

DIBOLL DAY 1986

Interview 134a

Diboll Day 1986, on the grounds of Temple-Inland, Diboll, Texas

Arthur Temple, Speaker

Retyped by Courtney Lawrence

ABSTRACT: In this short speech, Arthur Temple, Jr. dedicates the sculpture “Flathead” on Diboll Day, 1986. The subject of the sculpture, Albert Mitchell, and the sculptor, Ronnie Wells are also present and speak after Mr. Temple.

Dedication of statue on grounds of Temple-Inland office.

Arthur Temple, Jr., speaking at dedication of the statue of a “Flathead” on the grounds of Temple-Inland, Diboll, Texas, on Diboll Day, 1986.

Arthur Temple (hereafter AT):And a caring community welcomed with open arms are those people who recently called this town “home,” and those hardworking people who over many years made this community what it is today. It is fitting that the inscription on this statue which we are now going to dedicate reads: “A memorial to the loyalty and devotion of thousands of working men and women who created and built a great company.”

Albert was selected to be the model for this statue and for good reason:

1. He is identified with the forest.
2. He was a great family man and a great part of Diboll’s history. He started out up at Fastrill, and I remember he was the first one that tried to use what was then a gigantic power saw because it absolutely necessary. He told me, “I’ll take it out there and do it.” And when he did, everybody else started doing it.

And you know the rest of the story. That was early on.

More than that, it is proper that we honor Albert Mitchell whose likeness this statue represents as a living symbol to what loyalty, devotion and spirit has meant to our company and our town.

Joe Denman and I were arguing one day what would be the best way to recognize and say “Thank you” to all the thousands of men and women who had done so much to build this company. We thought that rather than putting a bust of T.L.L. Temple up or anybody like that, we would have a statue made of a picture that I had seen of Albert walking through the woods, looking up at the forest. I think Ronnie Wells, whom you will meet in a minute, the sculptor, has done a superb job.

Albert was a flathead for many years. One of the best who ever worked for this company. He embodies the workingman and the family man. One of many whose efforts has brought us where we are today. He brings to mind other great men of the woods of his time that I have to mention. There are many more. But I have to mention Laymon and Ira Gossett, Bill Howard, the Phipps brothers and Albert’s wood partner for many years, Riley Carr. A lot of you knew them. These men and so many thousands of others brought reality to the legends that are part of this great company’s history.

Albert began his work at Fastrill at a time when work was all sweat and toil. He welcomed the change that modern tools brought to his skill. We are a company and a town that welcomes change since therein lies our strength. I don't have to tell you that we are one of the few survivors from the forest products industry. We prosper at a time when the state is on its back, literally, economically, and we prosper – we prosper because of you. It is Albert Mitchell and those like him that make Diboll Day an important remembrance from whence we came.

Albert, I want you to join me here (if we can figure out how to do it) and unveil this statue – a symbol of our past and a recognition of our present and the larger than life hopes and dreams that we all have of the future.

Now then unveil it. (clapping)

Do you want to say something?

Albert Mitchell (hereafter AM): I just want to thank him for putting that out there for me. I thank him for it.

AT: He said he wanted me to give it to him. We are going to put that over in front of the office. A proper pedestal has been built for that purpose and it will be a lasting memorial to the thousands of people who have really built this company. Thank you.

Master of Ceremonies: Thank you, Mr. Temple.

AT: Would you introduce Ronnie Wells. I think he wants to say something.

Master of Ceremonies: I know you would like to meet the man who created the statue. May I introduce Ronnie Wells.

Ronnie Wells (hereafter RW): Thank you very much. I just have a few words I would like to say. First of all I want to thank the Lord that I finished it on time. He only gave me three years and that wasn't quite enough time. Also, I would like to thank Mr. Temple and Temple Industries for giving me an opportunity to create this monument to the people of Diboll. You know he could have chosen any subject matter or any sculptor, but he gave me an opportunity to do it. I can't thank him enough for that.

END OF DEDICATION