

PETE AND DONNA SMART

Interview 172a

February 22, 2008, at The History Center, Diboll, Texas

Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer

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ABSTRACT: In this interview with Jonathan Gerland, Pete and Donna Smart reminisce about their days working for Temple and living in the southeast and Diboll. Pete joined Temple as a salesman in 1965, working in Charlotte, North Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia; and Kentucky selling Temple products, particularly plywood, fiberboard and studs. They moved to Diboll in 1973 and lived there until 2007. Donna worked for the company from 1990 until 2008. The Smarts talk about Diboll Day, selling Temple products in the southeast, promoting Temple products, the community spirit in Diboll, Arthur Temple's vision for his company and Diboll, and other company leaders. They mention Bob Weston, Bert Lindsey, Joe Sample, Joe Denman, Clifford Grum, and Jack Sweeny.

Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG): Today's date is February the 22nd, 2008 and my name is Jonathan Gerland. And I'm with Donna and Pete Smart, and we are at the History Center. And we're going to conduct an oral history interview today. Just begin by telling us how you came to Diboll. Maybe a little of your backgrounds...how you met, and then we'll focus more on your experiences...

Pete Smart (hereafter PS): How we met...

JG: ...with the company. But...

Donna Smart (hereafter DS): Pete and I grew up in a town called Toccoa, Georgia...it's in the northeast corner of Georgia.

PS: T-O-C-C-O-A.

DS: And...Pete came back from the military in the early '60's. Like about '61. And we both were attending night school at an area college. We were working and going to school at night. And then, he...started the University of Georgia to complete his education full time in '63...and went two years and graduated in December of 1964. And, he was practicing his interview techniques at the career center at the University of Georgia. So, he signed up for an interview at something called Temple Industries and he'd never heard of it, but he thought well he'd get some practice in. And so, this was November of '64. And I'll let Pete tell you about that interview.

PS: Well my interview was with Bert Lindsey. And Bert was sales manager at that time...so we went in and sat down and I had had some training in interviewing and whatever...and so, but this was actually my first interview. And I had sat down and

Bert...I don't know whether you guys ever...or, you knew him...but he was the most enthusiastic guy you can imagine, you know, he was just...

DS: An expert ball coach...so that will tell you.

PS: Yeah. You know, there's a lot of stories around that. I don't know how he got to be with Temple, but I understand Mr. Temple persuaded him to come over and whatever. But, he was a typical football coach...and so we sat down and we started talking and we did just very preliminary kind of things...and all of a sudden he pulled out this picture of Mr. Temple that was on the Dallas, it was a story that was in the Dallas...

DS: Morning News.

PS: Morning News. And I think you've got copies of that. And he showed me the picture and everything and he started telling me about what the company was going to do and how great it was and yayaya. And he went on and on for a long time, I mean, this was table pounding, "You're not going to believe this but we're moving, we're doing this, we're doing that." And all of a sudden, I kept waiting on him to ask me questions and everything and he looked at me just as serious as anything and he says, "What do you think?" And I said, "About what?" (Laughter) He says, "You wanna go to Texas?" And I says, and I'm just sitting here thinking, well it'd be a free ride to Texas, you know. And I said, "Yeah." And he and...he brought me and myself and a young man by the name of J. B. Thompson who's still in Atlanta today. We hear from him occasionally...and J. B. and I came out from the University.

JG: ...came to Diboll.

PS: To Diboll.

DS: They interviewed, they came out to interview the week of Thanksgiving, first part of Thanksgiving week. He came back from that interview and he said, "Well, I'm going to work for them, I'm starting in...at the end of January, first of February in Diboll, Texas." And he said, "I'm gonna be out there for five or six months." And he said, "We can either get married and you can go with me...or, we can get married when I get through with my training." And I said, "I'm going with you." So we told my mother Thanksgiving weekend that we were getting married January 1st. And she almost had apoplexy, you know, 'cause she had Christmas going on.

JG: Oh yeah.

DS: We'd got married at my house with just immediate family...on New Year's Day 1965, and we stayed in a boarding house for three weeks in Toccoa. And then we loaded every earthly possession we had in a '58 Chevrolet that we bought from Pete's dad for 400 bucks. And we drove to Diboll, Texas.

JG: So, the first time you saw the town was at this moment, together.

PS: She, yeah...together.

DS: First time I saw it.

JG: Oh...you had already come after the interview at some time.

PS: Well, when I came out here for the interview. Now...

JG: Oh, you interviewed here...

DS: Uh huh...uh huh.

JG: Ok, I thought you interviewed at...

PS: No, no...we came out here.

DS: No, he came...

PS: And the reason that I felt so strongly about coming with the company because they cheated a little bit because...I think it's a whole different story to tell that the world needs to know is to how we all got here. And I'm talking about all that sales training class. But, there had been two to three sales training classes prior to our...the time that I got here. And they were beginning to form some semblance of a sales group and whatever. They were located in the upstairs of the commissary building, the sales department was. And I remember coming in and Bob...

DS: Uh huh. The guy that was over sales then...I'll think of it in a minute.

JG: Weston.

PS: Yeah, Bob Weston.

DS: Bob Weston.

PS: But they carried me up to meet him and that was not terribly impressive. But, I met with people like...Bert took us up, took me up and introduced me to, you know, all the people that were in town at that time. Which consisted of: Jack Bean, and Harold Maxwell was here...

DS: Henry.

PS: He was in our group earlier than any of us. You know, Kirk Kulock. A lot of guys, and 'course the secret to it...what I'm trying to get across is that the attraction for me was I had no idea what 2 x 4 looked like at that time. Never been involved in that part. But, it was a group of young people, it was kind of like a fraternity, you know. And they were

here in town and they had already had bought into the spirit of the company...and things were going on. And for lunch everybody went down together, went down to the Pine Bough. So, there was something there that I had not expected to see, you know. And so, I pretty quickly...both of us agreed to sign on. And...

DS: The...

PS:...of course I went home. And that's when this other personal stuff started.

DS: The class that Pete was part of was the first group that they put together that was going to go back out and sell in the southeastern United States. Up until that time they had been mainly a regional...you know, Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana. And the people they hired in those training programs were from this area. In Pete's group there was a guy from Jacksonville, Florida, one from Richmond, Virginia, Pete from Georgia, J. B. Thompson from Georgia. There was a guy from Tennessee, one from Alabama, and one older gentleman who had worked for Great Texas Lumber Company, and they had sold that and they were giving him a chance to kind of retrain. And his name was Aubrey Melton.

PS: Melton.

DS: And Aubrey ended up in Houston selling, and retired with the company, you know, years later. But, he was like in his forties. And the rest of these guys were like new grads.

PS: We thought he was ancient at the time... (laughter)

DS: Yeah.

PS:...because he was forty-five. And it was real comical because all of us were trying to learn how to figure out board feet.

JG: How old were you in '65?

PS: I was 27, 28.

DS: 6...26. He had been...

JG: Ok...

DS: ...he had gone to school, gone in the military for three years and then come back. Most of them were, you know, had gone straight out of high school to college. So he was probably a little older...

PS: Aubrey was older, but I was, by far, the...not by far, I was at least a couple of years older than the rest of the guys in the group.

JG: Uh huh. And tell, you've told me before, Pete, about...and you alluded to a little bit earlier, just the overall focus and goal. You've talked about how Mr. Temple had a vision for building this aspect of the company. In previous years he always had a focus on, "We'll do this part for a few years and we'll get that established and then go to another one."

PS: Well...

JG: So, this was the marketing side of it.

PS: I can't, I really can't say with great authority and...but, these are things that we felt were true and heard. Now, whether they're really true you'll have to ask people like Clifford Grum and whatever, but Clifford had already...I think he was already, no, he came when...

DS: I don't know but...

PS: But, anyhow, Mr. Temple had this vision. And the very basics of the vision was that "We no longer need to be a sawmill." And...

JG: Or just a sawmill.

PS: Just a sawmill.

DS: Just a sawmill.

PS: And so it, the amazing thing, and I've told you this so many times that it's kind of boring, but, we've said this so much, was the fact that you hear people talk about vision. He actually had one. I've never seen anything like that. And we'd, now don't get me wrong...we saw him from a distance, and we'd see him at the Pine Bough and that sort of thing. We were scared to death of him. (laughter) And...but, we were just a bunch of young pups in town. And that was funny within itself. Because, if you can imagine pulling fifteen, twenty, college graduate young men into a sawmill town. And I mean, it was pretty, you know...they had, obviously had streets by that time. But we used to laugh about it when we first got here. 'Course there was one television station and you had to have an antenna to get that. And there were a few people in town who had antennas big enough that they could get a little, a fuzzy Beaumont, Orange station. It was that kind of a thing, you know. But, Mr. Temple obviously had this vision. And I think what he was saying is, and he later told us a little bit about it...was that, he knew that we had, he had to become something different. That meant that he had to have a more than a regional, more than a Texas sales force. And see the Plywood Plant was under construction ...very near finishing at that time. Fiberboard had been around a few years. And so they had...but the Fiberboard Plant had...they had a sales contract with Certainteed, the Certainteed Corporation. And so, they were selling most of the products. They didn't need a sales force. But, Mr. Temple's, I'm stumbling around with this, but his vision was that he had determined, not only did we need to be in products that...other than lumber,

the byproducts were a very important thing to him. You know, not necessarily just an environmental. But it had become apparent from some of the better operators in the country that, particularly the west coast, that you had to use all of your tree not just your...and 'course when I got here, not that I'm that old, but there were still the igloo, is that what they call them. Burners, you know, the little...you know.

JG: The refuse burners?

PS: Yeah.

DS: Uh huh.

PS: And they were still burning. Yeah, they were still burning lots of stuff and whatever. But that was his, he saw that as being part of this. That was the building material side of it, but, he also had a very, very strong feeling that we need to be in paper. He said, "You cannot make it in this business unless you're in paper." And so, in my personal opinion, what Donna described to you a while ago, which was very true, was the fact that our group was...made up mostly of people from the southeast, and as you can imagine as far up as Virginia. We refer to our self later on as Missionary Salesmen. Because there was no reason in the world for most of us to be where we were at that time because we didn't have the products to sell out there.

JG: So...you were sent back to these areas after training here in Diboll.

PS: Yeah. After training...we trained here for a few months. We returned to different territories. And, like I said, we had a guy in Richmond, Virginia. I was in North Carolina...I went to Charlotte, Donna and I first location was Charlotte, North Carolina. Well, in reality we didn't have enough product to do that. We were shipping some things, but #1 is that the only substantial thing we had was fiberboard. And we had a sales contract with Certainteed so our competitor was Certainteed.

JG: Spell that.

PS: C-E-R

DS: T-A-I-N-T-E-E-D.

PS: I'm sure they're probably still around.

DS: I think when we went to Charlotte, North Carolina, Pete traveled North and South Carolina and the little corner of Georgia. And...we were out there two years and it was into the second year when he had his first...

PS: Plywood sale.

DS: Sale, plywood sale. And it was Frank Elmer Lumber Company in Greenwood, South Carolina. And...

PS: Greenville, Greenville.

DS: Greenville.

PS: Uh huh.

DS: Oh, I thought it was Greenwood. Ok...and, anyway Pete said, when he said, "I'll take a load." Pete said, "What?" (laughter) Because it was just such a shock. But...they had to go out into the southeastern United States with a product that people...never heard of pine plywood or, you know, they were buying west coast fir studs and fir plywood. And so, it was not just they'd never heard of Temple Industries, they'd never bought the product. So, they did pioneer the company name. You know, now, you know, 'course Temple is well known. But at that time it's like, "You're who?" You know and...

PS: And so we weren't really settled enough to justify our existence. But, we were doing what Mr. Temple wanted us to do. Now, we really didn't know that, it wasn't one...what he wanted to do. And you could see it later on...all of a sudden in all of the publications and things, you could see Temple Industries, you know, from Texas to Virginia to the Northeast. And so, he made this appear to be a much bigger company than it really was. Now I'm not belittling, I don't think it was a gimmick; it was just that he was a master of being...of, kind of public, PR.

JG: Uh huh.

PS: To make this look that way.

JG: Well in '69 the company went public, publicly traded stock.

PS: Uh huh.

JG: And so, like I said, this is all precursors to...

PS: It had to look that way.

JG: ...to getting to that point.

PS: And we actually...I'm sorry to get into that, this doesn't mean a lot...but, not only were we in Charlotte, North Carolina doing, you know, doing everything we could to spread the word...they encouraged us to be part of local and state organizations such as Lumber Dealers Association, which were very strong in Texas, it always had been...Temple was one of the founders of the LAT. And, but, I remember us going to Charlotte to the North Carolina, this Carolina building material which is North and South Carolina. And they just, people walking in constantly, "Well what do y'all do," you

know. And...so we really were just missionary kind of people. And so we couldn't...that was all well and good except I was making \$400 a month. Plus expenses, and one of the...if you could imagine Jonathan, for me this is amazing because I go to Temple over there now and they've got these amazing sales, computer driven sales programs. You know, where they sit there in their office and try to get somebody...

JG: Like market research and...

PS: Well they type in somebody's name and all their past history of what they like to buy and all of this stuff is flying up. Their goal now is that they should be able to handle a customer order within three minutes. That means saying "Hello," and all that other stuff. But, they should be able to...

JG: Three minutes.

PS: Settle on it...and it may be less than that now, but, I mean most of the time it is less than that. But, anyhow we were writing up orders and I always thought this was so funny because we were writing our orders up and...

JG: Long hand?

PS: Long hand.

DS: Long hand.

PS: And mailing them.

JG: Hand written.

DS: And mailing them.

PS: The only communication you had was in a telephone booth. There were obviously no cell phones and whatever. And so, the first negative I got, the first complaint against me personally was Bert called me one Friday and...which he did every week, every Friday... "Well, how y'all doing?" And I kind of give him a run down and whatever, and then one Friday he says, "I got a little problem," he says, "You and I need to work out." And I said, "What is that?" He said, "Mr. Aubrey Cannon thinks that you're calling your orders in too often," says, "You need to write up your orders and mail them." So, we went, we went from writing up an order, mailing it...which would probably take a week to get here...they would process it and usually we quoted at the bare minimum three to four weeks on most everything. And so, we're down now to less than three minutes.

JG: And Aubrey Cannon was the auditor at that time?

PS: Yeah.

DS: Uh huh.

PS: But, he took great...and what would happen...he was right, because I wasn't very good at writing orders and doing them right. So what I would do is...I'd call in and I'd get Charlie Havard. Now, we were allowed to do that if it was a hurry up deal. But I'd get Charlie Havard or one of the guys here to write up the orders. And, so that sped that whole process up. I didn't have to write it and mail it. (laughter)

DS: He was just basically ahead of his time. They just hadn't caught up.

JG: Have you heard of a telephone?

DS: Yeah.

PS: But, it was really funny because during all that period of time, this was for many years after I'd...selling. A good salesman at that time he had to know where all the phone booths were. And, you learned little tricks like, if I go to Holiday Inn and get in one of theirs, it's cooler in there and whatever. 'Cause we were driving the kind of cars at that time we were lucky to get...

DS: No air conditioning in the cars.

PS:...started out with no air conditioning. Later got air conditioning.

JG: So, you're traveling around...

DS: Uh huh.

JG:...describe briefly how, just how that works...just you're referring to making, getting an order and then calling it in or writing it in, staying at hotels...

PS: Yeah, well we...

JG:...who...

PS: We called on retail lumber dealers...

JG: Ok.

PS: Exclusively. Because we, they didn't want us particularly to sell to wholesalers. Because, that became a marketing decision that had to be made here as they set up a distributor. So...we started out in for many, many, many years after that our really forte in it for Temple and the market place, and all over Texas and everywhere else, was that we called on retail lumber yards.

DS: Just a side note...when we were there in Charlotte, in...Lowe's was in North Wilkesborough, North Carolina...that's their headquarters. And they had fourteen locations, that was 1965 to 1967.

JG: And we're talking about Lowe's the home improvement store.

DS: Yes, Lowe's Home Improvement.

PS: Fourteen of them at that time.

JG: It's huge now but...fourteen at that time.

PS: But that was considered to be really huge.

DS: Huge.

JG: Well, they've named the NASCAR Speedway there in Charlotte the Lowe's Motor Speedway.

DS: No doubt.

JG: So, I guess that makes sense. (laughter) They pay enough money.

PS: Before we get too far into this sales thing I want to tell you this because it's something that she and I witnessed that there is probably not anybody else around that witnessed that. I don't remember who was at the table, but, we were having a, during that first trip to Texas, we were taken over to Scrappin' Valley for some kind of a meeting.

DS: Our going away, it was our going away back into, out into our territory.

PS: Oh ok. Ok.

JG: After your training period. Ok.

DS: Uh huh.

PS: They were shipping a bunch of us out and so...but there were a lot of people who were here then. Bennie Brown and his wife, and you know, a lot of the locals; and Burt and Brooks Franklin and people of that nature.

DS: Brooks Franklin was the training director.

PS: And, now...so we were over at Scrappin' Valley...and we were just blown away with Scrappin' Valley. 'Course it was a lot different than it is now, it was not, but none of us had ever seen anything like that. And so, we were having this wonderful time and we were in the dining room that night. And we were eating and, much to our surprise, Mr.

Temple and Lottie show up. And supposedly they were coming over there to hunt or do something else and they came through and they decided to have dinner with us. But he, he always did things like that. He was just everywhere. But anyhow, we ate dinner and there were a couple of funny things that happened. And, Mr. Temple was across the room and we could hear him because his voice reverberated everywhere, you know. And he was telling stories to people...and he...well, I won't go there. But anyhow he did...it was really funny. And so, we were, as we said earlier, we had such reverence for him we were really afraid of him 'cause he was big and he spoke real loud. We were so young and whatever (laughter). But, Bennie Brown and his wife were...who were, I think Bennie's out in Arizona now. But, Bennie would, later became my regional manager. But anyhow, he was a little more metropolitan and so he and his wife were celebrating...

DS: Their anniversary.

PS: ...their anniversary. So he had bought a bottle of Champagne. And so, everybody, none of us, you know, that was kind of a big deal for us too so we're over there watching. Bennie's over there with his wife at a table, kind of by himself. And he pops the cork on that Champaign and it cleared Mr. Temple's head about six inches. (laughter) It went right zip...right over the top of his head, you know, we said, "Oh my God, we've killed Mr. Temple, you know."

DS: He just about died.

PS: But, all of a sudden...we were at a big table, and I guess there was eight or ten people there, wouldn't you think...husbands and wives. And all of a sudden he came over and sat down. And he started, I don't remember how he started the conversation but I will never forget, he started explaining his vision to us. And he started telling us...he did tell us at that time about paper, we're going to need to be in paper. And he goes through all of that and...it was really good. And 'course we were just locked in watching him and every word. And then he said, "I know a lot of you guys are not going to stay." He said, "That's just part of life." He said, "A lot of you will not stay with the company." He said, "Some of you will, and..." He says, "All I want you to know, to tell you is...those of you who are going to stay with us, you gonna have a good time and we gonna have..."

DS: "We're gonna have a lot of fun."

PS: "We gonna have a lot of fun." And then he stopped and he says, "Now you didn't hear me say we were going to make a lot of money." And then he says, "But, we're going to have a good time." And he says, "This is going to be fun." And...it was fun.

DS: And, but even before he died Pete and I would visit with him. He would say, "We had fun." It wasn't about the money, you know, it was about the excitement of...

PS: Yeah.

DS: ...what was accomplished. And Pete and I look back a lot of times and just think about, you know, your life and what you've had an opportunity to experience. And it's like...it's really amazing to have been part of that. To see a company and a community grow like, you know, from just this little family owned sawmill to a multi-million dollar corporation that's all over the United States and you were part of it. You were there, and saw it.

PS: And it really happened pretty fast. I mean, you know, because we didn't understand...and I'm sure you don't either, but we didn't understand because we were too inexperienced to understand the workings of the corporate world, and what was happening. But, I've heard people debate on television many times about the fact there is no such thing as vision and that sort of thing. I believe with all of my heart he had a vision. And...he never belittled what had happened prior to this or anything else. But he knew where the company needed to go and it was just like a chess board. He was putting us in place to do that...which we were just little players in this. But Bob Weston had been brought to town from, he had been with...had a sales exec. job with General Electric.

DS: Uh huh. Came from California I think.

PS: And they had brought him to town to do this, to put this together.

JG: The sales team.

DS: The sales team.

PS: The sales team.

JG: The new reinvigorated sales team.

PS: Yeah, I mean this guy is like, if you can imagine the Vice President of General Electric coming to here now. It was a huge deal. I don't know whether it's true...I don't know whether I can legally say this or not but, evidently there had been some kind of a price fixing thing and some legal situation at his company that didn't bode very well for him or whatever. And so he became available...and I don't know how Mr. Temple knew him, but he was a heavyweight. And he brought him, he came to town to organize this sales force and marketing plan. And he was good, he knew how to do that. And, the story is that he came to town and...with some kind of an understanding that he would stay for several years, five years or whatever. And at that point he'd be gone. And that actually happened. And...I always thought it was funny 'cause I heard the story was that he left, when he finally left Temple and he accomplished his task here he went to work for Boise Cascade. And Boise sent a leer jet here, 'course nobody had ever seen many of those, I mean, you know. And it landed somewhere in the area and then picked him up. And Bob, they said, Bob Weston got on the plane and they started up and bought him a drink and a snack on the airplane, and their headed out to California for his interview and he told them, he said, "Now, if you guys think you can come out here and fly out here in this jet

and pick me up and wine me and dine me and fly me to California. If you think you can impress me,” he says, “By God, you just did.” (laughter)

JG: Now, you told me some stories about Bob Weston but one that I’m thinking of right now, if I remember it correctly...and want you to comment on it, is the stud mill went in in Pineland in ’66. I’m getting at the magenta dye...dyer... the tenth of the studs. Tell me a little bit about that and...

PS: Well, you need to, you need, in your interviews you got coming up you need to confirm all of this with people like Henry Holubec. But, and Harold, but, I believe that it is very, just as true as I, now, that I...I think it’s really...

JG: And we’re...just for the record we’re talking about the magenta colored 2 x 4 studs in the house construction.

PS: But, all lumber at that time was not...was yellow. I mean it had a yellow pinta...not pinta, I’ll think of it in a minute. There was a treatment that it was basically a temporary water resistance that was put on. And if you’ve ever noticed, you know, sometimes they would deliver lumber back then, it would have a yellow tint almost like your pad there. And then as it sat in the sun on a house for a couple of weeks, even before the house got finished building it would go back to natural look. But it was a temporary water repellent. And, so that was...everybody’s lumber in the United States looked exactly the same. It was either absolutely natural or it was yellow. And at that time, they promoted yellow pine. Now in later years they’d drop that yellow real quick. And I’ll tell you why in a minute. But, the story goes that Bob Weston, being from the background that he was from...the world of marketing for him was very much in being able to differentiate products, you know, and a marketing scheme to sell and whatever. And so, he was having great difficulty with this thing, because everybody, you neighbors down the road, Kirby, everybody in the area and everybody in Texas. Every piece of lumber looked exactly the same. And it was driving him nuts. And so, he went on tour of the plant over there. And I guess it was when it was early being built or whatever. And they were talking about...

JG: At Pineland, you’re talking about.

DS: Uh huh.

PS: At Pineland. And they would, the finished product would come down the line and then they would actually drop it in a vat. They would be dipped into a vat of this material...convoy, is what it was called. Convoy.

DS: Convoy.

PS: And the convoy would, and then ‘course then it would drip dry as it went down and...he got up there to that and he says, “What is that?” And they said, “Convoy.” And they started explaining to him how wonderful convoy was and all this stuff. And he said, “No, no, no, what is that color?” And they said, it’s just a tint they put in it so that you

can see it. He says, "Is that...have any significance, the color?" They said, "No, not really, that's just what everybody does." "Could we use a different color?" And they said, "Sure if you wanted to, who would want to, you know. Convoy is yellow." And I think they did clear it with the company that made the material and whatever. But, he immediately started looking for ideas about what color to use. They did a little marketing thing here and everybody threw in their two cents. And then they finally came up with the magenta color. Now, there is no way I could explain to you how radical that was...at that time. Nobody had ever seen a colored piece of lumber of any kind...anywhere. And, boy, it was not only different, it was bright and you could see it on every house that it went up on and whatever. The pine stud came about by some really cool engineering by some people, and used to be in the saw mill over here...they had some equipment over here that would, they call it the crook reducer and all that stuff.

DS: Temple Jones Crook Reducer.

PS: Temple Jones Crook Reducer, which was developed here in town. And, but it was all pretty new because the same thing, the same struggles we had with the early yellow pine plywood was that it was a wonderfully strong product...but it, not very stable. I mean, you know, I'd go into lumberyards in South Carolina and I'd say, "I'm here to talk about yellow pine plywood." And they'd giggle. And I'd say, "What's the problem, have you tried it?" "No man," he says, "You cut the bands on a bundle of yellow pine plywood and," he said, "It would jump out in the street." Because it would bow and...

JG: Warp.

PS: ...warp so bad and everything. And early on it did. Well as...

JG: The thin stuff still does. (laughter)

PS: Well, you know, it does. And that's part of it...so that's what made...

DS: The studs did the same thing.

PS: ...that made studs pretty unique too because you didn't typically use pine for studs. But, it was just amazing because then he took, he used a sales force and kind of retrained everybody real quick and we all became stud salesmen. And, to give you an idea Kirk Kulock, who was...was the salesman to New Orleans. And he wasn't doing very well down there. But he immediately found a home for some studs down there. And then he, then it grew. But, what would happen is, people would see those purple studs, and 'course they would say, "What is that," you know. And then it became very visible, and people knew who it was, and knew what it was. And, not only that, they did some...when I say research it was like people going out and talking to other people. But they found out later on, Bob Weston did, that not only that people fascinated by the color, but, they'd go out on the job and they'd talk to the builders, I mean the construction guys. And they'd say, "Is that pretty good stud?" "Yeah, pretty good." "Is it better than other studs, does it

have fewer knots, or what's the deal guys?" "Oh yeah, it doesn't have as many knots as those others." Had absolutely the same.

JG: Just couldn't see them.

DS: Couldn't see them.

PS: No, it was just they were so fascinated with the color.

JG: The color.

PS: I think everybody was bored stiff. And, so that was really the biggest single breakthrough.

DS: And didn't he warranty them?

PS: Yeah, yeah.

DS: I mean, that way you could tell if that was your stud or not because of the color. If it warped.

PS: Yeah...and, strangely enough they never trademarked that color. Now, to this day its never been trademarked. But people in the industry have respect for other people's colors and...

JG: Yeah.

PS:...so they don't do that. But...

DS: L. P. uses orange.

PS: She's right. We, I'd forgotten that. They had a little thing, like if it, if it will bow or bend over half an inch or something on an 8 ft. like that, put it on a truck and we'll take it back. And so, they established this thing pretty quick. And it was a significant marketing achievement for him. And then the plywood was more difficult, but it finally caught on and... 'course that was a huge thing in the south when they converted to southern plywood.

JG: How long were you in the field before you came back, and when did you come back to Diboll for good...so to speak?

DS: We were in Charlotte from May of '65 to March of '67...then we went to Louisville, Kentucky. And the day we unloaded our furniture in Louisville it snowed eight inches. And we were there until '69, probably spring of '69...about two years and went to Atlanta, Georgia. And were in Atlanta for four years. He was...

PS: I was...I had become regional sales guy then. I was sales manager for the southeast.

DS: And then in '73 they offered him the product manager for fiberboard because Harold Maxwell, who had that job, was moving into the sales manager's job...and Harold called him and asked about coming. So we came in March of '73.

JG: Ok. So you were here when the Time...

PS: Henry Holubec was vice president of sales at that time...and Henry called me in Atlanta. And I was having a really nice time because we were from Georgia.

DS: Ninety miles from home.

PS: We were ninety miles from home with a company car and we were having a very nice time. Money had gotten better. And Henry called me up and he says, "How you feel about moving back to Diboll?" And I said, "Henry, I don't think I want to do that." And so I took my...initially on the first phone call I told him I said, "I don't want to do that." And...the next day Henry called me back and he said, "I was thinking," he said, "Let's go through this one more time." He says, "We want you to move to Diboll," he said, "If you don't move back to Diboll, where do you think your advancement is going to be in the future?" And I said, "Gee, I don't know Henry, I think I'll move to Diboll." (laughter) And that's how we got to Diboll the second time.

JG: That's how you got to Diboll.

PS: So, basically, we were ten years in sales I guess.

JG: So, while you were in the field the company, you know, on the...at the top I guess, some of the corporate affairs had gone public.

PS: Yeah.

JG: And I don't know, you know, how that affects you but...

PS: While...during that period we were in Atlanta. This is the first time we had met Clifford Grum...

DS: Mr. Grum. Uh huh.

PS: Because, well two little side notes...Chotsy and her husband were at Duke University...

JG: We're talking about Charlotte Temple...Arthur, one of...or Arthur's daughter.

DS: When we lived in Charlotte...

PS: And so we...Mr. Temple, and I never saw her, but he always when he'd see me he says, "Go over and see Chotsy. She's wanting to visit with them," you know. And I, of course, I was scared to death of him I sure didn't want to tangle with her. You know, I didn't feel comfortable with her but I never saw her there. But anyhow, while we were in Atlanta, this was traditionally true of Temple all the time is when somebody would come to your town...if you lived in Louisville, Atlanta, wherever...like that. They would always be thoughtful enough to tell you that they were coming there for a meeting or whatever and they want you to come to dinner with them. And so, that's when we first met. And Clifford was real early in this thing, and he was...

DS: He was the financial officer.

PS: He was brought on board for the specific purpose of taking this company public, and into the paper business. And so we met he and his wife at a dinner downtown.

DS: At the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, Georgia.

PS: It was Lottie and Arthur and that...there were...

DS: With Allen and Nan Miller and the Holubecs...

PS: Yeah.

DS: And the Grum's and us and...

PS: So they were in town for some kind of a function and we met them for the first time. But...that's something I've always appreciated. It was kind of a cardinal rule...even sales guy. If you went into somebody else's territory you told them you were there and what you were doing...and...tried to get together. He worked, he being Mr. Temple, he worked at being a family. And he made you feel like that. And he worked to make sure that other people did. And some of the members of the family that didn't act right and...Marley and otherwise like that, they didn't stay around. He didn't...and it was really funny, I tell this to people all the time. I don't know whether he appreciates it...well it's my opinion, I don't guess it matters if it's on the internet or anything else. Is that when I first got to Temple....to Diboll I was amazed at, and still am, at...we would go to functions...now I'm talking about in '65. Everybody associated with the lumber industry was hard working, hard drinking, hard playing folk. I'd never seen anything like that. And we would have meetings and things...and the traditional meeting would be followed, a sales meeting or whatever we were having, would be...they would close the meeting and thirty minutes later there'd be a poker game started. And everybody drank straight whiskey. And... 'course none of us could do that because these were old hands at it, you know. And I won't name anybody by name, but everybody did that. I just couldn't believe it. So...we didn't have a problem with that. And, certainly, you know. And we thought it was cool and everything. But, Henry Holubec came along and later years became this sales manager. And Henry was an absolute teetotaler and a very, very nice guy. Joe Sample was pretty close to that. And, they began...they kind of set the...

DS: Tone. Yeah.

PS: ...standard, yeah, for sales...for us. If we had a function, and we had lots of big functions, like for the LAT. We used to do parties and things, and, I mean, we did...I did one for the company one time and we had five hundred come to. And, but if we served alcohol, at the most, it was beer. They didn't put alcohol in the sales meetings, or anything else.

JG: This is under...when Henry was...

PS: Right, Henry was there and Joe Sample. But it was really funny. Henry never made a big deal out of it. It didn't matter to him....he never said anything to anybody who did drink. But, he just didn't drink. And we'd go out and party in...Atlanta and everywhere else, you know, and have a really good time. And...but, that became the kind of the standard for the group. And from that time forward it has never happened...I mean, it's pretty much been the same way. I don't know what's that's worth, it's just to me...

JG: You mean scaled back, as far as the alcohol, is what you're saying.

DS: Yeah.

PS: Oh well, yeah...and it set a standard for the caliber of people...

DS: And their behavior when they...

PS: Their behavior. It was not acceptable for people to run around on their wives, or do anything like that. You know, and it was really funny because that's just a life lesson for me...is that if you've got good leadership and you can set the standards, then it can be very meaningful...

DS: Without it being verbally...

PS: Yeah.

JG: Yeah.

PS: They didn't make a big deal out of it, whatever. But after thirty years, I look back and I said, you know, that was pretty neat. Because, I go to church occasionally and people talk about how rotten people are in the business world and I raised my hand at one church meeting and I said, "You know guys, I didn't experience that." I said, "I've been in business about thirty years, or with Temple, and..." I said, "I never saw that." I said, "There occasionally was somebody who got off base, you know, but, it was not the rule." And I said, "It doesn't have to be." And whatever, and I said, "To lump everybody into one thing." So, anyhow this family thing...caught on from Mr. Temple over to the Holubecs and to other guys, the leaders, Burt and all the others. And it was just

never...we'd go to other people's, or other organizations parties and things like that, and they'd be knocked down drunk deals. And we all knew that we were different, and it was really funny. And I think it carried over a lot into the town. I'm off base now, tell me where you want me to go.

JG: Well, you mentioned the town...let's talk a little bit more about the community from the time, I'm assuming from '73 on you've been here.

PS: When we moved to here in '65 we lived in the Clean Treat Apartments. Which was owned by, I think, we think it was owned by...

DS: No, Chris Franks managed them, I don't know who actually...

PS: Lottie was involved. I think Lottie and her sisters owned them.

JG: What's it called again?

DS: Clean Treat. They were...

PS: Clean Treat, they were right above Woody Ingram.

DS: Thompson St.

PS: And how they got that name was, they built some little, really apartment strips and like...

DS: There were four.

PS: Yeah. And, but, there was a...there was some kind of a new treating material in the industry and it was called Clean Treat.

JG: Clean Treat.

PS: Treat. Uh huh.

DS: Uh huh.

JG: Treat.

PS: And so they called it the Clean Treat Apartments. And, officially we'd call it that...

DS: And it was seventy dollars a month furnished.

PS: We came to town and...as we said a while ago, not to tell these stories about going to school uphill both ways, and that kind of stuff. But, we didn't have a lot of money. We...I mean, but, at that time you didn't need a lot. But anyhow, we got to town, and we

went to Carl Pavlic's Grocery Store. And...I don't remember as much about it as she does, but she had to have all the basics. Like, a broom, and a mop, and a bucket. And this, that, and the other, plus some food, and this, that, and the other. And how much did we spend?

DS: We spent twenty-five dollars.

PS: We spent twenty-five dollars. And I mean we panicked. We didn't think we were going...

DS: 'Cause we were going to have to wait a whole month to get paid.

PS: 'Cause we just didn't, we didn't have any money, too much, to come, you know, and whatever. But one of the funniest stories, I'll let her tell you this, was her experience. 'Course while I was here...this was, I don't know how many weeks it was, the first time. We were going to sales training over at the training building. Which, you know, at the sawmill entrance that building is still there.

DS: Upstairs in the firehouse.

PS: And that was the training building. And we'd go over there every day. And she'd be at home, and she didn't have a job at that time, so she was, tell him about going to the Post Office.

DS: I walk over to the Post Office to get my mail and the people in the Post Office would make comments like, "Well, you got a letter from your momma." Or, you got (laughter) I...they'd be reading your post cards and, you know. It's like...it was interesting.

PS: She walked in one day and the lady says, "Hi Mrs. Smart, you got a card from your momma." (laughter) But...

DS: But...

JG: How's she doing? (laughter)

DS: Yeah. We...when we moved back in '73 we lived in Lufkin in some apartments the first year that we were here. We bought a lot on Brookwood in Diboll from Joe Elliot, who was developing that street. We were about the third...third to fourth house maybe out there.

JG: You said Brentwood?

DS: Brookwood.

JG: Brookwood. Brookwood.

DS: It's right at the north Diboll city limit sign.

JG: Yeah, where you...live, yeah.

DS: And...we hired Burl Griffin, who was raised down here in that rock house.

JG: Ok.

DS: Down here in...

PS: By the school.

DS:...by the primary school. To build our house for us. So, we moved in to that in July of '74. And we lived there until December of 2007. And we have moved into a garden home in Lufkin because we had twenty acres of land in Diboll, and, we were getting weary of mowing. So, our son is living in that house. So there's still a Smart in there.

PS: Kind of an interesting side note to all of this, is on this family thing. We had guys that worked for us, like this J. B. Thompson in Atlanta, Georgia. Bob McCary in Alabama, and I still hear from them occasionally. And they left the company at some point. You know, most of them had worked reasonably a number of years, but they left the company. And till this day I'll talk to them this, that, and the other about, you know, what they're doing in their lives or whatever. And they both tell me now that it was the best time of their lives – their years they worked with the company. And Bobby McCary called me about Christmas of this year...and he teared up on the line, and he said, "I just want you to know," he says, "It was the best years of my life." He says, "I'll always feel fondly of Temple." And there was a second thing and then I'm sure you know how I feel about Joe Sample. But, Joe Sample was my immediate supervisor for thirty years. And, we were like blood brothers at times and we fought like cats and...

DS: Tigers.

JG: Fought like brothers too huh?

DS: Yeah, they did.

PS: And...whatever, but...Joe was a tremendous influence on our organization and Joe was...a straight arrow, you know. He...

DS: He told you just exactly straight.

PS: He told you exactly the way things were. He didn't...he was not abusive and he never used bad language or anything so he was...he and Henry Holubec and others in the company they, they really stand out to me. And I hope I stand out to others because...anyhow. So, the amazing things that I know everybody comes in here and tells you of us...but, everybody in town knew everybody else. Even the people who worked in

the restaurants, and they knew every one of us by name. Mr. Temple knew everybody by name. Spoke to everybody by name, in the sawmill and anywhere else. You go to the grocery store, everybody knew everybody. And I suspicion that people in town thought this was terribly unique and funny that all these young cats were in town here, you know, doing all these things.

JG: You're talking about the young salesmen.

DS: Uh huh.

PS: Yeah, yeah, 'cause I mean, you know, you and I've talked about this so much but, I mean, you know...you just can't imagine. You know, but we brought, Bob Weston and Mr. Temple, brought twenty-five, thirty college graduates and their families here to this town. And it was a tiny little town. I mean, there wasn't even places for people to live. And we didn't move to Lufkin at that early on, I mean, that wasn't the thing. You lived here in town; it was really interesting. And you'd go to the Pine Bough two or three times a week and to the restaurant. And you walk in the front door and everybody's waving at everybody. And Mr. Temple would be over in the corner with his, at his table and...we were just hoping he wouldn't say anything to us. (laughter) And we came in one week, and I never will forget it and...we were coming down the line, and I've forgotten what the issue was. And he says, "Bennie," he was talking to Bennie Brown, "What we doing on so and so?" He said, "Well, Mr. Temple..." he says, "Tell me what's going on, don't tell me all that other stuff." You know, and I mean he's shouting over about eighty people, you know, and Bennie is shrinking into the food line, you know. And...it was pretty amazing really. I don't know if other companies had that experience or not but...he wasn't above calling you out and finding out what was going on. But, Mr. Temple, in my opinion, he was the greatest, his single attribute was his ability to communicate with others and to show...his interest in you and your family. And I'm gonna tell you a personal story 'cause I don't care who knows it. But, our son Roger was born in what year?

DS: '76.

PS: '76 and we were here and he had really, really bad heart issues. And...they told us our first few days that he wouldn't live and then they said he wouldn't live ten years, and five years, and whatever. It just went on forever; but everybody in town knew about it and it was a pretty tragic situation for the...for us. But, he survived and we brought him back to Diboll and...I wasn't blood brothers with Mr. Temple. I knew him when I saw him and I tried to stay from him (laughter) and whatever. And, but anyhow, I went to a Chamber of Commerce function...and saw him, and...he called me over to him and he said, "How is that baby doing?" And I went through, you know, I tried to put a little spin on it to make it sound better, you know. That we were being very couraging upon and I said, "He's home now and he's..."

DS: And the company insurance is doing good.

PS: Yeah, and the company insurance is ok, is doing good. And we were, just really appreciated that. And I tried to put that spin on it, and as I talked to him tears started going. Now, as you know, it didn't take much to get him going but he started crying. And I couldn't believe it. I said, here's this massive man standing here talking to me and he's crying. He whips out his handkerchief and he wipes himself off and he listened intently while I finished and, by that time, he'd thrown me completely off and I stopped. And he just looked back at me and he says, "I'm not a doctor, I don't know anything about medicine, but," he says, "If it's a matter of money, I got some of that." He says, "You tell me if you need anything." Well, I think Jonathan you probably personally understand some of the difficulties that we were talking about. But, for me, that was an amazing thing, and he did that all over town, in Diboll, over the years. I didn't know it 'till later on but for people's personal tragedies. But, what he did was, when I was sitting in the hospital in Houston in the waiting rooms and they're coming out and telling me they're going to do experimental surgery and that kind of stuff...I did not know if our insurance was paying for this or what was happening. And I was just...I was scared to death. I had no idea if I thought they'd, you know, gonna come down and tell me I owed them twenty thousand dollars and I didn't have any money. And so, he didn't know it at the time, but that was the most...it just, comforting thing that he could possibly have said to me. Because, I knew he meant it. He meant every word of it. And I think you've probably heard the stories over the years, but there are just people all over Diboll that would have real serious illnesses and all of a sudden they would show up in Houston in some real fancy room, being treated at so and so. And everybody said, "How did he do that?" You know, and if you dig far enough back, you'd find Mr. Temple in there. And he personally funded some care for people, you know, over the years...as long as, all the way back. Again, this is just that care that he...family care that he liked to give. But it was infectious, and that's what I want to say. Now, what do you want more details about?

JG: Ok.

PS: I've told you...

JG: I want to talk a little bit more about community affairs and maybe some Diboll Days, but when did you begin to work for the company Donna?

DS: I started in 1990. I stayed at home with our sons until one of them graduated and the other one was going into his sophomore year. And I started out just doing fill in. And, it wasn't long before I was working in purchasing full time as a part time person.

JG: (laughter) Full time, part time.

DS: And then, I went to work in human resources when the ADA...

JG: Americans with Disability Act.

DS: Uh huh. When that act was passed we had to have job descriptions for every hourly position at all of the manufacturing facilities. And Brad Bussler was heading that project.

And he asked me to come and...he said, "I got a little typing." A year later we finished those up and...I worked in human resources until I retired a few weeks ago.

JG: Ok.

DS: So...but, you were talking about community and that sort of thing. I think something that I noticed, and...that...you know, kind of relates back a little bit to the caliber of people that they hired coming into the training program. They could have hired anybody off the street, could of sold lumber and figured board feet. But it was interesting to me that they hired only college graduates, which, the sales and marketing department still does to this day.

JG: Yeah, how was Pete hired, he didn't work...he didn't come from A & M? (laughter)

DS: Well, because they wanted people from the southeast...

PS: It was a problem at that time.

JG: Yeah.

DS: He...but, the reason they did that, the philosophy being that they were going to grow this company and these would be the future management people. And you look and it was Joe Sample and it was Harold Maxwell and it was Henry Holubec. And, sure enough, you know, that moved up...

JG: And I guess Jack Sweeny later. Didn't he come through the sales in '70?

DS: Jack Sweeny was, well, Jack came along a lot later than that. He, Jack was working in the office. And this is, it's kind of an interesting story too, he was working in the office when Pete came in to be the product manager for fiber products. And Jack will tell you this story himself. He got a little upset because, he wasn't selected to replace Harold in that position. And...he said, "I knew 90% of that job." And he said, "They brought Pete in out of the field and put him over me and I had to teach him, you know, that job." But he said, "What I found out was that the 10% he knew was more important than the 90% that I knew." You know, because Pete had been out in the field. And at that time Jack asked to go out and they sent him, I think he went to Tyler.

PS: Tyler.

DS: He went to Tyler in the outside sales and then that started his progression, you know, from outside sales back into...

PS: Jack and I are both...were product managers and then we became two marketing managers, which was a different function. And that meant that Jack was over lumber and plywood and I was over fiberboard and particleboard and those kind of things. And we divided it up that way so it's just two people. And we were coming up together. And

never really felt like it was a competition or anything. And I always kind of felt like Jack would do better than I did, 'cause he's pretty bright.

DS: And he's competitive, you don't have that competitive...

PS: Oh my gosh...and I'm not competitive at all. And...so, anyhow, we laugh about this 'cause it's a true story. One day we were sitting in the office together and...doing bull sessions like everybody does. And...one of us said...now, Jack said, "Have you ever thought about what it would be like if one of us, I mean, you know, goes up and," he says, "Like if I become your boss?" And I said, "Yeah, I've thought about that, I wonder how it would be." Or something like that, you know. And Jack says, "Well, I'm going to tell you what, if I ever become your boss," he says, "The next sound you'll hear is the whistle on the green chain over at the sawmill." (laughter) And later on, he moved up in the company. I was always nervous.

DS: But, you ask about community...the leaders like Henry, and Harold...

PS: And Joe.

DS: ...and Joe Sample, and Joe Denman, expected the management, and the people that worked in the office to be part of the community. To be active, to be in rotary, to be in the chamber, to be active in all community affairs, to take lead roles in the Diboll Day activities...it was never verbalized.

PS: And you never felt pressured but...

DS: But, you knew it was the standard. They all did it, and if you wanted to be what you ought to be as a member of Temple management, it meant community commitment, family commitment, you know. It just...

PS: And nowhere you'll ever go, I don't think in the world, and see a company that it didn't matter what time of the day it was, or what was going on, you stand up from your desk and everybody says, "Where you going?" "I've got a meeting, I've got a Diboll Day meeting or I've got..." You walk away, and never, anybody ever questioned, you know, "Was that necessary," or, "You need to stay here today," or whatever. And I probably...

DS: If it was a community thing they never said, "Oh, you can't..." You know, even my job. I was a civic center board member. It's like, "I've got to go at four o'clock I have a civic center board meeting." You know, ok.

PS: So...what she's saying is really true. It was never stated as such, but everybody understood that. And so, therefore, the longer you stayed in town and the longer you got involved in the town, the more committed you were and the whole thing. That was just accepted fact for us. And, I don't think we work any harder than anybody else did, but, if you needed to be over there at six o'clock at night in the office, nobody thought anything about that. You know, we didn't check our watches to see if we were on overtime or

whatever you know. Everybody was committed. And 'course Joe Denman, you know, was kind of headed up the early Diboll Day. And it became such a huge event and...over the years. But, Diboll Booster Club was a pretty big deal all of the time, you know. And...at that time we didn't have the facilities, you know, that we have now. It was really funny because we...you know, I was telling you the other day that I saw this, Jack sent me this book of the 1974 Board of Directors, Time Board of Directors Meeting, whatever.

DS: Temple Eastex Board.

PS: Yeah, it was a, well Time was in it too. It was the first time they met together, Fair Acres Community Center.

JG: Uh huh, uh huh.

PS: And that was the biggest thing in town. And so, Time board would come to town and meet in places like that. And then, over where the...behind Brookshire's at that...the old, what they called the apartments at that time. What's in there now...the?

DS: Oh, it used to be part of the school. Some kind of...

PS: Bob, not, Bowman.

DS: Uh huh. Not Special Ed but something like that.

PS: But those kind of things is over there now. And they use that building...but when we got to town that was actually in a little apartment thing.

JG: You're not talking about The Courts are you?

DS: I don't know what...over by the playground...

PS: They called it...

DS:...of the elementary school.

PS: It was called Company Apartments and whatever. And so...

DS: Across from Dixon Furniture Company on that street.

JG: Well, I think it grew out of the...the Antlers. The Antlers Hotel had built something called The Courts I think. But anyways, that area, if it wasn't.

PS: I'm thinking of the lawyers...

DS: Phillip Leach and Ward Burke.

PS: Yeah. Anyhow, what was so funny to me was that, this, Phillip will tell you this is true. Today, and every time I see him he laughs. But when they were trying to merge Time and Temple together they had brought the people that needed to be in that decision secretly to town. And they were in the biggest apartment over there. I was being...I came to town as a salesman...

DS: Two months before I did.

PS:...to...for something, I don't know what it was.

DS: To start your job before...

PS: Yeah, I guess...but anyhow, Joe Sample and the guy said, "You can get," he says, there were no motels around, they said, "We'll put you up in the apartment, and you're in #16 or whatever." So I came in that night and they're over there having this...

DS: Super secret meeting.

PS:...super secret meeting. Phillip goes to the door to see...he heard a car and he sees me, and he'd never seen me before. He and Mr. Burke look at me and they say, "I don't know who that is." I go into the room next to them and shut the door and everything like that. He later told me, they moved that meeting, they moved the Time people...

JG: Thinking you were a spy.

PS:...and everything because they couldn't identify me and they moved. They said, "Boy you sure messed up a great meeting. We had to move so and so, you know." (laughter)
Oh well.

JG: Oh boy.

DS: I can also remember when we came to Texas...let's see we were at the Radisson Hotel. We flew out here for a sales meeting in 1971...and they told us that they were in talks to merge with Champion.

JG: It was announced in the front page of the newspaper.

DS: Oh and we were all just like stunned, you know, it was so unexpectedly dropped on us there at that meeting. And then, you know, that fell apart.

JG: It just fell apart.

DS: Uh huh. That was in, I guess that would be the fall...

JG: It was '71 wasn't it?

DS: ...late fall of '71.

JG: Yeah. Yeah, it made the front page of the paper and then next week, or a couple weeks later it was a little 'ol bitty item on the back page of the paper. (laughter) It just said it's not going to happen and that was it.

PS: You know, everybody always tells me stories and I don't know this absolutely true...I've got some stories I can't tell. But, Mr. Temple, over in the commissary building, the old, old office, he would sit back in his office with the doors open. And, of course, everybody was coming in from the back door from the sawmill, well, the parking lot was in the back, back there, you know there's a train track and parking lots.

JG: Right, railroad tracks, yeah.

PS: And but, every time that door opened, if he was in there and wasn't doing anything like that, he'd yell at them. As I said before he knew everybody's name, and that included all of us. I mean, we'd come in and, "What are y'all doing?" You know. And it was pretty amazing, 'cause he made that, you know, a habit of his. And I don't think it was something he set out to do intentionally, you know, it's just part of his life.

DS: And Joe Denman was the same.

PS: But the employees thought that was a remarkable thing. That he knew them, and took the time to speak to them and whatever. And...when we moved into the big office over here which is the current corporate office or whatever it is.

JG: 79, 80.

PS: Yeah, whatever.

DS: Uh huh. 303.

PS: Everybody thought he was joking, because he kept saying he didn't want to move over there. And...he moved upstairs into third floor in the corner office where Jack Sweeny is now. And they put him in there and...he immediately started complaining to anybody who would listen to him...that he didn't like it up there, he says, "It's quiet, nobody comes up there, nobody comes by." He didn't get to yell at people (laughter), you know, whatever anymore. I brought...my mother and dad came to town from Georgia. And I took them on a tour, we were very proud of the building and everything. I took them on a tour; we walked up on the third floor just like it was the White House. You know, quietly sneaked around. "Hi Ginger, we're going to show mom and dad the..". And about that time Mr. Temple yelled at us. And he said, "Come on in here." So here's my mom and dad and they've never seen him before or anything, and we walk into his office and he is just as nice as he can be like that. And they said, Mother said, "Well, Mr. Temple you sure have a beautiful office." And he says, "I hate it here." (laughter) She

says, "You hate it?" He says, "Yep, it's quiet up here, don't see anybody. They're not going to isolate me, I'm going to get out of here." And it wasn't too many months before he vacated and moved to the...

JG: Moved to the...

PS: ...Exeter building. But he never bought into that. The word was that he always thought that that building was...what's the word...

DS: Ostentatious.

PS: Ostentatious.

JG: Ostentatious.

PS: That that was not what a sawmill town should look like. And...this is, I'm sure there were a lot of people standing there that day that the President of Temple, I mean Time, came down to dedicate the building. That his name and all that's written on the front of the building out there. And they set the little time capsule and everything. We all gathered around out there and...he got up and spoke. And he said a few nice things but it was real casual. And finally he says, "This is a nice building, I think it turned out really well. I know that Mr. Temple didn't particularly want this to happen here. But," he says, "You know, I've always that if you had to go to work every day," he says, "You might as well go somewhere nice." He says, "I hope you enjoy it and see you around." He went back to New York. We all cheered. Yay!!!! (laughter)

JG: Well, he built it in the flood plane...right there on that creek. I've heard stories about that.

DS: Yeah.

PS: Well that was Mr. Temple's deal.

JG: Yeah, Mr. Temple wanted it right there.

PS: Yeah and...

DS: Well, and you know...

PS: ...I was part of the Booster Club at that time. But, he was negotiating hard and talking to everybody and everything else...but he wanted that spot. And 'course, you know that the conditions of that was that he would build facilities in the park down there. Because, see, that was the...

DS: That was the city park.

PS: The city park, swimming pool, and he says, "I'm gonna build it bigger and better down there, if y'all will just let me have this spot." You know. And so everybody was, and he did. It was a very nice. He built it beautiful.

DS: And it has flooded.

JG: Oh yes, several times.

DS: Well, Pete and Jack Bean had to...

PS: We went down there in a boat one night.

DS: And they got out and held cars...got behind these cars and held onto them so Robert Conner could hook the wrecker up to them 'cause they were floating.

PS: They were company cars there.

DS: That were under...

PS: You know where the little portage is on this side? The cars in there. But we were in the health center. We couldn't get home 'cause the river, creek was up at our house.

DS: The creek was out at...

PS: So we went back to the health center, Jack and I. And Donna was at home. She was on the other side of the creek and couldn't get out. And I couldn't get in. So Jack and I were over here so, 'course we had a shower and some dry clothes and towels and stuff. And so we were over there and as it got more and more, and it began to settle down a little bit. I don't remember where the boat came from. But we had a flat bottom boat, but we paddled that flat bottom boat over to the office. And...got over there and they were, and then we started helping them hook onto cars.

DS: And it washed Bennie Brown's little car down the creek.

PS: He had a little...

DS: He had a little...

PS: Porsche or something.

DS: Uhhh...well, I don't know what it was. It was a small car.

PS: He always had a fancy, fancy sports car of some kind. Well, Bennie was very hard headed and he'll appreciate me saying that about him. And he was up in the office and they started saying, "The water's coming up everybody needs to leave, you know."

DS: “And move your cars.”

PS: “Move your cars, but if you want to go home you can go home. But you need to move your cars.” And they came through three or four times, you know, different people...management people. And boy, you know, most of us, “I’m gonna move my car I’m gonna get out of here.” And Bennie’s over there working. And he says, “They always blowing us out of proportion, you know.” And finally the guy come up there and he says, “Bennie you need to move your car.” And the next time somebody yelled at Bennie, they said, “Bennie come here and look.”

JG: Your car just moved.

PS: No, it was floating down the creek. (laughter)

DS: It moved itself. (laughter)

JG: Floating down the creek.

PS: Floating down the creek down there to...

DS: Too late.

PS: That was...that was fun. (laughter and leaning back in his chair)

DS: Don’t hit the wall.

PS: Oh well. What a great experience.

JG: Anything else, in wrapping up you want to...that you would want to...I’ve more or less run out of questions at this point.

PS: Did we run out of information?

JG: No, just I mean you’ve given me comments about the community and experiences working for the company, being part of the community. Maybe something more specific about Diboll Day. That just, the whole Diboll Day...what all was going on with that?

PS: We were involved in Diboll Booster Club. And it’s really kind of funny till this day to me is that Donna and I, as well as Jack Sweeny and Jack Bean and others...we all lived out in the Brookwood addition. Which is not in Lufkin, I mean not in Diboll...it’s in Burke, it’s actually considered to be Burke. And, Kathy Sample lives out 1818. It never mattered to anybody where you lived. Everybody was a Dibollian. And it was a joke around the company is that they say, “Well, how do you become a member of the Booster Club?” You are a member. Are you breathing, are you in this town or in this county, are you working for this company? And it was that kind of a thing, it was really interesting and then...but, even today, I don’t know if this is good or bad or indifferent,

we have organizations such as the Diboll Library Association, the Diboll Library, and the History Center. With a board made up of people who don't live in Diboll. Or whatever you call us.

DS: Civic Center Board doesn't all live in Diboll.

PS: And nobody has ever paid any attention to that one way or the other. It was kind of, it was just kind of an understood thing. You know, somebody said something to me not too long ago about being...they said, "Well, you gonna get off all the boards now that you've moved to Lufkin?" I said, "I've never lived in Diboll, I've been involved all these years." But, most of the people...you know, Diboll Day would have gone the way of Edsel if it hadn't been for people's attitude about that...because people who lived, worked for the company, who lived in Lufkin worked as hard or harder. The last President of the Booster Club and Diboll Day, the last years, last two or three years...both of them came from Lufkin. You know, that's an interesting thing that's happened over the years...and, I don't know if it's right, wrong, or indifferent. But it's, it's real funny because the City Manager put in a call to me, and I later...I haven't discussed it with him...but, they were calling me to talk about being on City Council at one time. Then they found out I didn't live in Diboll.

DS: Didn't live in the city.

PS: Because that's strange for somebody to come here and do that.

JG: Yeah.

PS: But anyhow, that's kind of the way it was. I, Donna was, over the years, and she can probably tell you the number of years, she was always in charge of the...her function was, she was in charge of the...

DS: Arts and crafts.

PS: Arts and crafts.

DS: From the first time they had that, Mr. Temple wanted to add arts and crafts booths to Diboll Day. That was in the '80's sometime.

PS: Yeah.

DS: And I did that.

PS: So she did that. And then I became, this is kind of my nature, I got involved in what we call special activities. Which included...everything that happened in the park: the entertainment, the tug of wars, events of all types. And we really worked hard at that...I mean we've had events here that were really pretty unique. Within the last few years not as much though, but, we used to have military bands and...

DS: Hot air balloons rides.

PS: Hot air balloons and...

JG: Well as we said earlier even in the fifties the Governors of the state came and you had...anyways.

PS: We had...I thought it would be cool. And one year we had a guy from Houston who did, had hot air balloons. And he primarily went to Arizona and New Mexico and places like that with these events, you know, to bring his hot air balloons. And so, I asked him if he could bring them up here and how much it would cost and we got that put together and everything. And he kept telling me, he says, "I hope I'll be able to do it." He says, "You know," he says, "The air is not that stable up around your area." And he said, "You know, we need," and he said, "We don't do well with pine trees." And he was going through all this, but he was really a fine guy and he wanted to do this. And so, he came up here and so we went on the east side, northeast side of the little pond out there in the park...and we tethered two balloons, two big balloons. It was spectacular. Everybody in town saw these balloons. Nobody ever seen them in this area of the country, you know. And so, when I saw they tethered...that was the only way you could do it. We get, we let people get in the basket and then they had ropes and things and let it go up.

JG: Let them up by ropes and pull them down.

PS: Yeah.

DS: Uh huh.

PS: And so, this went on for a couple of years, I mean, a couple of Dibold Days. You have to think about that being every other year. And...the last time they were here, we'd gotten to be great friends and everything and, but...a storm came up. We had the balloons up there and all of a sudden it veered really quickly. And it wasn't a storm, it was just a little thunder thing...

DS: The winds, the winds came.

PS:...and the wind started blowing. Well, we immediately figured that we needed, that they needed to come down. So, I went rolling over to the...the golf cart over there to where he was. And he's already started working on it, on this project you know. And so, I called on the radio and got a bunch of people, and I, you know, all kind of people came over there. I remember Ray Sanders and John McClain and all of us. And we're over there and we're all hanging on the ropes to try. And he, he's letting the air out of these things. And he gets like a monkey, I mean, these balloons are big. He starts climbing the ropes to get up on top to compress them, to get the air out of them. And we're watching him and everything and we thought we had it under control and we're all holding onto the ropes and all of a sudden, a little gust of wind came...it blew us all down. It was dragging

us down across the park...and we're headed toward the lake. It stopped ten feet from the lake. We all laying on the ground, holding on, you know. (laughter) But it was really fun. And, I don't know whether you want us to tell the stories about the, about the tug of wars. But, the tug of war was really a unique thing. And in early days, Diboll Day, one of the big things was we had the greased pole climbs.

JG: Uh huh.

PS: Later they stopped that because of safety and that sort of thing here. But, I mean, we had some...we had access to a lot of good poles in town. And we'd get those things up, get them greased up and boy the kids had a wonderful time. We'd...

DS: And the four wheeler races. I mean.

PS: Right, we put a fifty-dollar bill up on top of the pole and those kids would struggle forever. Nobody could get up it; nobody could do it. And then, near the end they kind of let go freelance and so people would start putting two and three together. They would stand on each other's shoulders and they'd get somebody up there. Some kid would finally get up there with his shirt off and get that fifty-dollar bill. And he'd come down and be skinned up and burned up and got creosote all over him. But...my favorite story all the time was the...when we had the tug of war with the...different industries in towns. And Texas Foundry and Lufkin Industries, and it was a big deal. Everybody would come to see how that was going to turn out every year. And of course Temple would provide people different meals. And they were dead serious about that thing. And one year they did grand entries and...entries and people came in limousines and all sorts of fancy vehicles. And they'd have bands playing as they came down into the park and Lufkin Industries would roll out. Well, the Foundry didn't show up that year. Finally they, after an hour of waiting and everything...they rolled in. And they said, "Where have y'all been?" And one of the guys said, "Well, Harsh was in jail," said, "We had to bail him out." (laughter) And it took us a while to get him down here. And Harsh was a...he weighed about 380 and...

DS: He was their anchor, I think. Their anchor.

JG: The important component.

PS: Yeah, and it was really true. Those early days of Diboll, you know, you know this better than I do, but, baseball was a big deal. And they played baseball here real serious. And, 'course, even when I got here there was, you know, they were moving families into town that had good athletes and that kind of thing. And, but I had a friend who worked at the commissary...Donna and I had a friend, his name was Lefty Vaughn. And Lefty used to tell us stories about, he worked in the commissary, but Lefty was in town, primarily, his attraction somehow or another he...they either encouraged him to come here to work or he was able get a job here because he was a good pitcher. And they called him Lefty, you know.

JG: Uh huh.

PS: And...but that was, that was real common, but at that time. But, by the time Diboll Day got really at its peak in the '70's there was a lot of attachment to, it was almost like the World Series is when that tug of war would take place. People would come down and really wanted to see what happened, you know, this year. And, it was probably not quite as commercial as, you know, at that time. But it was well attended and...everybody in town took part. I mean, you know, if you were in...all the homecomings and people would use that time. It was a pretty big deal. Bunch of money raised over the years, I guess.

JG: That would be four-and-a-half million to date.

PS: The year I was President of the Booster Club I worried myself sick, because I thought it was going...everybody that does it, thinks that they're going to be the, they're gonna...

DS: The bad.

PS:...be the year that nothing happens. You know, no money comes in and you'll be tagged with that. Well I didn't really feel very comfortable with it and Jack Sweeny said I stood around and wrang my hands for a year. But...I was worried about the money and everything. But I was...I was the President the year we went over, the first time we went over 100 thousand bucks.

DS: And that was 1978.

PS: And I thought that was a big deal. And...you know, they were slapping me on the back for two years about that...and then within just a few years it was 200 thousand, then 300 thousand, whatever, you know. So...

DS: Pete and I started, we did the...had the idea and started the first auction, art auction.

PS: Uh huh.

DS: For Diboll Day. We did the children's carnival.

PS: Yeah.

DS: And the arts and crafts thing.

PS: But, you're right about the political aspects of it because I remember being...and I'm, I know why they quit doing it, but the early days it was a, you know, there was Charlie Wilson and Buddy Temple running for Governor. There was a lot of political activity in the park and nobody thought too much about it. That was kind of an accepted

thing, you know, that that was a good time to come and shake hands, and press a little flesh and get some votes.

JG: Yeah, 'cause even before Diboll Day in the early '50's, you know, the Governors came for the Fourth of July barbecues. Then they had the Juneteenth barbecues for...

DS: Uh huh.

JG: ...for the black community... and Martin Dies, and they usually had some big, major political figure coming and making a speech and...

PS: I would be remiss without saying this. I have never in my life seen anything to match C. H. Shepherd. I've never seen anything like that. 'Course you know he was over the fiberboard plant at that time. And his...

JG: You're talking about for his exuberance with the Diboll Day.

PS: Yeah.

JG: Yeah.

PS: And he would get so excited and there's no way that you could manufacture that. But, he couldn't wait for it to start and he, he was Mr. Diboll during that period. And he'd go around town, and he was like a cheerleader. (clapping) "Y'all working hard, get us some stuff in here now, you've ordered these little trinket things to give away, and the coins and everything. You've got some stuff coming. Alright, let's go." You know, and...sixteen weeks that man would be...and he did a wonderful job. And then he was just really a part of it...and here again he was one of these Lufkinites working. 'Course you know, his son Mark is back in town. And he's back in the community here and he's been to Austin, and he's back here now. But, there were some pretty amazing leadership people that came through. I heard a rumor a few years ago that Mr. Temple...one time, told someone, he didn't tell me this, but he said that he regretted in some ways developing Crown Colony. And he said, he wasn't thinking at the time. And, because, when you ask him why, he would say, he said, "Well, you know, I never thought about it, but," he says, "When we developed Crown Colony," he said, "All of our young management people moved to Crown Colony." And he said, "We should of provided...housing..."

DS: They should have had Deer Trace or some place here...

PS: He said, "We should have kept our nucleus of leadership for the community here in town."

JG: Well I, he may not have said it in these exact words, but, it was always my understanding in talking with him, that that was why he built Crown Colony, was to attract the management that the company was going to need.

PS: They thought they needed to attract to bring them into town.

JG: Yeah.

PS: But...

JG: The golf course at Crown was specifically for that. And then he says...

DS: But he didn't mean for them to move their residence there...I don't think.

PS: Well, I don't know. I think he later on just realized that...

JG: Yeah.

PS: ...hey everybody's moving to Crown Colony and not living in Diboll...

JG: Or maybe just wished he'd built it here and not there.

PS: Yeah, yeah.

JG: But I think that that was the reason was to give...

PS: He didn't have anything against it, he was a very big part of...he and Lottie both were a big part of Crown Colony over the years.

JG: Oh yeah.

PS: I don't mean that to be detrimental, but, what I do think is that he...what I was try...my point is that he felt as strongly about, you know, developing Diboll as in those cultural ways as anybody could possibly feel. And he understood that. And so all of these little upstarts that were coming to town for whatever reason...and then the guys that were already here, you already know about. But it was remarkable. Stubby, Horace Stubblefield, John Booker, Jack Sweeny, all of these guys were ex-military, you know World War II pilots; and Bill Lindsey and all of them. And they had their own little club prior to this. And as I've told you before, he referred, not a lot...but on a couple occasions, he'd be talking to Donna and I and he referred to us as the second wave. Because, his first wave of management team was these guys, and a lot of them are still living.

DS: Engineers.

PS: Joe – he told stories forever about Joe Denman and how he built things here and downtown. And the hours and days that they spent working 16 hours a day to do the things they did. So he was very proud of that, and, we were kind of the second wave of his vision. And then I'm sure there was a third and fourth and whatever, but I, Donna and

I, tell people openly all the time that if you lived a 100 years I would never regret living here. Because, it was so wonderful, and other people that we know that were here too feel the same way. I was so, really neat to see this unfold. No matter what you thought of Mr. Temple, any time during this, he had his good points...wonderful points and he had a few bad ones. But, you...to see that unfold was just remarkable. And I used to hear them telling stories...and you need to talk to John Booker in Pineland sometime. Golly, some of the stories they would tell, but, they...when the early days when they were, Mr. Temple was...he had people like Denman and Stubblefield...all of them could fly. And they were flying in these little small planes without instruments and stuff in East Texas. And following roads and water towers...

JG: I heard how they found the Diboll airport was they looked for the Pine Bough sign at night because it would be lit up. (laughter) It was the only thing that was bright enough to find.

DS: Probably.

PS: He told us one time that they got down low enough in some little town that they kept circling a water tower trying to read what name was on it.

JG: What town's name was it?

PS: What the town was. That's...they did things like that. And, it was like conquering the old west, it really was.

DS: And, he said he never asked Stubby to do anything that he said, "I can't do that." He said, "No matter what I ever asked him to do, he did it." He could do it like, I think at the time he was talking about building the second nine holes to the golf course. I mean, he didn't say, "I've never built a golf course before." He just said, "Ok." And did it.

PS: This is just my...

JG: Stubby was over the Crown Colony project. Yeah.

PS: Yeah. This is just my opinion and it doesn't count for very much, but you know, I just thought about this, but you know you hear people talking about the greatest generation...you know, that World War II group.

JG: Uh huh.

PS: That's who built the early Diboll. As Mr. Temple moved into the industrial age, that's those guys.

JG: Uh huh.

PS: And we came along and we...we were the second wave...and...

JG: Second best generation huh? (laughter)

DS: Second best. Oh well. That's good enough.

PS: Whatever.

JG: I was just teasing.

PS: Well, I have a...as you can obviously I have a...

JG: You're going to be one best, or the greatest.

PS: Well, you know, I have a lot of respect for those...

JG: We're on an hour and forty-three minutes. (laughter)

PS: Have a lot of respect for those people...I'm sure you do too.

JG: Yes. Anything else you'd like to add? We can do another one.

PS: Can we have another day?

JG: We can have a rebuttal.

PS: Can we have another day?

JG: Yes, we can. We'll wrap this up. Thank you very much.

DS: You're welcome.

JG: Appreciate your time.

END OF INTERVIEW