

**STACY COOKE**

**Interview 188a**

**February 1, 2010 at The History Center, Diboll, Texas**

**Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer**

**Patsy Colbert, Transcriber**

**ABSTRACT:** In this interview with Jonathan Gerland, Stacy Cooke reminisces about the 14 years he spent as a member of the Diboll Independent School District School Board. The interview focuses on the years 1966-1970, during the integration of Diboll's schools. He credits the board, the school administration, the teachers, the students, the local community, and Arthur Temple, Jr. for ensuring that Diboll experienced desegregation without many problems.

**Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG):** Today's date is February 1, 2010. My name is Jonathan Gerland. We are at The History Center and I am with Stacy Cooke, who was a member of the Diboll Independent School District board of trustees during school integration. I believe he went on the board in April of '66. Maybe we could just begin by just asking you, how did you come to serve on the school board? How did that happen?

**Stacy Cooke (hereafter SC):** Well I had moved here in December of 1961, December 11<sup>th</sup> as a matter of fact, to join Temple and really at that time the furniture manufacturing facility. I'm saying all that, in '61 I was about 26 years old, I guess. I was young and by that time I was having children coming along in 1960, '58, '64, '66, and having children you actually have a little more interest in the schools and what is going on. I just wanted to be of some service to the community I think, too. When you're younger you're more challenged and willing to do those things. Not any particular reason other than that I think, just the desire to do what you could for the community you are going to live in.

**JG:** What was your own background? Comment if you would on your family. How you were raised? Where you grew up? Maybe, what were some of your experiences with race relations, things like that?

**SC:** You bet. I grew up in a little community called Reagor Springs, situated half way between Ennis and Waxahachie, Texas, a farming community. My dad ran a little country grocery store where I grew up. He was doing that from the time I was born until the time I left home and then after that. But anyway, of course in that area there were a lot of blacks and they were sharecroppers for the people that worked there. So, a lot of our trade was black people. I'm mentioning that because we are talking about integration ultimately here. So, it did give you some...probably a little deeper insight of things. My dad was always very cordial to all people and a good Christian man. But a lot of our trade was with black people. And at that time it was kind of interesting, the farmers you know, I remember my dad would say in regard to the sharecropper that was on their place, that he would be responsible to pay for anything they didn't pay over a hundred dollars, or something like that. So, dad would extend them credit during the growing season and the fall. So, there was that relationship early on, playing, I played with both races. Of course,

the schools were very much segregated in those days and there was some presumption of 'that is just the way it was'. We had all inherited that situation and of course they were natural regarding the years. You think back, I was born in '35 well, that is not a real long time after the Civil War. I've lived, now I'm 75 years old. Time is a lot shorter than it used to be. You know, we had a war over that and Civil War history has always been an interesting thing to me and I've done a lot of reading on that. One of the historians I believe, I can't recall his name, but he said it was the war that defined us as a nation where we truly held to those principals that were set forth in the Constitution about all men being created free and equal. So, I think the change was probably being set maybe in my generation coming up. We worked, played together and those things.

**JG:** And, you said you were born in 1935, right?

**SC:** In '35 right, March 30, 1935.

**JG:** And you graduated from high school there?

**SC:** I went my first six years to a country school that had four grades in one room. It was a two-room schoolhouse. By the seventh grade they had started bussing and we went to Waxahachie and that is where I finished high school. Going on from there I went to the University of North Texas and got a degree in accounting and married one of my classmates of that year at school. Went to work for Arthur Anderson in Dallas, public accounting. Did that for about a year and a half and had a call, I took ROTC in college and was commissioned to go in the Air Force. I went in the Air Force in what wound up to be two years because it was peacetime and had an early out. I came back to Dallas to Arthur Anderson until...then I had a fraternity brother in college who was ahead of me, he was already out of school in the field and he was making distressed furniture tops for case goods in the furniture industry. Of course, Temple was buying these tops from him, Horace Stubblefield actually, who worked for Temple as you know, and, so in this process my friend and Stubby were communicators and Stubby was looking for someone to set up a cost system at the furniture plant. So, I learned of that and I didn't know where Diboll was. My wife had grown up in Palestine, graduated high school and went to college from there so, I kind of fell in love with East Texas when I was dating her. So, I come down for that interview with Stubby, Stubblefield and he hired me, rather slowly, he was busy I guess and I didn't hear and I was anxious to come. I was ready to get out of Dallas and public accounting and come back to my country roots, I think had a lot to do with it. Diboll was a...obviously it looked like a growing town and an opportunity to do accounting like I would like to. Where you are more, where you're closer to operations and so it was an opportunity. I remember calling him back and saying, "I haven't heard from you yet, are you interested?" So he finally invited me on down. Now, I took a twenty-five dollar a month cut to come to Diboll and sold my house in Richardson, Texas where I was living.

**JG:** Describe if you would, maybe Diboll as a community during that time? You said you came in '61, just remindful that the city didn't even incorporate as a municipality

until '62. So, if you would just sort of set the stage from your perspective of Diboll and again, specifically with race relations, schools and that kind of thing when you moved.

**SC:** Well, I'll try to do it quickly. I tend to be a man of too many words, so. But anyway, yes, we moved here and of course the first question was a place to live. I had lived as I said in Richardson and I communicated [commuted to] downtown Dallas everyday and boy I was burned out on that rat race and a wreck on the freeway everyday. And, again the country was crying out for me. We came here and therefore I wanted to live as close, I used to say, as to the smokestack as I could. I had been driving long distance and I had my fill of that. So, I wanted to live in Diboll. Lottie Temple had a house here for rent that was her residence and it was for rent. I think I rented it for \$75 a month. So, we did that and settled in. As to the community of course the Pine Bough Restaurant was here and it was a great place to eat. Good food and everybody enjoyed going there for lunch, both in and out of town. But local grocery stores, Pavlics and I believe another store over here and a rather small community, slower action and kind of very interesting to me. It was a breath of life for me after Dallas.

**JG:** Okay, we are jumping forward now I guess to when you were on the school board. Like I said, I believe you came on in April of '66 and that was the same time that Buddy Temple came on.

**SC:** We came on at the same time? I didn't know that.

**JG:** Y'all came on together. What were some of your earliest memories of serving on the school board? Where was integration as an issue at that time? In the context of maybe other issues that might have come up, what was...

**SC:** You have to go back, and of course when the civil rights movement started in '64 there were obvious, you knew in all of this there was a risk of disaster almost because there were some people who felt very strongly that it shouldn't take place. And, you know, the civil rights movement was going on and there was a lot of resentment. I didn't sense that so much here. Not that I even thought about it, but at least I think that there was in the air the feeling that this needed to be done. Anybody that feels like you are a law abiding citizen, when the government of the land says this must be done, then you know you've got to either face abiding by the law or the results that come from not doing that. So a reasonable man knows we got to try to do this, but the question is how and how to do it peacefully. And when I was talking about the era here, the tone, Mr. Temple as you know, Arthur Temple, Jr. was a man who very much cared for the people. He was very concerned about that and that included whites and blacks, and hard working people on both ends of the thing. So, I think there was the feeling that as far as the company was concerned, and I was working for the company, that there wasn't going to be any resistance for sure on the company's part because you just knew that he was interested in all the people. So, that set the tone I think for that which would follow. There were, I read a few articles just to try to brief my memory on all this some. You know, there were in our time about three or four school board members that were for this and a couple that weren't. And, it wasn't, I don't think it was so much, they were older men, they were out

of another generation that where this was very new to them, whereas the rest of us were younger. A couple of these men were in business here and I'm sure they had integrated trade in part of their living. So, just like my dad was back in the grocery store. Not that it was driven by an economic factor but it had to be a consideration you know. So, I think the tone was here where we knew it was doable and you knew it needed to be done. The question was just how in the world are you going to do it and hopefully maintain peace and order in the community.

**JG:** I think I know the answer to this question but did the school board ever hear directly from Arthur Temple Jr. in any way?

**SC:** Never. I will comment on this, and this is the absolute truth. I worked for the company 35 years and even, only about 15 of that, 14 or 15 of that on the school board in the early days. But, never in the midst of all this kind of situation did I ever... any word come down to me through the chain that I needed to do something one way or the other. And I was thankful for that of course.

**JG:** This, a little bit out of order here, we are kind of going back a little bit, but you and I were speaking earlier about more of the setting of the community. Of course the city incorporated in '62, there were a lot of federal funded projects then ongoing, such as the establishment of the Housing Authority, the library, the public library had some federal funds and just a whole host of other projects that in the big scheme of things Diboll was a very progressive town. Do you care to comment on any of that and how that might have related into school integration with complying with federal maybe mandates you might say?

**SC:** I really don't know if you would say behind the scenes. I know that Mr. Temple was probably a democrat at that time and Lyndon Johnson was president following Kennedy's assassination in '63, which was a very traumatic thing. But, I remember somebody that was somewhere one time that talked about Lyndon looking over and saying, "Hi Arthur" so I'm sure Arthur was contributing to that, but now, I've since lived long enough and studied the history enough and read current events now to know that companies and people contribute to parties and that is the way it's run. You can argue that all day and you can talk about this too much, but I don't know to what extent even if any that had on say HUD [Housing and Urban Development] or who ever it was that provided the money that was provided to do. But I look at it more now from a managerial stand point 'cause at that time the plywood plant that I was going to go to, to work in '64 and become manager of in '65, was built on property that had formerly been the shacks of the old town. All that was torn and moved and Mr. Temple moved the people back.

**JG:** And this was the historically segregated black community, where the plywood plant was built?

**SC:** That is right, that is right, exactly. So, what is Garrett Ranch area they used to call it, they went down and built other houses for them and thus there was improvement. Regardless of how you feel politically at the time, you had, the black man had a better

opportunity. And they liked it. I remember one of my first college classes was on sociology. And that always stood out to me, one of the things you read is that people resist change, just a truth. So, naturally there was some resistance, and I think it would be some resistance to a lot of people, the black people had lived the way they lived and they had their house that they lived in. They probably hated to give that up. I think I remember some of that. It wasn't perhaps a big thing but a very personal thing I guess. But, overall when you look back and then came the public housing. I've been on that board too. My reflection on that is in a more worldwide fashion I really think the government would have been wiser had they made it an opportunity for people to get a loan and build a house somewhere. Because, I think in a way we have created a situation where people are living so closely that even there is probably some resentment there. This crime that we know grows out of these kind of situations. Maybe it could have been done a better way but even at that there was the opportunity for above sub-standard livings that were going on at the time.

**JG:** What was the talk on the town so to speak? Did you hear directly from your constituents as a representative on the school board, specifically to the integration issue? At church, co-workers, did that ever come up in conversations?

**SC:** You know really, I don't remember, probably other than what I would sense at a board meeting because of the other couple of guys. It wasn't that they were adamantly opposed; I think they were probably a little more afraid of where this would take us. I'm saying that is probably about the only time that I remember any hard discussions. I don't remember them coming and saying, "What are you doing? You guys have gone crazy." It never was anything like that said to me like that. I don't really sense it in the community too much. I think that most reasonable people realized that this was going to take place one way or the other. We could do it with an armed force like that went to Little Rock, wasn't it I believe, when integration back in those days, or you could just try to make it peacefully work, so that was our charge, I think.

**JG:** Let's look at maybe if you can recall any of the issues involved with integration. Where I'm getting with that is, do you remember anything about say the disposition of the teachers as the children integrated? Maybe concern for adequate number of facilities, integrated sports, social interactions, and also recall that the school district had just recently expanded irregardless of integration with bringing in the Beulah School district or the Beulah schools. The Burke school had just recently been brought into the Diboll schools. Maybe just the growth overall of the district and then how integration fit into that. Do you recall any specifics of all that?

**SC:** Well it's a little difficult to remember all of that. But, I know there had to have been problems. That would have just been the ongoing type of board problems where you're trying to do what you've got to do with the funds that are available through taxation. I guess being 15 years on the board I remember a time when people were against raising taxes anyway, so it's hard to relate that say to necessarily integration. But yes, you know I've read some of the articles that were in the *Free Press* and in that era to refresh my memory a little bit. And for example, at the Temple School, which was the old colored

school, the black school, I remember Mr. Massy was principal at that time. A very good man, very quiet and gentle and able to balance things I think. I read in the article about the coaches that were... as integration started there wasn't enough boys to sign up for football to make a viable team.

**JG:** On the black school.

**SC:** On the black team yes, the government was saying you are going to have to integrate sports too. He came to the meeting and said that he couldn't field a good team and his coaches had resigned so it was time to do that. But, the building and I'm reading again, I think the elementary schools was already pretty well pushed to capacity, and here we're gonna open a school, so how do you re-prorate the students. Not only the students but you've got black teachers too. It couldn't have been an easy time, I don't remember all those details now, but I just know from the logistics of buildings and people and all that it's amazing probably we didn't have more problems than we had I guess.

**JG:** I think the state education administration came down in November of '66 and at that time was recommending the school district to add two and a half classrooms and two and a half teachers per year, as the school was growing.

**SC:** They probably didn't fund that mandate either. That is thing you got into even with the federal thing, there wasn't any federal money coming along to say, "We are going to build you the buildings to do this."

**JG:** I think the school district too was building a lot of temporary buildings and they were even advising not to do that, that you needed something a little more permanent.

**SC:** We did a lot of that. I remember being involved in that and going to other schools. It was a little later, but we had to start having them.

**JG:** I was looking back at some of the school board minutes, and I think the very first meeting I got a little tickled out of this. You made the suggestion that the school board be reviewed by Axley & Rode Auditors. (laughter) I remember when you came on our board here at The History Center we started using Axley & Rode, too. If you could, do you remember anything about the school finances as an accountant coming in, what was your first impression of how things were run?

**SC:** Well, as an accountant that got me probably more involved. I remember not long ago John Ralph Poulard was telling me sometime later when he was on the school board we had talked about getting bread bids and one of them had come in lower, and I guess the accountant, I had figured out how many slices of bread were in each loaf and actually the other bid was going to be cheaper. It kind of astounded him, he hadn't thought of it that way. But getting back to your question, apparently we felt, Mr. Pate, he was pretty well loaded, he is an older man, getting near retirement, we have got integration and as he said from the days he had been in school as superintendent that always involved teaching, overseeing, changing light bulbs, sweeping the floor and the whole ball of wax.

Well, things were getting a little more, you had more population now and schools are getting busier and it's obvious it's wearing on him and so some of us felt we needed a business manager. You mentioned that from the audit, I remember that coming up because it had become that the idea of bringing in a business manager was not, I guess, felt like the thing to do by some and therefore it...I'm getting my timing mixed up a little bit, but Pop Rich had been hired as business manager and in there, there was some insinuations that surely he must not be doing things just right or perhaps it wasn't all on the up and up. And I knew better because I knew Pop and I knew the family. I just knew the board members that were kind of against that and I just didn't feel like we were going anywhere until we got it resolved. So, I just made a motion that every expenditure over a certain dollar amount be looked at by the auditors. And I think that passed and we did that and sure enough nothing came up and that was the end of that. Then we had a business manager from then on. I don't remember all the details about why, but I think I felt that we needed someone riding closer on finances. That was not to any ones detriment it was just the fact that it was good business to do.

**JG:** I noticed also in the minutes and it came up in the context of taxes, whether evaluations were going to be raised or the tax rate was going to be raised, but to cover, I believe it was in September of '66, that Temple Industries made a \$63,000 donation, which was equal to the school debt at that time. Was that common?

**SC:** I don't think, not that I recall. I don't even remember that, yet I kind of do too. Yes, I suspect rather than raise taxes, I don't know the economic situation in '66.

**JG:** This would have been early on in your time. They had like a three-year carry over of debts. The context I think was that Diboll, the school district was being very cautious of what they did. It was even mentioned that all the other school districts where Temple owned land, which as you know they owned forest lands all over East Texas, but whatever Diboll schools did they followed suit. So it was maybe a little more important that they didn't take it lightly.

**SC:** Well, from a company standpoint, I don't know that the board went to the company and asked for money.

**JG:** No, I wasn't implying that.

**SC:** But I suspect that the company knew that the school was having that kind of problem and just decided that was the best way to take care of it. Just to donate that to our...

**JG:** But to your knowledge, I mean during your time did that ever come up again?

**SC:** Not that I recall. Not that I recall. In fact I suspect, you know, I think the company for sure by this time is wanting more to get out of that type of thing. Back in the old days of owning houses and renting, Mr. Temple, he wanted to get out of that era and let people be on their own and get out of the commissary idea, etc. I think that kind of attached to

that would just be more of the parental type overseer of the school and not, I just know we weren't under any gun like that. I think it was just a matter of expediency probably that year.

**JG:** How did integration progress? The plan, the Freedom of Choice plan, which was actually adopted before you came on the board. I believe in '65 the '65-66 year roughly twenty black students had enrolled or expressed their intention to go to the formerly all white schools, but only one student actually did and that was Valerie Anderson. The following year, I think roughly 40 or 41 signed intentions and did go to those schools. Anything that you recall, just the progress any issues that came before the school board in connection with that?

**SC:** No not that, you asked me if I recall, that is my problem with this many years to recall. But no, I think it was probably even on part of the black community they probably enrolled and then when the time came it was again hard for them to leave the school. This is my...because there wasn't any pressure that I know of trying to keep people from actually showing up. I think the next year it was just a revelation that it just took that time for the things to start settling in, soaking in. Problems not off hand, you have got problems that would come up. You know, you might have a scuffle between boys at school, fisticuffs... that went on before integration too. But if it got being between races that might get kicked, people are a little more noticing of that. The school I think were very hard in that time, the principals of the school knew the families and knew the children and they knew, let's just say and I think I remember a case maybe of a black boy and a white boy getting in a fight. One boy, maybe the white boy, gets a little different punishment. We were interested in those kind of things and we would say why was this boy sent home and this other one given capitol punishment and a good spanking. And they would say well, if we sent this boy home he was going to be out on the street. If we sent this boy home his parents were going to know and we knew his parents and we knew they would take care of the problem. So, if we got into it that is kind of an example of one thing I remember. In questioning you found out there was some common sense of educators to know how to deal with those better than we did as a board, where we get more political at that level.

**JG:** But there were a few cases you do remember where that did come before the board?

**SC:** Well, yes but very few as coming before the board.

**JG:** What about teachers? Again, I didn't have the opportunity to go through all the minutes, but I remember there was one black teacher, Odyessa Wallace, I think was questioned. She was teaching at the formerly all white school.

**SC:** The former all white school, all black school.

**JG:** She was a black teacher teaching at the white school, I believe.

**SC:** Okay, by that time.

**JG:** Yes sir and she was come under question as to maybe her disciplinary actions or maybe even her grading. Do you remember anything about that? And actually I think Bea Burkhalter made some defense of her, a white teacher defending [her], saying that she did not do anything out of the ordinary.

**SC:** Oh I see. You're saying she stood in defense of Odyessa.

**JG:** Right, right.

**SC:** Odyessa, Odyessa...I think. [Transcriber's note: Mr. Cooke is trying to remember how to pronounce her name]

**JG:** I think Patsy found out the other day a different way of pronouncing her first name.

**SC:** I remember her. It apparently wasn't a big issue. I don't remember any... much about that.

**JG:** But, to your knowledge you don't recall any incidences like that where teachers might have come under question, white or black. You know, the black community questioning some of the white teachers or anything.

**SC:** Not right off. No, no.

**JG:** You mentioned your children. How many children do you have?

**SC:** I have four children. My oldest was born in '58 so by the time I moved here in '61 he was only 3 or 4. My next daughter was born in '60, she is in the first grade by this time, I guess and he is a couple of grades ahead of her. Then about a four year gap of my last two were born in '64 and '66. All of my children graduated here and went on to college.

**JG:** Do you recall anything from your two oldest children when school...I mean did they attend school at the all white school and then integration happened while they were attending school?

**SC:** Yes, integration would largely have happened while they were...my first two were in elementary school. Would be right at 58 plus six is what, 64. So, he was just beginning the first grade in '64, so not at that level. When my children were involved there were enough years I think took place that we were pretty well settled in by the time say they went to mid school or high school or generally when their problems began. I don't remember any big issues. I think it was more challenging and not saying you know...our country was somewhat responsible for the fact because of poor plants and facilities for the education of the black. They were a little bit behind, with all due respect they were. So when you integrated and you got to kind of teach now to both levels so that was probably more of a challenge for the teacher, but it had to be done.

**JG:** Do you remember where the school board meetings were held?

**SC:** Yes, I remember, my chief memory is over, you know the high school was the school that sets here by the History Center now.

**JG:** It's Junior High now.

**SC:** At that time it was high school, and now it's the junior high. And you walk in the front door and it seems to me the meeting room was off to the right or left right as you enter the room. That is where most of the meetings that I recall took place.

**JG:** How did a typical meeting progress? I mean, you served on a lot of boards and different things, how would you describe it in the context of that?

**SC:** I think generally the agenda probably was made up by the superintendent, just the things we were going to address in that meeting. It has been a while but probably a review of the budget that was the biggest thing during the summer getting ready for. There was always the question, one thing we used to fuss about was the coaches. You know, they had their meeting and their state meeting in August and you'd find out some of your coaches had been hired away by another district. So, those were always issues. Staffing you know, people resigning and hiring new teachers. A lot of changes and I remember we had way back, sometime by the time...David Foster I believe was the man we hired to follow Mr. Pate. He was a good man; he was beginning the turning of things here. I brought that up for a reason, now it escaped me. That is what happens when you age.

**JG:** We were just talking about the meetings and how they progressed and that kind of thing. Does that help you?

**SC:** Yes.

**JG:** Not necessarily?

**SC:** Yes, well.

**JG:** How long did you serve on the school board?

**SC:** I believe it was fourteen or fifteen years. We closed the Diboll plywood plant in '79, shut her down in October of 1979 and it was about that time, somewhere as my memory serves me.

**JG:** Okay.

**SC:** So I went on, and what did you say '66? So, '66 to '79, thirteen or fourteen years.

**JG:** Okay, and since you served, not at the very beginning but certainly near the beginning of integration and all the way through, how would integration play in maybe the big scope of things? And, let me...I just thought of this, I know it's been said Diboll integrated much earlier than other schools.

**SC:** I think that is right.

**JG:** And you know Lufkin, I remember even [in] '99 or 2000 was still under some kind of...

**SC:** Mandate.

**JG:** ...yes, federal review policy or something and that wasn't lifted until the past ten years, I guess. Comment on that, if you would. How do you feel about all that?

**SC:** Again, in my review of the paper and articles, I say that Huntington was moving about the time we were. Now it's said, you know, it's hard to tell but they are a fairly close school district reliable on tax money too, I guess. I had recalled I thought in my mind we were pretty early on. I was reading the time lapse from the time the Commissioner of Education approved our plan it was not a long term, and I thought gee of all the districts over the nation that must be putting in this information you would think it would take forever to get word back. But again, it makes me think they weren't probably a lot of them doing it. I think we were fairly early on.

**JG:** You almost get the impression too, that Diboll expressed an early interest in doing it. I remember, I think one of the very first mentions when it came up, I don't think a specific vote was recorded, but when it was first presented the school board said, just what you are saying, we are going to do it, it's just a matter of the details. You almost get the impression too that, I think that last year the school board voted to go Freedom of Choice one more year.

**SC:** Yes, and that was the feeling of...

**JG:** Then like the next month the review board came down and said, "What is really holding you up?" And you said, "Well, I guess nothing."

**SC:** You talking about the feds, the feds coming down?

**JG:** Right, right.

**SC:** That is right. But I think after all you got this mandate, the feds say here is what you got to do and you need to do it. But at the same time we are sitting here amongst the people and you're knowing this and this can be a fire-able issue and so let's say, lets use some reason here. I think the logic, it would be more logical to let's integrate the first grade say, and let time kind of take care of that process. I know that had to be in some of the early discussions. I think we did that. The paper article I read think we came up with

kind of a stair step and that wasn't going to be acceptable. So, it wasn't resisting, we were just trying to make it work in our community as best we thought we could. But they weren't going to accept that.

**JG:** Right. Well, I was just wondering because you know, say you would maybe hopefully, correctly assume that they were doing the same thing in all of these school districts. For instance Lufkin, for whatever reason, you know resisted.

**SC:** More resistance there.

**JG:** More resistant, that is what I was getting at is that maybe obviously...

**SC:** I think that's evidence of the fact...

**JG:** Diboll was a little less resistant, didn't put up a fight, if that's the correct term.

**SC:** That is right. I think it was largely because of the company and the Temples' influence. I really do. That here we've got working people and Mr. Temple as you know, you've been around long enough to know it. He made the statement, "What is good for the company is good for you." He'd be talking about his managers then, people like me. And, I'm not talking now in regard to integration but in whatever thing, if we needed to take a cut that year, or not get an increase, I don't even remember specifically of what I'm talking about, I just remember there was that rule. One thing I do remember him saying one time when we were talking about political action committees you know, when that movement became and it went into management because the unions were getting such power and such an ear at Congress, I don't know what administration but, it felt like it was time that management have some feeding into the political, I never was personally a believer in political action committees, but I think that is one of them I remember Mr. Temple saying it because he was saying, "Look, the company needs legislation favorable to the forest industry and all that that implies if we are going to stay in business." It was a very logical business decision and therefore you need the right to have some balance in this thing between labor and I don't know if he went into all that detail at the time but I know now from reading history that's kind of the way this evolved. He made that statement so I guess I got on board. But, it would come the time when I would begin personally neglect 'cause I felt like sometime whoever the company was interested in for going to Congress was not the guy I wanted. So, I would just be off setting my own vote. I had some discussions about that.

**JG:** [Cell phone ringing] Excuse me, just ignore my phone. I'm sorry, go ahead.

**SC:** But, that is it. I'm just saying that there was that idea. I'm saying that even in regard to integration, if we must do this and we need to take care of our people, and I'm reading behind the scenes now, that it's never in public known to me but I would just imagine that Mr. Temple tried to do all he could to make Diboll a better place to live. If that involves federal funds to build better housing, it was going to go somewhere and therefore I think his philosophy probably generally was "if it's good for the company it's

good for us.” And no one...it wasn’t being forced on us I think that was just a thing that had to happen. It would be the same...we went, the company went to Mexico and was instrumental in bringing a lot of Spanish in because you needed those people to fill those jobs. These new industries were getting into particleboard, plywood and other things. Those people working in those mills had to come from somewhere and the labor base to do that kind of labor in the beginning wasn’t here. So, in a way that had to do not only with black integration but with Spanish too, I think.

**JG:** Well, comment a little bit on that if you would. You said you served through ‘79, when did the Hispanic families come in? I have forgotten.

**SC:** Well it was before that.

**JG:** Did that come up in the school board?

**SC:** I remember in running the plywood plant, just running the plywood we began to have several Spanish people coming in. So, that had to be somewhere between ‘65 when I started there until during that ‘65 to ‘79 years, in there somewhere, and probably earlier even. The early part of that I think probably.

**JG:** But your experiences on the school board did, you know...

**SC:** For what, the Spanish?

**JG:** Yes, was there anything that came that made it to that level?

**SC:** Not that I recall. No, if I...and this is...I think it was probably the case that many of the Spanish families not being able to speak the language, the parent, mother and dad that came in and wanted their children to be integrated. They were generally the Spanish families seem to me to be a pretty close family knit company, group, interested in family. I’m saying that they didn’t make waves. I think they just...but they weren’t, I don’t think at the same time that somehow in our culture the Spanish weren’t more as resisted as the blacks were going back to old earlier times, i.e. the Civil War and all that came out of that and probably more importantly Reconstruction. It’s sad that we had to fight that war and didn’t take care of the thing better after the war was over.

**JG:** Did you regularly attend sporting events say, Diboll High School football games and things like that?

**SC:** Oh yes, during that time, yes. During my days on school board at least and those when my boys were playing.

**JG:** Do you remember those first years of integration with Diboll having black football players? And maybe the opposing teams, were they integrated as you recall?

**SC:** I don't recall all of that so much, but I remember there were some pretty good black football players, one of which went on I think to get a scholarship and then went to pro-ball. I don't think it lasted a long time, Mack...

**JG:** Mack Mitchell?

**SC:** Mack Mitchell, yes. And so, yes, there were some good, I think athletically we probably, I think you could pretty easily say the black guys pretty well dominate the football sports arena. Because they are good at it!

**JG:** Okay Stacy that is pretty much all the specific questions I had. Is there anything you wanted to add in follow up? You've already given us sort of a broad perspective of everything so it's not necessary but I just wanted to give you the opportunity if there was anything that you wanted to add.

**SC:** Oh boy, it just becomes more nostalgic now with so many years I was here, from what...all of '62 to when I left in 2007...2008. I guess I moved to Houston in 2008 when I remarried on the loss of my wife. But now, coming back you know, it's hard to fathom all those years you spent here doing what we did day in and day out. I had the privilege yesterday of assisting in a funeral for James McGuire. James was a long time operator of the band mill at the sawmill and a good friend of mine and a member of our church. I'm still kind of remembering that very clearly and the sadness of his family. He had a great family – hard working man and didn't have a lot of education. But very good and the funeral home was just filled with people that knew him. He was one of the old time guys, right out of the sawmill, hard working. There are houses all over this country constructed with boards he sliced off those logs. There were a lot of men like him that even preceded him back through those years. So it's....the years from plywood that I spent while here. After we closed the plywood plant and shut it we had built the Pineland operation by then and converted that sawmill to a plywood plant in '73-74. About ten years after we started Diboll and it was more modern and it carried on until they it changed back to lumber a few years back. A lot of things happened, a lot of memories.

**JG:** All right, well thank you very much.

**SC:** You bet.

**END OF INTERVIEW**