house after two years of college and never did go back. So I continued to go to Burke and help out in the store until I left East Texas in 1935. My mother and my brother and I moved to Austin so my brother and I could finish college over there and I got a law degree and my brother got a degree in Petroleum Geology. Then we moved to Houston and lived there for a year and a half and then I moved back to Lufkin. I had an uncle here, Carmon Breazeale who had been defeated for the office of District Judge in 1940, he had served ten years. So I came back here and went into the Marine Corps, my wife and I married that year, I came back from the war. Got back in – about the first of '46 and ran for District Attorney and was

elected in three counties, served six years there. In '56 was running unopposed for District Judge through a man named R. E. Minton, who had been the attorney for the Southern Pine Lumber Company and Temple Industries for nearly fifty years. I came back, while I was District Attorney I officed with him because the county didn't furnish and office for me. Judge Minton had a son that I had been very close to before the war. He was a lawyer in Lufkin and he and I had gone to school some together, he got killed in World War II. So when I came back the Judge wanted me to – or invited me to come up there and sue his son's office, which I did. Of course, I paid my part of the rent and all. When the Judge decided to retire, he recommended me to Arthur Temple, the present Arthur Temple. We had a talk and worked out a satisfactory arrangement. I started representing Diboll and did that until I retired in '83, and now, of course, I am helping with the foundation. That is a sketch.

ML: What year was that when you first started working with the Temples?

WB: May 1956.

ML: And then you retired in what year?

WB: 1983.

ML: Okay, and since then you've been working with the foundation?

WB: Yes, as Executive Secretary and a trustee. Phillip M. Leach joined me as a lawyer in Diboll in 1959 and Arthur had us to do the legal work, start the foundation for Mrs. Munz in 1961. We drew up the papers, you know, the legal part and Arthur and W. Temple Webber, Sr. were advising and counseling with Mrs. Munz, their aunt, because she wanted to do this. They were her primary consultants, her husband was dead and she was the daughter of Mr. T. L. L. Temple who started the Temple Industries. So we did that legal work and I did, Phillip and I, have done all of the legal work for the foundation from that time until the present.

ML: Can you tell me Mr. Munz' first name?

WB: Georgia- Georgia Temple Munz and she married Harry Munz and he died and then she caused the foundation to be formed. During those years, 1956 until oh, almost until the time I retired, Phillip and I did most of the legal work for Mr. Webber, his family, and Arthur and his family. And a lot for Ann Allen and her family, Arthur's sister, and for Mr. and Mrs. Gregory. Mr. Webber's mother had been married twice, she married a Mr. Webber the first time, and she was a daughter of T. L. L. Temple, and her husband died, Mr. Webber died. And then she married Mr. Gregory and they had a very fine marriage and we did all of their legal work. So we weren't just strictly company lawyers. We had- we were responsible for the legal affairs but we couldn't possibly do them all. It was our job to do those things that we could best do and then employ outside lawyers to do specialized areas of work. The main reason they employed me, really, was to do land work because I had rather specialized in that, and Judge Minton was one of the best land

lawyers in East Texas, if not the best. He was a very outstanding lawyer. I say that in the sense of a man who really studied and knew the law. He, really, every bit of law he ever read, he briefed it and put it in a notebook.

ML: That's really something.

WB: He was tremendous. So I was fortunate in that- Phillip and I together were the chief legal assistance to Arthur and to Mr. Webber in all of their work and endeavors to build Southern Pine Lumber Company from an old typical East Texas sawmill, which I had been familiar with all my life, into what it is today.

ML: You saw some very interesting changes.

WB: And I still think it is difficult for people even after they read about it, to realize how difficult it was. And how it really, although they got help, it was really those two and that was Arthur and, I would say, secondly, Mr. Webber. Mr. Webber was older than Arthur, you know. He died two or three years ago.

ML: Yes, I was so sorry that—

WB: Well, he was, I thought it was the perfect team. Arthur is, by nature and talent which he developed, a true entrepreneur: a builder, a developer, you know, with vision and ideals and impetuosity. Mr. Webber had a very keen business mind. He was astute in making investments. He handled all the investments for the foundation and over the years he was living, of course, he and Arthur did it together, but mainly Arthur left that to Mr. Webber. He managed those investments from the time it was organized until he died and the foundation never lost any money on any stocks or bonds and never went down in value through all the vicissitudes of the stock market in all those years.

ML: An amazing thing to be able to say.

WB: Amazing.

ML: How many businesses do you think can say that? Any others that you know of?

WB: Not many. And, of course, so he kind of set the balance wheel with Arthur's ideas, Mr. Webber could kind of see how they could be effectuated business wise and financed and the economics of it and this is not criticism, Arthur, of course, didn't have a controlling interest in stock. But Mr. Webber, through his mother and his influence with Mrs. Munz and then Arthur's mother, who was a widow because, I believe Arthur's father died in 1952, that was about three-fifths, you see, of the total of Temple Industries. So with Mr. Webber speaking for himself and Mrs. Munz and Arthur, being able to speak for his mother and Ann, generally going with Arthur, they had enough stock to control the company. But they always wanted to be a family enterprise that people didn't get crossways with. So Arthur wanted all the family to be with him. He never tried to use the vote to keep any of the other family out of the business.

ML: A delicate balancing act, I imagine.

WB: He wanted them all involved. He wanted them all to finally support what he was doing. Mr. Peay was married to – married into the Temple family and Mr. Gregory, both of them were, I think, older than Mr. Webber. Both were very conservative, both of them had a fear from the Depression days, which I can relate to, I tend to have it, they had a fear, you know, that the company, that Arthur was going to bankrupt it. You know, they could see him spending all this money, which he did, to improve, enlarge and modernize, and it just scared them to death. So Arthur would go to great lengths to get along with them and pacify them. And not just like he could have. You know, “Yeah, we’ve got the votes, I don’t care whether you like it or not” he never did do that, he and Mr. Webber-

ML: Did you think that is one of the great strengths of their management policy?

WB: Oh yes.

ML: Well, I would like to hear anything else along those lines that you would care to talk about.

WB: Well, I can kind of maybe trace, I guess the minor points, everybody knows the overall development, you know, it is obvious. It has been written up many times. But Arthur’s philosophy was to, and this was always true of the Temple family and also of Arthur’s mother, Katherine Sage Temple, who was one of the most unusual women I ever knew. Of course, I was always kind of partial to her because her father was a lawyer and she always took up for lawyers. Sometimes lawyers get blamed more than, well-quite a lot, but anyhow, she always had a warm spot for lawyers. She was a very, very benevolent woman, and genuinely so in that I don’t know how many people she helped educate, that she helped and didn’t get any deduction.

ML: I have heard that, yes, amazing.

WB: She gave her money because she wanted to give it. If she got a tax deduction that was fine, if she didn’t, it didn’t make any difference. She worked at the Red Cross in Texarkana for years, went down to the office every day and sat there and worked, counseling people who were in need, just like she had to. So that background and Arthur’s father and his and old man T. double L. Temple, they were big believers in libraries, education and that sort of thing. Sort of like my family, I think, in that respect. So Arthur wanted the towns to improve, Diboll and Pineland, he wanted the people to take over the towns and run their own city government, own their own utilities, and I have heard him speak of this many times. He wanted to concentrate on building a business because he thought that was better for the company and the people both. We had to have an election to incorporate Diboll because it was not incorporated. It was just, they called it a town, but it was a company town. You’ve heard all about that. But the first election we had failed. People didn’t want a city, you know. They didn’t want to face paying taxes and running a city government, owning their utilities. They would rather the

company do it. They were used to it.

ML: They were too comfortable, huh?

WB: Yes, so we waited about a year and had another election and that time it finally passed.

ML: And what year was that, the second one?

WB: It was between 1956 and 1960, my files and legal department would show all that, but I can't remember those dates. But it was pretty soon after I went down there. We started working on it right after I got down there. After the city was organized, the city secretary was a lady that was working in some other part of the company down there and she officed upstairs in that building and we kept all the city records in our legal department. We were the city officers.

ML: Oh, I see. Well, you have come to a point that interests me. It's exactly this transition between what really ought to be called a feudal arrangement to modern-

WB: Oh yes, see, the company owned all the houses. It owned the water, the lights, the gas system, I don't believe they owned the – maybe by that time they had gone to TP&L [Texas Power and Light], but originally the company owned all the utilities, and you bought it from the company. The company had the company store and I've traded in that store many times, my dad's store in Burke accepted those, both the brass checks and later the paper checks, just like he did ordinary money and he never took them at a discount. A lot of people, you drew those, you know, as advances on your wages, a lot of people would not take those at face value. If an employee went to use them somewhere else they would have to discount them 10% or 20%. That later led into a lawsuit because the company tried to stop that practice. But my dad never did do that and they knew he didn't. So when he went down there, sometimes he would go down there and buy from them at wholesale to sell in our store because we didn't really compete with them. Three miles was like thirty miles in those days. Because the only road between Burke and Diboll was a dirt road and most people didn't have cars and three miles was too far.

ML: How far do you think people tried to spend that kind of money? Did they ever go to Lufkin and try to spend it or would that have been ridiculous?

WB: They did after, what was old Highway 35, was built through Burke and Diboll about the year 1923 or '24. My Grandfather McCall's house there in Burke, was on the east side of the T&NO [Texas and New Orleans] Railroad of HE&WT [Houston, East and West Texas] and our house was right across the highway on the west side, part of our house is still there. Then on back of our house was the cotton gin that ran three of four months. My dad bought the cotton there. Well, they wanted to build Highway 35 parallel with the railroad and there wasn't enough room between my grandfather's house and the railroad to build the highway so they had to condemn part of his land and move his house back. I remember moving, they put it on, you know rollers and rolled it back and put new

pillars under it. And it was a big house. It had about, of course a long hall down through the middle, and it had, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 – eight rooms that were big rooms, a back porch, a room for groceries in the back and inside bathroom and an outside cistern so the water could be moved inside the house plus and inside cistern built in the ground and the water off the roof ran into it and you got your drinking water out of it and you kept your catfish in it to eat the wiggletails.

ML: Yea, well, I've wondered why people still didn't use cisterns in East Texas, why go underground for water when there is so much coming down?

WB: Well, you don't know what is going to run in that cistern, they didn't bother about it, you did have a cut off, when it rained you let part of the water run off on the ground, and you had the roof kind of washed off then you flipped a little couplet inside the pipe and the water then ran into the cistern.

ML: If you weren't home when it started raining you might get your cistern messed up?

WB: Yes, you could. Once a year you drained it and cleaned it out. Went down and drew all the water out and went down in it, cleaned it out, got all the trash out and started all over again.

ML: Well, let me ask you...

WB: Let's go back –

ML: A little bit more about the...what I wanted to ask you was about the change that Arthur Temple was able to make from the feudal company town to a modern town with ownership of houses and ownership of utilities and tax paying, etc. People didn't take to it very kindly in the beginning but how did he promote the idea? Was it piece meal through gradual ownership of different things or was it a kind of a policy, an idea, a philosophy that he promoted?

WB: Well, he – it was his, I know his philosophy that the company ought to run it's business affairs and the people ought to run their personal lives the way they wanted to. He did not want to continue the old paternalistic system that had been inherent in sawmill operations in East Texas.

ML: Did he see that as being bad for business? The paternalistic approach?

WB: I think he thought it was bad for both business and the people. I have heard him talk about this because we discussed it in the days when he was trying to get it down. Some people thought it was a bad idea, they said “ Arthur, you know, these people, they form a city and then they pass tax laws and you don't know who is going to be on the city commission and they might levy pretty heavy taxes, you know, on the businesses.” You know, his position was – well, the taxes are going to be equal and uniform, you know, if they make taxes high on values that they are obligated to do under the law, well, the rates

are the same on a house as they are on our mill and said, "We can't complain but I don't believe people are going to put a business out of business that is supporting the town and the people. He was willing to take that risk.

ML: And he turned out to be right, didn't he?

WB: Oh yes. And then of course, he had already started long before I went down there, which for sawmill people in East Texas was new. I can't say that we were the first to do it, but you know, he started a retirement plan and health plan and there was no union in there forcing him. I'm sure it was partially, you might say, some selfishness. I don't think it is selfish to try to use good business practices. Sure you are trying to improve your business and he wanted his employees well paid. He tried to pay wages on merit basis. He wanted to raise the wages, he wanted the people to have health benefits and retirement benefits but he didn't want to run their lives. Of course, he did the same thing at Pineland. Pineland was already a town but he did the same thing over there because we handled all the legal work over there, also. We did all the legal work for the two cities as just part of our duties for the company, we did that, too. So he had already closed out the commissary before I went to Diboll. He had already gotten out of the grocery business because the commissary was our office building. That is where we officed. And.....

ML: Did I tell you I was over there the other day and had a look at some of those records that are up in the top floor? It was an awful experience, it was mid-summer oh, and there were rats, and no lights and it was hot, it was just terrible. But there is a lot of work to be done up there in those records.

WB: Oh yes, yes, there sure is. Well, to kind of go forward, we – the city was formed, of course. I can't remember all the minute details but for very nominal consideration, mostly gifts, Arthur turned over the water system and the gas distribution system. I believe we were already out of the electrical business. I believe TP&L was already handling that. Then about the same time he was concentrating on the housing situation and out west of Diboll was what was called quarters. I know you have heard all about it but they were nothing in the world but about the worst type of slums you could imagine because they were old shotgun houses, five or six feet apart with a pit type privy out back and, maybe a hydrant down at the end of the block or street, and I can remember driving through the quarters going fishing when I was a boy with my father and uncles. We thought nothing about it, you know. Our houses weren't much better, you know. It just didn't make any impression on me, that bad a living conditions but, of course, it was, single floors, single walls and, you know, most of them pretty dirty. And Arthur was determined to get rid of that and we started looking for legal and financial ways for people to buy homes or get better homes. And so we did the work and formed the Diboll Housing Authority, which was created under laws passed by the Texas legislation back in the Depression years. And started getting homes and building houses and I'll try to stay out of the legal angle of a lot of things, but we formed another corporation called Diboll Housing Foundation. It was built to try to take advantage of some federal laws to build low cost houses and then the laws were changed before we could – and it wasn't as effective as we thought it would be. And when – this was blacks and whites both. It was just not possible for those people

to get home loans with private institutions---savings and loans and banks and insurance companies. The money they were making, their credit records. We tried it, the only way you could get the loan was if the company endorsed the notes. Well, the company couldn't do that, I mean, legally. Legally we couldn't do it but Arthur was trying to build a good balance sheet and to get all that debt, the balance sheets would have just, it would have stifled the building he was doing and the business side of it, which he was doing constantly. He was engaged in modernizing the plants in Diboll. They started the fiberboard plant while I was there. He was doing the same thing at Pineland and there wasn't anyway we could finance all that. So the Housing Foundation was the next thing we tried. When the first group of houses were finished and he told people "You've got to move over there." They would still be renting because they couldn't buy. A few of them bought and then literally went out there, I mean Arthur had the houses bulldozed down and burned, most of them. A few that were, could be used were sold if people wanted to buy them and move them somewhere. You know, people would want to move them out in the country for a barn or something. The majority he just had them bulldozed down and had them burned. Had a big bonfire and we had to, under some government programs, we organized classes to teach the people how to live in a modern house. You are moving people out of a house with no plumbing in it, well, one bulb electricity, no air conditioning, nothing, single floors where sweeping didn't do any good so you didn't sweep. Now you have moved them in the houses with attic fans, commodes, running water, painted walls and windows that worked, all that. They didn't know how to take care of them. So you've got to teach them and we had classes to teach those people how to take care of them and live in those houses.

ML: Did both men and women come to those classes?

WB: Yes, we had night classes.

ML: My goodness, that is something to think about.

WB: Oh yes, there is no use, you know, you really can't – I know from the way I was reared, the reason I told you something about my family. They had some background, we were fortunate. I'm not bragging, I don't want you to think I am ever bragging on my ancestors in the sense that I deserve any credit for it.

ML: No, I don't think that.

WB: A lot of people, you know, they want to brag about their ancestors. Well, if I want to honor my ancestors I have to do better than they did.

ML: Yes, that's just the way I feel, too.

WB: So, you know, I'm not telling that to say "Look at me, I had some great ancestors."

ML: I never thought that for a minute, I sure didn't.

WB: Well, anyhow that – but, you know, there were just a lot of things people don't know and they don't think about it and you've got to give them some guidance.

ML: Yes, that really is true.

WB: No, I remember Vernon Burkhalter telling me that after people moved into the better housing and, as a result of those problems, he sensed a better attitude on the job and he knew his absenteeism dropped.

ML: Uh huh, very interesting. Well, I'm going to be talking to him, I just talked to him on the phone this morning; we haven't caught up with each other yet.

WB: Yes, you sure need to talk to Vernon now, he has lived with it. He really knows the handling of the people and all better than I do but he and I worked together on a lot of things.

ML: I'll catch up with him next week.

WB: So, after we kind of got those things straightened out, of course, Arthur was trying to diversify both at the mill and in other places because the lumber business has always been a cyclical business. You know, you have your peaks and then it will go down and there is nothing you can do about it. You know, if they are not building houses you can't sell 2" x 4"s. There's just no market and so you can't make any money. And a lot of the logs were being wasted which hadn't mattered in the early days logging, but it did matter in the modern era so, of course, they had a handle plant that moved in before I did, Temple-White, to use part of the trimmings. Use those trimmings and just regular lumber they'd cut and sell to Temple-White if they couldn't use it for anything else. Also due to the cheapness in gas we changed from wood fired boilers to gas fired boilers and that is skipping ahead, but now you see, we had to go back the other way. Gas got high, we transformed those boilers back to burn wood waste and Love Wood Products used some of the sawdust. The fiberboard plant used chips and then the particleboard used a different type of chip. In all of that the type of lumber that had earlier been left over to sell to Temple-White could no longer be sold that way. It wasn't profitable and Temple-White had to start getting its raw material from Central and South America. So things, you see, are constantly shifting and changing. Of course, they started the Creosote Plant up there to widen the market. The same type of things were going on at Pineland and I remember there were a lot of arguments back there about closing Pineland. That everything that could be done there could be done in Diboll, that that was going to be terrifically expensive and really might not be economically feasible. And Arthur and I and some others went over there usually every Monday, spent Monday and Monday night over there and Tuesday to look, work on Pineland affairs and then we would be in Diboll the rest of the week. Because Arthur always wanted to be there and see what was going on. I mean, actually going through the mill and talking to people and getting the feel of what was going on out there. He didn't rely on what somebody told him, he wanted to go see it for himself.

ML: He was like his father and his grandfather in that, wasn't he?

WB: Oh, yes.

ML: Didn't they both do that a lot?

WB: Oh yes, I understand. Of course, I didn't know either one of them. I never met Arthur's father, but one of the things, of course, was privy to some of the discussions that kept pineland open, was not economic reasons but the fact that Arthur said there were too many people over there depending on us and we are not going to get up and move off and leave them unless we have to. And that was quite a consideration and I think, from what I read in the papers, a lot of companies don't feel that way any more.

ML: I've rarely heard of one that does.

WB: But that was a major factor in all of that.

ML: I see – well, what about this new mill at Evadale, what kind of company presence because of the papermill over there, etc, has there been for very many years or is it much more recent?

WB: I couldn't - I really don't have any background to speak about that. That was all planned, developed and instituted since I left down there, so you know, I wouldn't know. But I just think it is, as far as I know, my connection with the company all these years, it's just a continuation of the philosophy of the company to build and expand and search out new ways of improving the company and, hopefully, improving it's profits. And so it's...I don't consider it anything out of character or out of line to what they have always done. In those years we were building, you know. We brought in a plant called Tex-Lam that built those arches out of pine, used for churches, etc. It didn't do well, eventually didn't make it. Then, of course, we merged with Temple Associates which was another of Arthur's independent construction firms which he had started before he went back to the company as president when his father died. He was already operating Temple Associates, a general contractor firm. But in-of course, obviously Arthur knew that he – because of tax consideration and because of estate planning to keep the family from taking some big losses when some of them died with stock that they wouldn't be able to sell at a good price, he knew sooner or later obviously that the company was going to be sold or liquidated or something. The question was, do you just sell out, try to get a good price and sell and you pay a horrendous tax, or do you try to work out a merger where you get stock that is saleable and you don't pay a tax at that point? And if you do that, "Do you do it so you lose all control?" Or "Do you do it in such a way that you end up with some control?" And that's the kind of things that he and Mr. Webber were weighing. So everything they were doing was to get the company; they obviously decided they weren't going to sell out. They didn't want just to sell out for cash. There's been a lot of facets to that. So they bought Woodward Furniture Company in Austin. They bought Texas Gypsum Company that was in El Paso and we moved it to Dallas and then we got the mine in Oklahoma with it and then we closed the Dallas plant and moved it to west

Memphis because that is a better market, closer to the markets there. They bought AFCO [Angelina Furniture Company], which they still have.

ML: What is AFCO?

WB: It is a specialty company that basically sells products that are used in home improvement markets mostly by people who want to do their own improvements and refurbishing and that sort of thing. Sells things like paneling with so you could put in your own bathtub, own shower and put in the paneling yourself and all that sort of thing. All types of self help materials that you could use for home improvements. They were in Alexandria, Louisiana and in Houston. We merged with them or acquired them, of course. We bought Chattanooga Container Company in Chattanooga and then, of course, we closed plants, closed out some companies and there was a constant movement of buying and acquiring or consolidating in an effort to get the best economical mix and also to drop things that were no longer profitable and get into the diversified lines where this things wouldn't be so hard on you. We acquired LIC [Lumberman's Investment Company] which is now the financial end of the company that bought the insurance company. LIC was owned by the Lumberman of Texas, originally established it. They had a lot of shareholders. Then over the years Arthur and Temple acquired all that stock so they ended up owning the company because he saw the possibility of mortgage banking tying into the lumber business. So we did all that, of course, changed the name of Southern Pine Lumber Company to Temple Industries Inc., in about '62 or '63. Also, of course, started beefing up the change in the sales department and so we could improve sales and have some sales force nationwide. Got into, we used to make seats – Temple seats – toilet seats, got out of that business. The first particleboard plant was built at Pineland and we got it from a Switzerland firm and they agreed to build it, to erect it in Switzerland. We'd go over there to inspect it, to see if it met our specifications. If it didn't, we didn't pay for it. Then they further agreed to bring it over here.

ML: Bring the whole plant?

WB: Take it – disassemble it, bring it over here, reassemble it and operate it to our satisfaction before we had to make the final payment and they did it.

ML: Wow, that's wonderful.

WB: I still remember the man they sent over here. I liked him. They didn't bring a bunch of lawyers or anything like that. He could speak some English. He was a very fine engineer and I guess from a practical side fixed some contract ability and he handled all the legal work.

ML: Perfect – lovely. Well, speaking of mergers would you mind talking about the Time merger.

WB: No, you know, there was one ahead of that that was with Champion International it was then.

ML: Tell me about that one first.

WB: Well, the two companies started talking about a merger and, of course, Champion International, let's see, was that the correct name? No, it was something else – Champion and another large company had merged and they had a little of both names. Well, I can't remember, but they were, of course, a huge company. They were – we would have been a drop in the bucket. If the merger had been consummated the controlling interest of the merged companies would have had complete control over the Temple interest. The Temple family interest would not have been large enough that they would have had any impact on ultimate control. Now of course, they would have agreed to have put Arthur, Mr. Webber and maybe two or three on their board, but it would have been strictly, you know, whether they wanted to or not. They could put them on there one year and drop them later. There was no way we would have the leverage from stock ownership. We were too small. It's doubtful if, and I'm just speculating now, but from what I knew it was extremely doubtful that Diboll would have continued to exist as a viable manufacturing center.

ML: Really? How interesting!-

WB: The Company was too large. They would have – they might have continued the mills there and they might not. And you have to remember now at that time we didn't have Evadale and the papermill. That came from the Time part. We only have about 500 thousand acres and the plants at Diboll, Pineland and some of these other smaller ones that I mentioned. And they were, I forget the comparative size, but they were so much larger than Temple Industries that, you know, they would have just swallowed us up. But, of course, we worked on it for about a year and they never would pay what Arthur thought the company was worth in stock. Everything else was done but that. We had all the merger papers finished except price. And that finally broke down so the deal didn't go through. So it went from there and Arthur and I – how those talks started I don't know, but he started talking about Time which, to me, was and, knowing something about the companies that were available, I don't think we could have found a better merger partner. It was the only one that really fit what Arthur wanted, and I think it was a good merger at the time. Of course, it was friendly, it was not a takeover because they had roughly 500 thousand acres of land, they had a papermill and that was the key element that really Temple needed. And Arthur had been trying to build a papermill for years. It was the ultimate element that you needed for a good viable forest products company because it gave you an entirely different type of market for paper. In fact Arthur had hired engineers, etc., to plan a plant to be located at what we call Boggy Slough in Trinity County.

ML: I've heard about that one.

WB: We did all the work necessary. It took us years, to get all the permits we needed from the authorities for the use of water and discharge of water. We got the permit to impound the water we needed. We got the permit and this had to be based on finished

engineering plans and specifications so the state could see that we could purify the water, the outfall, so it would not pollute the Neches River because that was where the water would go all the time. And we finally got all of those permits and had them in hand, plus we had satisfied ourselves we could get the – I don't believe we had to get the air pollution controls permits in advance, but we also knew we could do those so it was a matter of financing and that was the big hurdle. Temple Industries was just not able to do the financing. It cost too much to build the plant. So the merger with Time, they already had a papermill, you see, at Evadale and the Time management in New York was still basically oriented toward what they do, and was what I think they do well, magazines. And they wanted to go into TV and all the other things in their line of business. They had, they didn't have any echelons of management down here that they could look to to carry on the mill. They had good top management but they didn't have any backups and they didn't want to do it. Of course, we had, not expertise in running a papermill but we had expertise in all other areas of it and they knew Arthur's ability to run any type of manufacturing plant. They knew he could oversee it and he could get the people to do it and he would know if they were doing it right. Of course, it got them additional forest lands for their paper mills, got us additional forest lands for logs for our type of plants and the stock we could get in exchange to the Temple family pretty well assured them of a significant impact on time after the merger because the total percentage of stock, and the family stock would all, there was no agreement to do so but they were all going to pretty well stay with Arthur because it was a good deal. Altogether the family would have something like 18 or 19% of stock in Time and in a big company like Time, that is significant from the standpoint of management, it doesn't have to be 50%. So it was worked out and done and it was an excellent transaction from the standpoint of the Temple family, from the standpoint of East Texas, from the standpoint of the employees. Nobody lost any jobs over it and in most mergers, particularly where, even where they are friendly, there are a lot of jobs lost; people can say all they want to, "It doesn't change" it changes and there were some changes. But I don't think there were two jobs lost over that. When their senior management down there retired, got to the age and they were already close to it, why we were ready to move people in there, like now, they have David Ashcraft down there, excellent manager at the papermill. I know David well. Time pretty well left the running and management of the area down here to Arthur and the people down here, because they didn't have that expertise. You know, the Time stock, I had - there were tremendous changes in technology pertaining to communications, video and the whole shebang. It was almost dramatic as the change from wagons to automobiles. So Time needed tremendous capital for their own operations. Temple-Eastex and Temple-Inland needed tremendous capital for the forest products, their development. And they were so diverse that I can see that Time finally said "You know, it just doesn't make sense for us to continue this way and as long as our shareholders get the stock in a spinoff, the shareholders haven't lost anything." People forget that the owners or the corporation are the shareholders. They think of Time as this here, you know, it got rid of what is known as Temple-Inland. What Time did, but the Time did, but the Time shareholders didn't, they still – after the spin-off the Time shareholders owned exactly what they owned before the spin-off, only –

ML: We do tend to forget that, don't we?

WB: Oh yes, and it gave the shareholders more freedom. Some people, investors, do not want to be investors in forest product companies. They do want to be investors in a company like Time, and where Time is in both, well, they say “The heck with that, I want to get in this new technology and I want to be with a company that that’s what it is doing.” So I think – and so us people who were originally with Temple-Eastex I think we are doubly fortunate. We have Time stock, have Temple-Inland stock, if you don’t like being with Temple-Inland, you sell your Temple-Inland stock. If you don’t like being with Time, you sell your Time stock and you still have your Temple-Inland stock. Everybody’s got a bigger choice and – so you know, when I looked back over it, it was a very education experience and, frankly, Megan, I didn’t foresee all of this back there when we were doing all of the work in expansion in the ‘60’s but Phillip and I, having the unique position of being lawyers, of doing both the family’s affairs and the company’s affairs and no conflict, we didn’t have to do anything that was illegal, under the table or anything, I don’t mean that. And then we were, had to be and did, and studied and learned expertise in the tax field, both from the standpoints of corporations and individuals. Phillip was particularly a – well, he just had a mind for taxation. One of the best lawyers in that respect that I knew. Well, we could – we soon learned what the reasons were and what needed to be done. You could foresee, you know, what was – the remarkable thing is, not being a lawyer, Arthur knew all of this and he didn’t learn it from us, now we helped. You know, he was in the business world. He was in these trade associations. He saw how things operated and he knew where he had to go. And he chalked out his path and knew how to get and use good people. But I guess, and I know, this has all been said too much. But I still don’t think sometime that even people pretty close to him don’t realize really the significance of what he and Mr. Webber did and how unique it was, considering the background it came out of. It’s just – it’s the only forest industry left anywhere in Texas that still got a strong control from the founders in that business back in 1894. They were- oh, at one time there were five hundred sawmill companies operating in Texas and big ones, they were bigger than Southern Pine. Kirby Lumber Company was a lot bigger, Lutch Moore, they were a lot bigger and a lot older. The Thompson Brothers, The Grogans, Frost-Johnson, they had the same opportunity the Temples did, but they either sold out or cut out or Mr. John Henry Kirby went into bankruptcy. I don’t think he did it necessarily. The financial interest that foreclosed on John Henry Kirby, I think, made a mistake during the Depression. They got scared and foreclosed on him. And Kirby Lumber Company, in bankruptcy, paid off every creditor. Everybody got their money in full and they would have got it without putting him in bankruptcy. But out of all that background and all, the Temples were the only one that maintained and held on and finally worked out to where it is now. They are not the owners of Temple-Inland. I recognize that, but they will have an influence on it and the foundation will influence East Texas, my goodness, for a hundred years. There is no telling what changes it will make, because we will be spending – we’ll be giving away an average of four million dollars a year, just in this East Texas Pineywoods.

ML: Well, before we talk some more about the foundation could we take a little break?

WB: Sure.

WB: It is significant about Arthur's character and it's kind of an interesting story and kind of illustrates the way he works. One of the banks we did business with was Southern National in Houston and this was in – again I have trouble with the dates, probably in the '60's when we were trying to expand. A man named Wilbur Clarke from, I believe, Las Vegas, was a hotel builder. He was going to build three hotels in Texas: in Austin, Corpus Christi and Clear Lake, that's the space center. He got part of his financing from Southern National Bank for the Austin hotel. We owned land in Corpus Christi where the Holiday Inn is now, which was the hotel he built in Corpus Christi under a lease agreement with us. We were going to build the building and lease it to him. I'm cutting through all the corporate stuff, I'm just saying "us" meaning Temple-Eastex, Scotch Investment Company, a subsidiary. We weren't connected with the one in Austin, which is now the Crest Hotel, there at the end of Congress on the river. At about the time that the construction of all the hotels was completed, Wilbur Clarke died with a heart attack and it developed that his great financial house was a "house of cards." There was no money when he died.

ML: And no one knew it until then, huh?

WB: No one knew it. Well, the people who were going to furnish the financing, the long term on the hotel in Austin, I'll just keep it to that, reneged and said we are not going to renew the loan. Southern National was left holding the interim financing with a hotel on their hands, you know, and they did not want a hotel. They wanted their money and there wasn't much of a market for that hotel. It was going to be sold on a Tuesday morning at a public auction in Austin. They called Arthur desperately in need of some kind of help. Anyway you can help us. Arthur said, "Well, I'll go over there tonight and look into it and I'll let you know tomorrow." And he called me – he said "We're going to Austin, we are going to fly to Austin and I want you to check the title out tonight to see if we can get good title at the foreclosure sale." I knew a title company there so I got access to their records, so they pulled all the cards and the next morning I told Arthur "We may get in a law suit but I think we'll get good title." He told Southern National – said "You bid it in and if it isn't too high, I'll take it off your hands provided you finance it." "But I'll make you a good deal on it, no interest and all that." They had people there in Austin. They had a couple of vice presidents, an accountant and a lawyer and everything else. So, they bid it in, then we worked out the deal to buy it from them. Wilbur had had a partner in Austin and, of course, he tried to make some trouble, we had problems with him. The company that had done all the furnishing, all the furniture, all the drapes, all the carpets, everything did not have their lien recorded, so we didn't owe them one cent.

ML: They just hadn't had it recorded?

WB: Wilbur Clarke had talked them out of it. You know, I need to keep your lien off the record until I can be sure that my permanent financier has got a first lien. Now this wasn't, he wasn't being exactly honest, that could have been handled either way but, anyway the foreclosure sale wiped out, you see, all the creditors – no creditors. And the man at the furniture company, they had, now I forget now, I think it was six or seven

hundred thousand dollars worth of stuff in that hotel. They came down to see Arthur at the hotel; we stayed over there about a week, had so much trouble. And they came to see Arthur about it and told him their predicament and Arthur and I then met in another room and he says "Ward, what's the legal situation?" I said, "Arthur, they are wiped out." I said "They can sue Wilbur Clarke's estate and get whatever they can." Of course, he was bankrupt and I said, "They can't touch the hotel and they can't touch us, they have been wiped out." He said, "Well, I'm not going to do that," said "If we can make a deal with them I'm going to pay them for the stuff but I'm not going to pay them the kind of profit they were going to make, probably 50%" and he said "Well, let's get with them then, if they will finance it at prime rate over a period of five years and I'll agree for them to have the usual customary profit in the trade." And I forgot what it was, maybe 10%. But he called them and told them he would do that. So we did, fixed up the papers, signed them and paid them off.

ML: I'll bet they were overjoyed.

WB: Oh yes, and – but Arthur would drive good hard bargains and all that, but when I, you know, a person in the business world will do that, you know they are honest.

ML: Here's my question about liquor and land that I have to be sure that I get asked because I got a phone call last night from someone who knew I was going to see you today and she especially wanted me to ask this question. It is Marie Davis who has been one of the mainstays of the project. She has seen some deed papers from the original Diboll and she was concerned about a restriction that was in those papers, you're grinning so you know what it is.

WB: I know all about it.

ML: Okay, well, I'll just open up and you tell the story because wasn't there originally a restriction that no liquor could ever be sold on this land?

WB: That's right. Through the Diboll family, they called it "Deboll," we call it "Diboll" in East Texas, but they were French and a lot of the family still lives in New Orleans.

ML: As a matter of fact I have been to New Orleans to interview Collin Deboll and...

WB: Collin was

ML: So I have a bunch of material from him.

WB: Okay, in – they were teetotalers and in a lot of the deeds to the land in and around Diboll, not all of it, you have to get a map to see. But oh, four or five hundred acres had that restriction; liquor could never be sold on that land.

ML: Where would I get such a map?

WB: Dennis Maynard, in the land and timber. He is thoroughly familiar with it. He know as much about those land titles as any lawyer living.

ML: Okay, go on.

WB: But he has – he would be able to show you exactly a map that shows which areas had the liquor restrictions because he and I worked together on it. Had some awfully good people, you know, in the company, Megan, that just did tremendously good jobs. But, you know, Arthur couldn't know. He had a concern for his people but he couldn't know a lot of people. He knows – knew Dennis, but that Dennis Maynard – a person who knew more about their records in land and timber was Kenneth Nelson –

ML: I talked with him the last few weeks. He is astonishing.

WB: Oh, that man, if you could just, I knew a lot of people he had – particularly the Kenleys, and I don't know how the man did what he did. Just have no ideas you can't put in words what he must have put up with. But you know, sawmill days are literally daylight till dark, six days a week and I mean that went on day in and day out and, of course, in those earlier years it was \$1.00 a day. Tough, but anyhow, that is in the deed restrictions and when we were trying to do the public housing and get loans, that showed up, of course. It was dangerous in the title, so we got abstracts on it and I did all the examination and determined which tracts were restricted and which were not. Then we got the complete history down to the date of the Diboll family and then we prepared documents releasing those restrictions and explained to them why, you know, it wasn't that we intended to go down there and sell liquor. It's a dry county anyhow. But, you know, it was going to absolutely stymie progress in Diboll. You know, you couldn't do anything with that land, the people just wouldn't take the chance. And certainly no loan institution is going to loan you money with that kind of restriction.

ML: So it was in the early '50's when you prepared these papers?

WB: No, it was late '50's or early '60's. You see, I had just got down there in '56. So I circulated and all the family signed it and we got a release so they are no longer in effect. And we did it for the entire tracts of land, not just for land the company still owned because some of it had been sold. When we started all of our public housing and that sort of thing, you see, we tried to open up areas where people would buy their homes and we allowed them, there were a lot of pretty good homes that the company owned in the main part of Diboll that we didn't destroy. I'm talking about the ones we destroyed earlier, just over in the quarters, which were mainly the black people. So there were a lot of good homes that the company was selling off and a lot of them owned land that had the restriction. So the company didn't still own all this land but we got the restrictions lifted as to the entire tracts that were restricted. So all of those have been released; they are no longer in effect.

ML: One of the things Marie asked was "Did the lift of the restrictions have anything to do with the establishment – I don't know what they call it, an establishment called The

Family Affair or was that a completely separate event?

WB: Had nothing to do with it.

ML: Had nothing to do with it.

WB: No, that was established – I remember when it was established, that was long after we did all – what I am talking about, regardless of what people think, you can go back and check the dates but, you know, whether that happened or not had nothing to do with our thinking. It was strictly from the standpoint all of the opportunity to build Diboll in the areas where those restrictions existed just mean that there would be no, I mean just simple homes because you couldn't get loans. Nobody, - nobody, savings and loans or anything else is going to lend money on property where the title can be lost by somebody selling liquor.

ML: Yes.

WB: So it – and this involved, I forget how much, but I'm sure it was about two or three, four hundred acres, you know, that would be more land than there is in Diboll.

ML: Yes, what a snarl that would have been!

WB: Oh yes, I had had some – I think I knew about the restriction before that because I had been, you know, doing land work, land title work in Angelina County for years. I had done more land work than anything else except when I was District Attorney. I knew of the restriction from some of the clerks. I had run across it previously and just didn't – but it had never been worthwhile doing anything about it. But after we got into it for the company we had to do something about it. And Collin's family, the Diboll family were very – they always took pride in Diboll and were always easy to work with. The work we did on the heirship helped them because they leased a lot of their manvils at various times and all of that heirship information was put in records here in the county and it helped them when they wanted to make oil leases. All that information was available for the oil companies and they didn't have to do all that work over again because we showed the complete family history of record here at the Court House by affidavits.

ML: Oh, a lot of work.

WB: It sure was, all of it was a lot of work.

ML: Well, let's make sure we don't miss talking about your school days in Diboll, because you said you would never forget that. Do you want to talk about that a little bit?

WB: Well, it was – the children in Diboll, I don't guess, I don't think any children are mean in the sense of meanness like an adult but I would say the – of course, I was raised doing farmwork and that sort of thing, you know, and we worked all of our lives, but it was a new experience – those children in Diboll were, I think, fighting was a way of life.

They were – I know that the Principal of the school was Henry Stegall and he would come through the classrooms periodically to see if the teachers were having trouble with any of the students. If they reported someone to him he would turn them over the front seat and he carried a sort of rubber tube. They said he had chalk in it. I don't know about that, and he would lay it on them right there in front of the class. You might be sitting, it might be your desk if you were sitting on the front row that somebody was leaning across and screaming in your face while he was whipping them. I remember a lot of the people in the class with me down there. But every day or two you were going to have a fight with somebody and you had better know who was brother to whom because if you were fighting one of the brothers you were going to have the other brother jump on you at the same time. I don't remember anybody getting hurt particularly bad, but I think it was just halfway a way of entertainment. Just tended to get in fights.

ML: But it was different than it was in Burke?

WB: Well, you see, I never did go to school in Burke.

ML: Oh so you are not sure whether maybe it was the same in Burke, too?

WB: I doubt it, the first year I went, I went to a class with five other boys that my aunt was teaching in her home, for some reason or other. She wasn't teaching school that year; she taught school for fifty years in East Texas and Louisiana in a variety of place, ended up teaching in Lufkin. But that year she wasn't teaching for some reason. So the first year that – my folks didn't think the school there at Burke, they they thought it had really gone down, so we went to her every day and she taught us everything in the first grade so I was in the second grade at Diboll. It was quite – well, it was sure different than going to school with six, in the confines of my aunt's house.

ML: Well, as far as educational aspirations of kids growing up and going through the school system in Diboll, do you think that there was a lot of aspirations to get away from East Texas and go and get a better education someplace or was the aspiration to stay in this are?

WB: Well, you see, of course, Megan, I moved to Lufkin when I was starting the third grade and I really didn't have a lot of contact with Diboll after that. Yes, there were because there were a number, like the Nelsons, you see, they commuted to Lufkin to school. Kenneth and his brother and three or four other people and then there was the Dubose family out East of Diboll that commuted to Lufkin. Yes, there were people that had aspirations for a good education. They knew how important it was. They understood that you just had to be able to read and write. There was a time, which I think was pretty unusual now, you're talking about in the '20's and '30's that people were commuting in automobiles to go to high school.

ML: Yes, astonishing.

WB: But see, that paved highway was put in there in 1924 and that also was the demise

of small towns like Burke and my father's store was already going down before the Depression. The Depression wiped him out because he was buying cotton – plus he carried all the farmers from spring until the crops were gathered. It is hard to imagine that literally thousands of acres around here now where you see timber, was cotton and corn fields and we picked cotton and there were a lot of gins. There was one at Burke that ran day and night, and as I say, it was right behind our house. It ran day and night for a couple of months.

ML: Did you personally pick cotton?

WB: Oh yes, we raised cotton. My dad raised cotton as well as running that store and he did a lot of things. Raised cotton, ran the store, bought and loaded cross ties on railroad cars for shipment. And so he and, of course, the Depression hit in '29 and that fall he was buying cotton and he was paying 29 cents a pound, I mean 25 cents, that's \$125.00 a bale. He customarily stored it in Houston. I cleaned up some of his business affairs, believe it or not, from the store that my aunt continued after I was practicing law in Diboll with some of the storage houses in Houston. And he paid storage and then sold it because usually the price would go up in the spring because most of the crops were sold in the fall. There was no government support. It was strictly free market and he would sell in the spring and get his money and maybe a little more than what he had paid for it. Well, of course, in the fall of '29 the price went to a nickel a pound.

ML: Yes, I heard that from so many people.

WB: Well, he had all that he had taken in, part of it he had taken in on debts, you see, that they owed him and I don't know how many hundred bales, and he had a good many hundred bales suddenly reduced in price from \$125.00 to \$25.00 and he couldn't even pay the storage. So he lost everything. It just about cleaned him out.

ML: Did just about all the cotton producers in this area go down at the time of the Depression?

WB: Oh yes, oh yes, you just can't imagine how bad it was. You know, people can't picture that, Megan, because they started when things were – I forget which year they started issuing surplus commodities just to keep people alive. They handled – they used our store as one of the storage places and they would store them in the back of the store – and it was cornmeal and bacon and beans.

ML: Salt bacon so it didn't have to be refrigerated?

WB: Oh yes, they didn't have refrigerators, of course, we all used smoke houses. You know, people I had known who had for East Texas, you know, they made a living, farming, there would be some people who worked hard, didn't make any money but they wouldn't come in the front of the store to get those commodities. They'd go around to the back. They were ashamed to come in there and get them, but they were starving. People would say, you know, they could do something, well, you know, you can raise some

vegetables and you can raise some cows and chickens without any feed, you won't get many eggs and you won't get much butter and milk but what are you going to do for shoes, clothes and salt and pepper and coffee? You know, I was in the midst of it, I was there in our store and we would sell a little stuff along. My aunt would and sold most of it on credit, didn't get a lot of it back but – they couldn't raise cotton, you can't raise cotton, even then, buy seed, and they used even little fertilizer even then and even if you did it all within the family, you couldn't raise much more than forty acres of cotton, it was hard then if you had your wife and man working, maybe a couple of kids you could maybe handle forty acres of cotton but that was about all. So it was really, I think a lot of people, they just can't realize and really there's no way you can put it in words, but the people were just – the government had to do something. We were on starvation.

ML: Well, when the woods grew up again on top of the cotton fields was there planting or was it just what naturally grew around here?

WB: Mostly it was what grew. But they didn't start planting until many years after that.

ML: That's what I had thought.

WB: Oh yes, no, it just, of course, you know the Temples had always thought that pine timber would grow back and it could be reharvested. One reason they held on to their lands. So many of them thought to cut out and get out which was the old philosophy, which they did. Well, Mr. Temple didn't believe that – understand, I didn't know him, but I understand he was that way about a lot of things. He didn't believe in selling anything, but when he bought something he believed in holding on to it. But, of course, they were pioneers in perpetual yield and that sort of thing but in those years, in the '30's and '40's people just left. They couldn't farm, and then, of course, when the war came plants opened up on the gulf coast; people that didn't go to war just flocked, if you look at the Almanac of Texas, the census in those years – in the '30's the population of these counties plummeted down.

ML: I've seen that in so many little towns that I have looked up, they have gone from several thousand to a few individuals just suddenly. It's amazing!

WB: The whole county did that. Then after the war, see people didn't come back and the economy here didn't get good until, oh, in the '60's. The late '40's and '50's were not good years.

ML: Well I've got something I want to ask you about the

WB: All right.

ML: The company and what it did during the Depression – I would – if I can just stop the tape for a minute and tell you – give you an update on our publishing plans?

WB: All right.

WB: I'm not sure but our next door neighbor at Burke, just a fence between us and about thirty feet between the houses, like everybody else there. In the back of our houses we had a chicken house and barns and cattle and horses. All of that you know, and out houses and didn't worry too much about sanitation. But old man I. D. Clarke, he was Justice of the Peace and he also peddled in Diboll. Mostly in the quarter, and he had a son named Claude, part of it – I don't remember – I remember the last part of it but Claude and his dad owned some land down south of Diboll and I forget who it was they had. The son, Claude, got crossways someway down there about land line or crossing his land or something. Claude shot this man down there and killed him and Claude got sent to the penitentiary and he came back and – part of this my mother told me, she wasn't afraid of Claude, he – I don't think he was going to hurt anybody but he would come over and play with my brother and I. Mama thought he was pretty rough. He was a grown man and, of course, we were boys and he had already been to the pen and Mama was, you know, preferred he wouldn't come in the house but she wasn't going to say that, we could – being our neighbor's son. He went to Diboll on his dad's, I. D. Clarke's, peddling days and Mr. Clarke went by the icehouse to get ice and we did that also. My dad would go to Diboll and get three or four hundred pounds; he had built a big icebox to keep it in – and Mr. Clarke had stopped his buggy and was getting his ice and his boy was sitting in the buggy and the father of the man he had killed, shot him and killed him.

ML: Oh, my goodness.

WB: And I do remember that because I remember Mrs. Clarke coming over to our house, you know, crying and upset when Mr. Clarke brought the boy's body in the buggy from Diboll. You know, it's things like that that you remember a whole lot. Mr. Clarke was a quite a character – I don't think he had any grandchildren or children living but he would sometime maybe drink a little too much and he'd get to the house and his- he couldn't understand why the horse wouldn't go through the gate and the gate would be closed. Mrs. Clarke would have to go out there and open the gate so he could get through the gate and Mr. Clarke would be laying on that horse with his buggy whip because the horse wouldn't go through the gate. You learn about a lot of things in a small town. You know, everything was pretty well out in the open.

ML: I've often thought that small town life is a little more cosmopolitan than city life because you just, there is nothing you miss.

WB: Well, being raised on a farm and all that, people were pretty open about things, you knew what was going on and we had a boy from Diboll that I knew, one of the Kelly boys was killed in front of our house, on the train. He was hitchhiking a ride from Diboll to Lufkin at night and fell through the cars and it ran over him and killed him.

ML: Ohhhhh – gosh.

WB: I remember when that occurred. I knew his brother, went to school with him. So you had your tragedy then, just as you do now. But I don't know that I can, offhand, think of anything else, Megan, if I do I'll...

ML: Okay