

JOHN MARTINDALE

Interview 255a

January 23, 2013, at his home, Jasper, Texas

Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer

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ABSTRACT: In this interview with Jonathan Gerland, Jasper native John Martindale reminisces about his life in East Texas. He grew up in Jasper, attended Stephen F. Austin State University and Texas A&M, joined the Army Air Corps in World War II and returned to East Texas to work and raise his family. Mr. Martindale talks about working as a land inspector, as a drafter for highway construction, and as a land inspector and personnel manager for Kirby Lumber Company, Southwestern Settlement and Development and Temple-Eastex. He talks about the differences between his jobs at Southwestern and after the merger with Temple, the differences in forestry practices throughout his career, and the changes in the forest products industry. Mr. Martindale recalls negotiating land leases and hunting clubs, managing the forests and the personnel that worked the forest, and keeping his districts around Kirbyville and Silsbee free from any land disputes.

Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG): Okay, I think the recorder is working now. Today's date is January 23, 2013 and my name is Jonathan Gerland. I'm with John A. Martindale at his home here in Jasper and he was so kind to let me come to his house today and visit with him and do an oral history interview. So, he retired from Temple, I guess Temple Inland in the late eighties and did some consulting work after that but...

John Martindale (hereafter JM): In '87.

JG: '87, okay.

JM: I mean '86 and my last working day was December 31, 1986.

JG: '86, okay. So, we want to talk about his career with the company and forestry work and things but maybe just to begin and sort of set the stage let's start with when and where you were born?

JM: I was born here in Jasper, a matter of fact about six miles out of Jasper in 1921, November 22, 1921. I believe Warren Harding was president when I was born and I don't remember him but I remember a little bit in the late twenties about Calvin Coolidge.

JG: Yes sir.

JM: But, I do remember a whole lot about Herbert Hoover. They called armadillos Hoover Hogs because people was having to eat them.

JG: Now who were your parents and what did your father do for a living?

JM: My father was George Martindale, he was born in 1893 and he died when he was 45 years old. My mother was Alma Walker and she was born in 1896 and she lived and died...let me think a minute.

JG: Sure go ahead.

JM: She died April 1, 1991 and she was like 5 days being 95 years old.

JG: Wow! And, what did your family do?

JM: My daddy, my father was in the logging business (JG: Okay) as far as I can remember he was in logging business. In the late twenties he had a 1928 Model A Ford truck, single wheels. I remember one time this was later on in '28 or '29 that they put a big log on it and it wouldn't hold but one log and it made the tires almost flat it was so heavy.

JG: So they had pneumatic tires huh?

JM: Yes, they were big tires. Later on in '33 and '34 he bought two Ford trucks that had dual wheels and all.

JG: He was a contractor then?

JM: Yes he was. He was with Jasper County Lumber Company.

JG: Okay, where was their mill?

JM: Right here as you go towards Beaumont and you get to where the Baskin's place of business is, right behind there if you go on the other street behind that other street over there is an old mill pond there. (JG: Okay) Jasper County Lumber Company was a pretty big outfit and they had a locomotive that went from Jasper and went down into the Neches River bottom and I remember when I was a boy you could hear it blowing it's whistle when it crossed the track, the country roads out there. They had a camp there what they called Beech Grove, company houses and a commissary too.

JG: Beech Grove?

JM: Yes.

JG: Beech Grove, okay.

JM: That is where you go out towards Woodville and you get down there and get to Hwy 777 and you take a left and it's not far to where the old camp was. They had company houses and they had a commissary there too.

JG: Now y'all never lived in a camp did you?

JM: Oh no, we lived in a...my dad built a home back in 1930. Just about the time the Depression hit, you know, and that was in the fall of '29, but things were going relatively good here. The effects of it didn't come on strong until later.

JG: What are some of your earliest memories of your father and the logging industry and things like that?

JM: Well I remember it was awful wet back then. (laughter) It was...you had teams you didn't have any tractors or caterpillars or anything like that.

JG: So it was mule teams?

JM: Yes.

JG: So these were his mules?

JM: Yes, he had all that.

JG: What kind of wagon did you use carts or wagons or both?

JM: No, they didn't use carts or wagons, you know, to pull the logs, they just usually hook the teams on them and...

JG: Slide them on the ground.

JM: ...slide them on the ground.

JG: They didn't have those high wheeled carts that lifted them up?

JM: No, not to my knowledge.

JG: Okay.

JM: We have a picture somewhere. I don't have it here I think my daughter has it, but in downtown Jasper sitting on a log wagon with a team, four mules on it and he is sitting up there on top of that big log with the rings in his hands.

JG: So, just drag them right across the ground huh?

JM: Yes.

JG: That had to be a lot of work without a skidder or anything.

JM: Well they had guys that didn't do anything but drive those teams and they were good. They would talk to them. I remember one guy he didn't have to use a whip he just talked to them, you know, and they would respond to him.

JG: So, he had crew men working for him then?

JM: Oh yes.

JG: About how many people would he have working in a good time?

JM: Well, he had two log trucks, two people to drive the trucks. He didn't never work out there but he had two or three people working for him and then he had the guy that drove the teams. Now later on down in the river bottom, the Neches River bottom on that Jasper Company land he had a tie mill, he had a sawmill and he operated that sawmill in there.

JG: For cross ties?

JM: Yes.

JG: Okay, a tie mill.

JM: But the Depression, my dad was relatively a good business man, you know. He had bought a good bit of land and timber and the Depression pretty much put him out of the business. I think he wound up with a hundred acres of land plus the 156 acres where we lived.

JG: Now what kind of wood did he use for the crossties was it pine or did he cut hardwood?

JM: No, no it was hardwood.

JG: It was all hardwoods, okay.

JM: It was all hardwoods and I remember going in there with him and he had an old Ford tractor that ran that sawmill, you know, had the belts to it and the saw cut it.

JG: Gasoline powered car?

JM: Yes, but I remember going in there and seeing a trapper. He had all those different kinds of skins there where he had trapped different kind of animals, coons, all of them.

JG: So you were just a little boy?

JM: Oh yes, I was just a very little boy.

JG: You remember that?

JM: Oh yes.

JG: Was that just a onetime thing or did a lot of people do that back then?

JM: Well, not a lot of people because I remember the Martindale's were fairly industrious people and I remember Frank Martindale, he was in the sawmill business as far back as I can remember. Then it wound up his sons were in the sawmill business. They both died a few years ago and they were relatively rich. They made a lot of money in it.

JG: So, would these be your father's brothers or cousins?

JM: My father's first cousin.

JG: First cousin, okay.

JM: You asked me who he had working for him. At one time he had his three brothers working for him in the Depression and helping feed them, you know, because it was tough, tough, times.

JG: Right.

JM: You sacrificed for them just to help them.

JG: Right. Where did you go to school?

JM: Well, I graduated from Jasper High School and I wanted to go to Texas A&M, that was my desire and...but since my dad died right before I graduated from high school and I was very close to him and my mother wanted me to go closer to home so I went to Stephen F. Austin [State University]. I went up there two years and I transferred to A&M, and at that time there were seven thousand students there. It was all male and it was all military and I wound up I was in the horse Cavalry out there. We used to go out and chase jack rabbits. (laughter)

JG: So, you went to SFA for awhile and then transferred.

JM: I went two years at SFA and then I transferred down there.

JG: What was your major?

JM: I was agronomy.

JG: Agronomy, okay.

JM: I didn't know what I wanted to do. I was young and I didn't want to know, but I didn't get to graduate because I wasn't in the corps. That was my first year in the corps and so I got drafted. Had I gone out there to begin with I could have gone ahead and finished and became a first lieutenant, but I went in and I was immediately put in the Air Force.

JG: In the Air Force.

JM: I was in the horse Cavalry and then they put me in the Air Force, but they were needing men over in Europe in that 8th Air Force. The losses were extremely high.

JG: What year did you go over to Europe?

JM: Well, I was drafted in January 1943 and I wound up I went to San Antonio. I really never went through basic training. I went to, they sent me to Keesler Field in Mississippi and I took some test there and then sent me to radio school in Bellville, Illinois. That is right across the river from St. Louis. I finished that in July 1943 and then I was sent to Panama City, Florida to Keesler Field, Mississippi, Keesler Field, Florida. Not Keesler Field...Tyndale Field, Florida, I'm sorry and it was Panama City, Florida and I went through gunnery school there. I don't know but I was told when I got there and where I was in my living quarters where I was that Clark Gable had just graduated right ahead of me there. He went through gunnery school there. And, after I finished gunnery school they sent me to Salt Lake City, Utah where a bomber crew was formed and I was radio operator.

JG: Say that again, what is that term?

JM: Bomber crew.

JG: Bomber crew, I'm sorry.

JM: We were then sent to Alamogordo, New Mexico, bomber group. We were on a B-24 liberator, that is a four engine and we trained there and then we sent her to Kansas and that is where it was the jumping off place to go overseas. That is where you got all your equipment and everything checked in. Then we flew to West Palm Beach, Florida. That was in March.

JG: You were with the 8th Air Force but what bomb group?

JM: Well, I will get to that.

JG: Okay.

JM: They sent us to West Palm Beach, Florida. I know there was snow on the runway when we left Kansas and we landed in West Palm Beach, Florida and everything was warm and green. We got our shots and all for cholera and everything like that. Then we

flew from there, we flew to Trinidad and then we flew to Brazil, Fort Lee Brazil. Then we left one evening about five o'clock and flew all night and rented a car out and stayed there three or four days and left there and flew to Marrakech, Morocco and that was the first prisoners of war I saw and they were Italians. Those Arabs would go where we would dump them old powder eggs we didn't like they would go with a bucket and they would fill that garbage and fill it up and go over there and sit down and eat it. But, we left there and we flew to Pressley, Scotland and then flew down to our base at Lavanel, England about seventy miles northeast of London. We started flying in May of 1944 and we flew, I flew my last mission on October 14, 1944. I flew 30 missions.

JG: In a B-24?

JM: Well, we flew in B-24's until August 1st then we changed to B-17's and they would take more of a beating than the B-24 was. They wouldn't fly quite as fast but they were easy to fly. But anyway...

JG: What position in the flight crew were you?

JM: Oh I was radio operator.

JG: Radio operator, okay.

JM: Yes, radio operator in the gunner and then I was Tech Sergeant. I was five stripes. After, oh after, I don't remember the exact date but we became a lead crew. We led our bomb group and after that I never did have to man a gun. I was already...because I had to do all the transmissions back then and we used International Morse Code. You had to encode every message and decode it. That code would change every day but, anyway.

JG: Did y'all fly on June 6, D-Day?

JM: I did. My crew didn't fly that day. There was a guy that, a radio operator went on sick call and they called me out to take a position and I flew with that crew I had never flown with before. I was 22 years old and the pilot on that crew was about 20 and we ran out of fuel and I remember we came back after we made our run over there over France that we were back over them and I noticed the pilot, on a B-24 we was on a B-24, and I noticed the pilot and co-pilot were just going back and forth talking and in that plane the radio operator was right behind the co-pilot and I turned and I said "what is wrong guys?" He said "we are running out of fuel." (sigh) But, anyway to make a long story short we landed, we found a base and we landed and just as we got to the end of the runway that plane started spitting and sputtering.

JG: It was a B-17?

JM: My crew thought I was killed because it was two or three hours later before I got into the base, but anyway it was good. When I finished that last mission they sent me

home. They took me down to a port in Southern England and I was on my way home. It was eleven days at sea.

JG: What flight group or bomb group were you in your mission?

JM: I was in, of course that was 8th Air Force and I was a 487th Bomb group.

JG: 487th okay.

JM: There were 26,000 men killed in the 8th Air Force in World War II. The losses were extremely high and I didn't know it at the time but the reason they put guys, when I was going through the school so fast it was to replace the guys who had lost their lives over there. There was, I don't remember exactly but there was 20-something thousand that were in the prisoner of war camps that bailed out. There was around 20,000 that were wounded over there.

JG: I'm sure you knew John Booker?

JM: Yes, I knew John. As a matter of fact when they were looking for a place to build that sawmill at Buna he contacted me and see that was in my district and I took him down there and showed him that land.

JG: Oh okay so y'all got to talk a little bit about your war experiences.

JM: Yes, we talked a little bit. He was a pilot you know.

JG: Yes sir.

JM: He is a good fellow. I thought a lot of him.

JG: I interviewed him a couple of years back and he told me about him being a POW [Prisoner of War] and everything.

JM: Well, I don't remember. I had forgotten about him being a POW, but there was a lot of them shot out over there.

JG: Yes, that is what he was saying just so many people that didn't come back. Okay, so you got home.

JM: I got home. You don't want to know where all I went then do you?

JG: Well, I want to focus, it's all important, but I want to focus on your time in the forest but if you need to kind of connect the dots go ahead.

JM: No I don't need to. Well really after I came home that was in, I got home in November of '44 and I was discharged October 17, 1945. But, I really didn't do anything.

JG: No more combat after that?

JM: No I didn't really do anything. They just shipped me around. They sent me to California and they sent me to Big Spring, Texas and Greenville, Mississippi. They were reactivation, capsuling those bombers were coming in but I didn't do it. I just went out to Vicksburg and had a good time. But anyway when I got discharged I was at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas. They call them forts now; they don't call them camps. Okay, I came home and married my sweetheart.

JG: Did you know her from school?

JM: No she lived in Kirbyville, but I met her when I was going to A&M. I was hitchhiking home and back then we all hitchhiked. We didn't have cars. We hitchhiked and there wasn't a whole lot of traffic but they would pick you up then. I met her one...I was stranded there in Kirbyville and I went down to a café where she was a band member and she was down there. She was a band member in Kirbyville School and I met her. And, fell for her and so I started putting the pressure on her. (laughter)

JG: Yes sir.

JM: But we didn't get to marry you see 'till it was 1942 and it was 1945 when we married. It was three years. But you know, the most important thing when you was over there is the letters you got from home. You treasured those! But, after then I was discharged and then that is when I went to work for Corp of Engineers. I didn't work for Corp of Engineers, but well as a matter of fact I worked a little over there on the Rockland Dam.

JG: That was in the forties so what were you doing in Rockland?

JM: They gave me a pickup and I went to work.

JG: Where was the office for Corp of Engineers was it out of Fort Worth?

JM: No it was out of Galveston.

JG: Galveston then, okay.

JM: But they had a temporary place down here right on 96.

JG: Here in Jasper?

JM: Yes, and I would go up there where Sam Rayburn is now, (JG: yes sir) and they had a couple of helpers lived over across the river and they would paddle across and I would meet them over there. They had a hand auger and we would take samples as far down and every time the strata's changed I would take a jar of that and...

JG: Core samples then, drill for core samples, okay. How deep would y'all drill?

JM: We would drill as far as we could until we hit rock. We usually hit rock about 40 feet or something like that.

JG: Forty feet. So, this was on the Angelina River?

JM: Yes, this was on the Angelina, but after awhile I worked about a month over on Rockland Dam.

JG: On the Neches.

JM: Yes, but the first time we went out there they pinned us down, those nesters. They were shooting twenty-two's. I got behind a tree and they didn't send us out back there anymore, but they had a lab over there and they put me to work in that lab.

JG: A laboratory?

JM: Yes, I didn't do much there and then they called me in one day and said we are sending you to the Galveston office.

JG: Did y'all do any core samples on the Neches just north of Rockland there what they call Rocky Shoals?

JM: You cross the Neches River and you go up there and you take a left back in there.

JG: Towards Best Bend, huh?

JM: Yes, I've heard of Rocky Shoals but I've never been to it. That is where you used to wade across, isn't it?

JG: Yes sir, there is a big rock formation shelf and there is a waterfall when the river gets low there is about a three foot waterfall there.

JM: Yes, I've heard of it but I've never seen it. But, I went to Galveston and went in there and quit and came home. I said if I ever got home alive I wasn't going to leave. I came home and started fishing.

JG: Where did you fish?

JM: I would fish in Sandy Creek down here and I would go down on the Neches River and some on the Angelina, trot line.

JG: Did you use nets or anything?

JM: No.

JG: No, just trot line.

JM: They were illegal weren't they? (laughter) But anyway, it wasn't long I got my sister, she was county treasurer, and she told me that Mr. Purcival with the Texas Highway Department wants you to come see him.

JG: Purcival?

JM: Pursival, he was a resident engineer for the highway and when I went in he hired me and I became an inspector and we worked on plans and I could print pretty good then and do drafting and we would work and make plans, go out and do the preliminary work and we would do the preliminary work and then make, the draw up the plans and then go out. I liked that work a lot. You would go out and then put your plans on the ground and then hire your contractor and we did that so, I was inspector on those road constructions. I worked until...well the guy with Houston Oil Company and his office was over here where the old company office is now. You know where it is don't you?

JG: On Bowie, 229 Bowie, right.

JM: It's Campbell now. But he hired me as a party chief and I worked for him.

JG: As a what chief?

JM: Party chief.

JG: Say it again.

JM: A party chief.

JG: Party chief, okay.

JM: But, I didn't work long. We stayed away from home too much. I went to work then, the inspector for, we had those land inspectors they had to inspect, the land office in Jasper, one in Kirbyville and one in Silsbee and one in Tyler County. The guy, the inspector asked me he said "I would like for you to go to work for me." And, I jumped at the chance. I went to work and I worked from January 1, 1949 till April 1, 1950 and I got promoted and put over the Kirbyville District as inspector and I worked there 'till June 30, 1978. They made Mr., oh the manager of Temple-Eastex, he was originally in Pineland. I don't know why I can't think his name.

JG: From the Temple side or the Eastex side?

JM: From the Temple side. Call his name.

JG: Chancellor came from Eastex.

JM: No, this was before Chancellor, after the merger and they came together with Southwestern.

JG: It wasn't Kenneth Nelson was it?

JM: Yes, it was Kenneth Nelson, he is a great guy. But, he is the one that hired me as personnel manager of the forest division and I was over the safety of the forest division.

JG: Let's go back to the early days of Southwestern if you don't mind and then we will work our way up.

JM: Okay, that is fine.

JG: But, what...you know, someone today living in today's, my generation or even younger we see the forest and we drive down the highway and we...compare the way the forest looked back then, late forties early fifties compared to today. Just describe the forest. What did the forest look like and how did things operate? And get into management and stuff like that but just start with how did the forest look.

JM: Well depended on where you were, but anywhere you go for example below Kirbyville there is lot of open country because all that timber has been cut.

JG: And no effort to replant it or anything?

JM: No, there wasn't any effort then, but there is a lot of stumps, but it was about that time that they started, I believe when they first did it they started blasting them trying to get them up but they later came up with the caterpillar and not a blade on the front but a mechanism that would just go down underneath the stump and get them out. They hauled them to Louisiana over there where they process all that and made that turpentine, you know.

JG: So these would have been long leaf I guess, long leaf stumps.

JM: Yes, that was long leaf country down there and but there were some good stands of timber in places and you get down in the bottoms and there is some pretty good stands of hardwoods and pines too.

JG: So had Southwestern begun to replant a little bit by this time? I know originally they wanted to sell it off, develop it as farm land.

JM: That is right. They had a farm subdivision in Kirbyville and they had one in Silsbee and they had land salesmen. The land salesmen we had in Kirbyville when I went there in April 1, 1951 was J. A. Lock.

JG: J. A?

JM: J. A. Lock.

JG: J. A. Lock.

JM: He grew up in Zavalla and his father was Otis Lock used to be State Senator.

JG: Oh okay, yes.

JM: J. A. Lock came down to the Kirbyville office and my best recollection in about 1928 and it was purpose of selling this cut-over land. He was a good land salesman because when I went there he was getting a commission of seven or eight hundred dollars a month plus his salary and that was big money back then but he would sell this land to some of them old guys down there.

JG: So, Houston Oil Company kept the mineral rights (JM: That is exactly right.) and Southwestern then just had the surface and they wanted to sell it off so it wouldn't be a tax burden.

JM: That is right. Well, I think under the law they had to...well yes, that is what it was. Well, the problem with that was, you know was to, I think they wanted to initially they wanted to set up these farm subdivisions for agriculture purposes but that didn't work out.

JG: The land was meant to grow pine trees huh?

JM: That is right. You will starve to death on this land if you didn't put some fertilizer on it. But anyway he was well known and well liked. He would sell some of this land. He would sell them 20 or 30...and later on these old guys up here in East Texas came down they didn't have any money and the war broke out in 1941. They went to these shipyards in Beaumont and Orange and made money and then they came back up here where they lived.

JG: So now they had money to buy the land.

JM: They started buying land and they would sell them that land and finance it for ten years and a lot of that land had enough timber on it that it would pay for it. It just...

JG: Just timber growing up on its own.

JM: Yes, and some of them did, they sold that. I remember there was a guy that grew up here in Jasper and about the early forties he moved to Kirbyville and he got out there and he bought a hundred acres, had him a dairy farm and everything. I knew him well and once I moved down there I asked him I said "how do you like it down here?" He said "oh I like it. I wouldn't give one acre down here for ten acres in Jasper." But, they sold that

land and their timber business they began to realize the importance of the timber business. I remember the first forester came in here was from, his name was Elton Wilson. The first one I remember and I believe it was 1949. He graduated from Louisiana Tech as a forester and he was put over that Kirbyville district and I think later on he was over the Jasper District. But the one that came to Kirbyville and he came June 1st I had just gone there April 1st and he came June 1st and he was Joe Miesh. Have you heard of Joe Miesh? He was the chief forester over Temple Inland in Diboll. I think he got that promotion in about 1960.

JG: How do you spell that name?

JM: M-i-e-s-h I believe but, he came from Louisiana Tech too. They placed foresters at each one of these districts and they got into the forestry business. They didn't do a whole lot to begin with. J. W. Pedigo, he was over the forest as long as he was here and his office was over here. He sold timber to Temple up here at Pineland and he sold I know to Trout Creek Lumber Company in Kirbyville. I don't know, I'm sure there was others he sold to but off hand I don't remember.

JG: I want to get to some of the reforestation efforts and ask you about the Stillman Nursery but before I do again going back to that time period, late forties early fifties, of course you were already working for Southwestern, but how was Southwestern viewed by the community, the people of Jasper, the Martindale family, you know, as far as a business? Of course...

JM: My dad was highly respected and all the Martindale's.

JG: But I mean Southwestern Settlement and Development Company.

JM: Oh yes, well I know when they gave me the job, promoted me the job as inspector in Kirbyville they wanted you to live down there. Now they would probably let you live here and drive there now. But, they said "we want you to go down there and make you a place in that community."

JG: Okay.

JM: We want to build a reputation with this company. So, I went down there and after I got my feet on the ground I joined the fire department and I was in the fire department for ten or eleven years. Then people got after me to run for city council and I run for city council and was elected in 1961 and in spring of 1967 they got after me to run for mayor and I ran for mayor. I was elected and then they wanted me to run again and I run again and I was elected.

JG: This was Kirbyville, mayor of Kirbyville?

JM: Yes, when I moved back to Jasper in spring of 1970, but before I moved back I was also Chamber of Commerce. I was president of the Chamber of Commerce.

JG: So, you made yourself a part of that community didn't you?

JM: Yes, I did and the people were good to me. They really were and I hated to have to leave there but I left there on account of my son was handicapped and the Jasper schools could provide something then that Kirbyville couldn't. And, anyway I treasure the time I was with the company.

JG: You mentioned the fire department and that got me to thinking, I know in the early days, reforestation efforts were pretty basic, mainly trying to keep fire out. What did y'all have, any fire towers or anything like that or was that all forest service?

JM: The Texas Forest Service did all that.

JG: The Forest Service did all that.

JM: But the company initially started out when J. W. Pedigo was over it and it was happening when I was hired, they had a jeep with a plow on it, behind it. When they would get a fire they would go out and that is the way they would curtail the fire.

JG: Just one little old one bladed plow huh?

JM: Speaking of fires when I was in Kirbyville there was an old native down there single, he had cattle all the way from Kirbyville to Evadale. And, they told me, I did visit him and sat on his front porch with him but, he didn't tell me but others told me that in the spring he would get on his horse and get a box of matches and start in them Pineywoods and [strike].

JG: Just light them as he went.

JM: Burn them where his cattle would have green grass to eat. But, anyway I think you will find in Mr. Merrem's writing here where that Dick Townsend...have you ever heard of Dick Townsend?

JG: Townsend? I've heard the name.

JM: Well, they were instrumental in getting Dick Townsend in here over the forestry division okay, and he came in here and he implemented when they was wanting to plant trees he implemented a way of planting areas that were difficult to plant, you know. He came in here and he got a caterpillar with a big snow plow behind him and they would go through the forest and they would come behind and plant those trees where they plowed.

JG: Do you remember when they started Stillman Nursery?

JM: Oh yes.

JG: Tell me how that came about.

JM: Well, I was in Kirbyville and Ennis Washburn was his name. He was a graduate of Auburn University and I remember that day he drove into Kirbyville. It was one morning early, he had his wife and three small kids I believe and they hadn't had any breakfast and he didn't have any money and he wanted to cash a check. The main business up there in Kirbyville was Mixon Brothers. It was the largest mercantile and hardware so I took him up there and introduced him to them and he wrote a check and they cashed it for him. Later on they built that Stillman Nursery I think about 1954.

JG: '56 or '57?

JM: Somewhere in there. That wasn't in my district, that was over in the Newton District (JG: Okay) but I used to visit over there a good bit and I got to know Ennis real well.

JG: Ennis Washburn?

JM: Yes.

JG: But those trees supplied all the Southwestern lands right?

JM: Yes.

JG: When did you start getting them for your district?

JM: Well, I didn't have anything to do with getting any for my district. That was strictly up to the forester, but they usually started planting in November when the wet season began.

JG: December, January somewhere in there?

JM: Well usually around November I think.

JG: Okay, even earlier, November.

JM: It depended when the rain started.

JG: Right. So, when you say you didn't have anything to do with that what were you doing, you were personnel?

JM: I was personnel manager then...

JG: Personnel manager okay.

JM: And I was over the safety too and what they did, they, the company had their own planting crews then. I think now they contract it but they had their own planting crews and one of my jobs was to hire guys to ride on those tree planters and plant those trees.

JG: Drop those seedlings in every now and then huh?

JM: Yes, and I was on that from '78 to about '81, I was personnel manager and I was over the safety too. But, we had a problem with those guys claiming they got hurt and all that and we would always send them to the doctor and we knew the doctor's pretty well and they kind of defended us. Those guys and people going to the lawyers to kind of get more money out us. But, we had a safety program, we had a guy with Continental Insurance Company out of Houston and we would have safety meetings up here and have all the employees would come here to Jasper for those safety meetings. One time they had a problem, which I had, not a problem but a program, this was done when Mr. Pedigo was over the foresters, they were girdling these hardwood trees, killing them. I didn't like it and I never did say anything and I don't know how much but they would have these backpacks with the girdlings and just go around this tree and cut all that cambium layer, they will die.

JG: Right, Temple did some of that too in the early fifties I guess.

JM: Yes.

JG: I think a lot of people were doing that to have more pines grow up I guess, deaden those hardwoods, girdling them and deadening them and poisoning them and stuff like that.

JM: W. Merrem was a great guy. Of course he was in Houston but toward the end before he retired he lived here in Jasper a few years.

JG: What was his background?

JM: He was a lawyer. He didn't tell us where he was from. But I have been told, he never did tell me but, I was told he was a pilot in World War I over in France.

JG: Now did you know Mr. Richtor?

JM: The only way I ever knew Mr. Richtor, well I saw all of his correspondence years, way back and they had a...company had a big house there at Silsbee and they would have the company picnic. The first company picnic I ever went to was there. Yes, that is him.

JG: Yes, he was the one that was put over trying to sell all those lands back in the late twenties early thirties. (looking at a picture)

JM: I can tell you something about the Papermill if you want to know it.

JG: Yes, okay. I eventually want to get to that. Now you are talking about the fifties, the Papermill in the fifties?

JM: Yes.

JG: Okay, yes let's talk about that and in that context maybe a little bit about Kirby Lumber also. I know Kirby about that same time was consolidating all their mills. I think they had four big ones and they were consolidated at Silsbee. How did that and the Papermill how did that affect what Southwestern was doing and how it was working? And, did y'all, I imagine Kirby got a lot of their timber from Southwestern or did they? Where did that timber come from?

JM: The Papermill timber? I don't know where they got it, I'm not very knowledgeable about that, but they got a lot of it from their wood dealers at the Papermill. You had one for each district. My brother was a wood dealer for them, Virgil Martindale. They had wood dealers in Silsbee and they had wood dealers in Woodville and wood dealers in San Augustine everywhere. Then they cut this in short lengths and we had these bobtail trucks and it was mostly black people driving them and loading that pulpwood.

JG: So short length, four feet length pine?

JM: Yes, I was trying to remember when the mill was built. You probably know when the Kirbyville mill was built over there?

JG: In Silsbee, it was '55 I believe.

JM: I think that is about right. But, I remember they had locations everywhere. They used to have one down there in Roganville. That is a town site. They had a big one in Kirbyville. It was burned in 1917 and they had one in Honey Island.

JG: Didn't they have one at Buna, or a small one at Buna at one time?

JM: They had a big one there, Bessmay.

JG: Bessmay, yes.

JM: Yes, that was a big one and even John...what is his name at Pineland?

JG: Booker?

JM: John Booker, he even looked at that Kirby tract, see there was a big Kirby tract where that mill was there and he even looked at that but he just moved right across the county road on Temple Inland land, Temple Eastex it was then and that is where they built that mill.

JG: The Buna mill, yes.

JM: Yes, on that Papermill the first job I ever, in Kirbyville I got a promotion as inspector in April 1, 1951 and I had hardly got settled in and I got a letter out of Houston that they wanted me to make a cruise and give the history and how that land was used back then. And, I did and that was 1951. I didn't know what the purpose was of it but the purpose was that they were getting ready to build that Papermill. I don't know I worked about a month on that and I had to make a report and have a big plat and I sent it to that Houston office.

JG: And that is where Southwestern's headquarters were, in Houston huh?

JM: Yes, they didn't move up here until about 1960.

JG: They had an office in Jasper but they just didn't move the headquarters until later right? Is that what you are saying?

JM: Yes.

JG: Okay.

JM: W. E. Merrem and others were in Houston but...

JG: That is where Kirby's offices were and Houston Oil Company offices were too.

JM: Yes. Kirby, I remember they had some big timber around Honey Island and all in there. I remember when I went to work with Houston Oil Company as party chief that we started to work and that is where we were working when I was hired. I remember seeing some big timber that Kirby had in there.

JG: In Honey Island?

JM: Yes, all around that area in there. I just really don't know whether the company sold much to Kirby or not. They may have but I don't remember any of them when I was in Kirbyville and I was there 27 years.

JG: I think that is why they started the seedlings and everything was to replant, reforest, get everything growing quicker because the Papermill was going to need a shorter, they didn't need to have a forty-sixty year rotation. They could go for a shorter rotation for pulp.

JM: Kirby wasn't as aggressive as we were in the planting business. That is my recollection on that.

JG: Did y'all have much contact with Temple in those early days before everybody came together?

JM: Not really.

JG: You mentioned Pineland. I guess Pineland would have been the closest operation that y'all would have kind of had some overlap in.

JM: Well Pedigo he had, I know that he and Eck Prudhomme...

JG: Eck Prudhomme, yes.

JM: ...they had a good relationship.

JG: Okay.

JM: Wes Pedigo sold them a lot of timber. I know that.

JG: For the Pineland mill, yes.

JM: But that was the early days when I first went to work. I really didn't have much connection until after the merger and then.

JG: Yes, Prudhomme left late fifties I believe, mid to late fifties.

JM: I was trying to think, Wes Pedigo was buried over here at Tyler County where he grew up. He was a...he recommended me and helped me get that job in Kirbyville and I never will forget that.

JG: Were there any real challenges in the industry? What were some of the challenges in the industry in the fifties?

JM: Well, I really don't know of any challenges, you know, the war was over and there was a lot of timber being cut. A lot of little sawmills around in different places.

JG: A lot of upstart mills?

JM: Yes, they were cutting this timber. They were building homes out of it. I guess I would say back then they were just getting into the mechanization in the logging woods.

JG: Right and the pulp industry kind of contributed to that. Of course Lufkin had that newsprint mill, you know, in '39 and '40 so that kind of influenced how forest were grown up in that area.

JM: I remember this that Champion Paper Company they had, Southwestern sold quite a bit of timber to them. I remember that.

JG: To Champion?

JM: Yes.

JG: I think Time Incorporated was interested in the Champion mill down in Pasadena or somewhere in the early, early days for the magazine.

JM: Yes, they built one down there because I had a brother in law that was a millwright down there when they were building it.

JG: Let's get into the sixties, what about Rayburn Country?

JM: Rayburn Country, well I remember that in 1961 that all those executives on that board with Time Incorporated came down here to make a tour. I remember Ollie R. Crawford was over Southwestern then.

JG: Crawford?

JM: Yes, O. R Crawford, he had just taken Mr. Merrem's place. Mr. Merrem retired. He expected me to drive one of the cars and bring these board of directors guys, I think it was three guys on that Time Incorporated board of directors that I drove around. I remember driving them up to Rayburn and they were working there and you could see all that heavy equipment work. But we went on down and I remember before they ever got started and it was in, I think it was in August, somewhere in there, it was during the dry season and those...you get down in that Kirby area and the soil gets dry it's just like powder and the car, and no wind, the car could go down it and that dust get in there and just hang in there forever. It was that way and I told the man over me, that was W. A. Eddy. You ever heard of him?

JG: Spell the last name.

JM: E-d-d-y.

JG: Okay.

JM: He was over the land department and I told him I said "you don't want to take those directors on a tour down that country road." I said "it is so dusty they can't see the pines." They wanted them to see the young pine forest that had been planted, you know. They were going to get up about 8 or 10 years old. I said well, you just don't want to do it. So, they hired a road contractor here to take his water tanks and go down and water that road.

JG: They watered the road to keep the dust out.

JM: I often wondered what those directors thought. There wasn't any dust on the road but you could look on those trees and they were just powder white. (laughter) But, we made the tour all around to the nursery and everywhere. They asked me a lot of questions.

JG: Tell me a little bit about how Rayburn Country came about. I know the lake influenced it but, do you remember any talk of Southwestern saying hey we are going to develop this?

JM: Not really, that was an echelon above me I think but I remember that after they had developed and surveyed it all out that they gave us, offered us a chance, the employees, to buy one if they wanted.

JG: Did you buy one?

JM: No I didn't and I'm glad I didn't. Unless it has changed you could get some of those lots on the lake front, you can't give them away. I remember there was a couple out of Dallas owned a couple of lots in there, it wasn't next to the lake it was a good piece off. They gave them to my church here, First Baptist Church Jasper and we wasn't doing anything but paying taxes. We finally got somebody to give them to.

JG: Just gave them huh?

JM: Yes, just gave them.

JG: They didn't have any lake frontage.

JM: Somebody told me that up there at the lake that Time Incorporated considered selling out up there and building a place up here. The main Time office, but that never materialized apparently.

JG: What about clear cutting do you remember when that was started clear cutting?

JM: Let me think a little bit. I remember when it started, right now and of course I might not be correct but, it seemed like it was in the seventies. When I became personnel manager in 1978 they were getting into it pretty good then.

JG: Would it have been earlier maybe in the sixties?

JM: Well it could have been earlier, a little bit earlier.

JG: I think Southwestern was definitely doing it in the sixties. Even Temple was doing it a little bit, not a whole lot but very selectively, but I think Southwestern was doing it a little earlier.

JM: Well, if you had asked me when I retired I could have told you but I been retired as long as I have but I remember it.

JG: Well, I was just wondering if you remembered it. What do you remember of it? Was it controversial?

JM: I remember I never liked it and I still don't like it. The reason I don't like it is its not being restored the way it was. The hardwoods are not there and as far as I know if they have gotten into reproducing any hardwoods I don't know anything about it. Are they?

JG: Not that I know of. It's like corn crops.

JM: Used to you could go into the woods and you had the pine timber and you had the hardwoods, you had it all. With exceptions like the long leaf where the long leaf grows. They have some of these long leafs now, back then most of my years they weren't there in the early years when you had virgin timber. You got black jack and sand jack and all that but, I remember seeing the last virgin timber over here between here and Newton County. I remember going in there and getting big timber and it was just clear.

JG: I never saw the World War I battlefields but the photographs look like a World War I battlefield. The photos of the World War I battlefields look like some of these clear cuts.

JM: He tells about that, Mr. Merrem does.

JG: You know, from Diboll coming over here even this morning 1818 [FM 1818] used to have a lot of those aesthetic management zones where you used to have to leave timber all along the road and of course Campbell has clear cut all of that because those are mature trees. That is a lot of money standing there.

JM: Now they are cutting that timber that is ten or twelve years old.

JG: There is some select places where they are trying to do a natural forest, but I mean it's very small and very limited and selective, but for the most part...

JM: Arthur Temple wouldn't be happy with what is going on would he?

JG: No, but for the most part it's maximizing share holder value, you know.

JM: About Arthur Temple, I remember after the merger when the word was out that we were going to do it. Then Arthur Temple called a meeting and all the people in over in different parts of the company's business and the salaried employees and they had a meeting. Kirby had a camp house down in Hardin County down on the west side of the Neches River and we all had to meet down there and eat and everything. I always remember Arthur Temple got up and the only part of his speech that I ever remembered he says "you know Temple and Southwestern have been sleeping together a long time and now we are going to get married." (laughter) I always remember that.

JG: Yes, I think because of the Pineland operation and supplying timber to the mills, you know, they were cooperative for a long, long time. In fact, years and years ago even the Diboll mill had logged some of Kirby's stuff around World War I time period. Kirby

had some timber up around White City, which is now just north side of the lake there and you know, Kirby was pretty much bound with the Santa Fe and his tram roads and everything was structured and he could make more money by selling it than manufacturing himself so the Temple's bought it. They actually hauled it from White City across the Cotton Belt into Lufkin and then the TSE [Texas South-Eastern] Railroad hooked up and brought it down to Diboll. So, their cooperation goes back to the 1910's even. But, yes talk a little bit more about that time period. Of course what we are talking about is that Time Inc. owned Eastex and Southwestern and Houston Oil and all that and then Time also bought Temple Industries and then it was the merger of Temple Industries and Eastex Pulp and Paper that created Temple Eastex. Just talk about that time period. You mentioned the mill that y'all had and just talk a little bit more about that and how that came together. What were some of your co-workers thoughts and feelings? How was it different?

JM: They weren't too happy with it. Let me say this. Because of the merger I got promotions that I wouldn't have gotten if Southwestern had stayed like it was, but most of the Southwestern employees were not real happy with it because they felt like we were a better company, more progressive and I think we were.

JG: I've talked to some of the other employees who have said the same thing; that they felt the Temple operation was a little behind in management.

JM: Yes, and I remember that Kenneth was placed over the head of it, had his office here.

JG: Kenneth Nelson?

JM: Yes, and Allen Eddy was over the land department. He was my boss and when the salaries, when they come around for promotion, not promotion but annual increase in your salary well I got mine and I thought I had done a pretty doggone good job. I wasn't very happy with what I got and I went in and saw my boss. I said "I'm not very happy with what I got." He said "well you better go see Kenneth because I've done what I'm allowed to do, what I was allowed to promote" you know. So, I went to see Kenneth and he was always the nicest guy. He came up through the ranks you know and I said "Kenneth I'm not happy with what I got." He started squirming in his chair you know and he said "well John I tell you those Temple people are not making as much money as y'all were and we had to pull them up kind of up there with y'all." That is one of the things I distinctly remember.

JG: So Southwestern paid better than Temple did?

JM: Yes.

JG: So, trying to level the pay scales.

JM: Yes, and we had better retirement. I don't know about the insurance but I imagine we had better insurance. I know, I thought it kind of strange, but it was an old way that people had a place where every Friday you go out and get your money and of course we got our checks in the mail, our monthly checks you know.

JG: You were paid each month?

JM: They had a pay place where you would go over in Diboll and get the money, get paid.

JG: You had to go in person to pick up your check.

JM: That is what I was told. I never did see it. But, I primarily after the merger there was a definite emphasis on the clear cutting and reforestation because I know in '78 I became personnel manager and hiring those employees to ride those planters there was a lot of it going on, a lot of clear cutting going on. I know they even had the helicopters, you know, where the clear cut areas going in and using the same kind of fuel they did in the war. What do you call it?

JG: What is that?

JM: The same kind of fuel you had in wars you had in flame throwers.

JG: Napalm?

JM: Yes, I think that is what they used to burn some of these clear cut areas. They would wind row them and then...I saw a helicopter over there in Diboll one time took off and I was out there where they did it and they just went down there and throwing that flame down there that Napalm.

JG: What was that for just to burn off all the refuse?

JM: The clear cut area where they had wind rowed it. It got so hot it rained a little bit. I remember that.

JG: So would that be part of site prep? They would burn it off.

JM: Oh yes, that is the way they cleared it. Then it was ready to be planted.

JG: So that was a Temple thing or a Southwestern thing or just something that came after they came together?

JM: That was after they came together. That was after they moved to Diboll when I saw that and they moved to Diboll from here in 1979. I know when Kenneth Nelson first had his office here he was driving from Diboll over here and then when he retired well Glen Chancellor.

JG: Glen?

JM: He was a nice guy. He was good to me and Kenneth was too.

JG: Talk a little bit more about some of the people you worked with like Glen and Kenneth if you want to.

JM: Well Glen Chancellor when he first came here he was party chief over the Woodville district.

JG: Over Woodville?

JM: Yes, and he got that promotion and after that he was right under Kenneth Nelson. Actually when I was hired as personnel manager Glen Chancellor was the one that told me, asked me if I wanted that position. And I did, I didn't think so at the beginning and of course 1960 Joe Meish was over the foresters. He promoted to over the foresters all which back then was Southwestern but he wound up, his office was here but in 1979 they moved him to the corporate office in Diboll when it was completed. So, there was Jo Meish, I can remember a bunch of the foresters, Ron Ducote was over the forestry district.

JG: Who is that?

JM: Ron Ducote.

JG: Ronda?

JM: Ron Ducote.

JG: Ron Ducote. How do you spell that last name?

JM: D-u-c-o-t-e, he was a coonie, (laughter) real likeable fellow.

JG: What about Bob Baccus?

JM: Bob Baccus, yes, when I was in the Kirbyville office Bob Baccus came in there. I liked Bob.

JG: I was going through, we have a few issues of the old Southwestern, *Southwesterner* or whatever it was called, the little newsletter. I remember seeing a picture of him in there.

JM: Bob Baccus was a forester in that Kirbyville district.

JG: Did you work much, I know he wasn't an employee with Southwestern he was with the Texas Forestry Association, what about Mr. Wagner, Ed Wagner?

JM: Well I didn't know him very well but I knew of him.

JG: I know a lot of these pictures there is Mr. Crawford (JM: O. R. Crawford) and Mr. Wagner here they are talking about the nature trails. Now, did you know much about that efforts?

JM: No I didn't have much to do with it I just knew where they were.

JG: The nature trails?

JM: Yes.

JG: I was going to ask you if you knew too some of the balances of this thing called a multi-use forest where you have got timber growth and then you've got recreational possibilities and how did that balance?

JM: The only thing I heard a little bit of talk about it but I don't know anything about it really.

JG: Because I know even in some of these articles they would often, you know, it's a newsletter and it was an educational thing but it's sort of trying to put responsibility back onto the general public that hey we are opening up the forest for public use but you have got to take care of it and what happened so often is that people just trash it out. You open up a picnic area and then people start dumping. Dumping appliances and...

JM: Yes, they did that. I caught some of them.

JG: What do you mean when you caught them?

JM: Well I remember I would be out just (JG: Cruising) at times I would go out and just check for people that might cut timber.

JG: Illegal cutting or...?

JM: Yes, you go out and check and I caught one red handed one time. He had just dumped it. I said "what you doing there?" He said "well I'm dumping this." I said "is that your land?" "No." I said "would you dump it on your land?" "No." I said "well this is Southwestern land." (laughter)

JG: What about squatters? Did y'all have many that you knew of that y'all had to deal with?

JM: No, I had encroachments we had to deal with. We had areas where I remember we had a few houses that were encroaching or something but they go way back and they were allowed to...

JG: You did like tenancy agreements and things?

JM: Yes, that would strengthen the title to your property. You know, after I went out of personnel well Glen Chancellor called me in and told me said "I want you to take over the coordination of all the land problems..."

JG: All the land problems. (laughing)

JM: ...and you be in contact with these foresters and make sure they take care of those encroachments and all the problems." So, I did and I traveled all over where the holdings were. I would go to Rusk, Silsbee, wherever the foresters were and they would report those problems to me and the surveyors would find them and report them to me and then I was responsible for keeping in touch with the foresters and making sure they handled it properly and all that. So, I did that from '81 until I retired. I also worked...

JG: What county, is it any county that stands out in your memory that had more than others? You mentioned Rusk, all the way up to Cherokee County.

JM: No, I didn't know that, but Temple had more problems. They were light on the...they didn't have inspectors just strictly for land. They used their foresters and they didn't do a very good job some of them.

JG: For instance Trinity County, what about Trinity County?

JM: I never did go to Trinity County; I never did have anything to do with that.

JG: Okay, because they had a lot of problems in Trinity County.

JM: I know Townsend was in Rusk and he had some problems and I dealt with them.

JG: In Cherokee County?

JM: Yes, he took care of them properly. You know he had a son was, flew in Vietnam and went missing and they never found him. But, I thought my district I feel like mine was the cleanest one around. I tell you one thing the reason was J. L. Lock was such a good land salesman he sold a lot of them problems away. They had them!

JG: Sold the problems away, yes.

JM: But when I made the cruise for the use and occupancy for that Richardson league where that Papermill was built there was quite a few encroachments down there because that was an old place, a lot of history there. See, Kirby had a mill way back in there.

JG: Right.

JM: And, them old settlers in there, I talked to one one time and I worked on the history of that league and he told me the name of steamboats that came up that river. That was in 1951 when he told me, of course, he was born way back yonder.

JG: Right, the nineteenth century huh?

JM: Yes.

JG: So, since you worked with that did Kirby leave a lot of the houses there when they no longer operated it? I know like at Aldridge there for awhile some of those old houses were left behind.

JM: There wasn't anything when I cruised that.

JG: Okay.

JM: I remember there was a pipe sticking up in the river right below where the old mill was, of course there wasn't any evidence of the old mill or anything.

JG: So, it was all gone huh?

JM: In my investigation of all that and in talking to old timers that area there was where the housing was, the camp houses, quarters for people living and they called it Cat Town.

JG: Cat Town.

JM: Cat Town and if you can get in the records of Temple Inland my report is in those records and the map also of all what I found when I worked that. It may not be of any importance to you.

JG: It would be!

JM: I imagine they filmed that or something I don't know but, they've got it wherever those records are.

JG: Campbell now, since Campbell bought most of the land, with it came a lot of the land records that they needed to keep. All the abstracts and all that and that kind of stuff they kept for legal and business purposes.

JM: I remember Temple had that camp there at Evadale. You ever heard of it?

JG: The Temple camp at Evadale? Not necessarily.

JM: It was there.

JG: Did it have a name or did they just call it Evadale Camp?

JM: I don't know what they called it because I didn't have anything to do with it because the merger had not occurred but at night you could hear that Temple mill. I remember the Temple locomotive engine pulling them logs. They would bring them logs out of that river bottom down there from that Temple camp and load them and that was the Santa Fe Railroad. They weren't running in the day time but Temple locomotive would come through at night carrying that lumber up to Pineland.

JG: Pineland, yes they got tracking rights over the Santa Fe. Yes, I think, I may be mistaken but I think the name of the connection there was called Temco, T-e-m-c-o, but it was a rail connection and that is where the Temple logging road, you know, had a connection with the Santa Fe and they did a lot of that logging in the fifties and got a lot of hardwoods.

JM: Yes, they used to get a lot of hardwood out of that bottom down there.

JG: Right because they knew the lakes were fixing to come in and we've got pictures of that as a matter of fact and those were some huge, huge hardwoods they got out of there.

JM: Oh yes! I remember that...

JG: So, you remember when they were doing all that huh?

JM: Oh yes, that was the tail end of it. I remember one time Kenneth asked me he said "I want you to go down on that Temple land," they had a lot of land on that Neches River, "and I want you to check on the river and see if you got any illegal occupants in there or buildings." So, I remember I got a game warden and we went up the river to that bridge there that goes from Evadale to Silsbee and located some camp houses that Kenneth asked me to do. I remember doing that one time.

JG: It was June of '58 I believe when they were doing all that logging near Evadale and like I said I think the log road connection was Temco, T-e-m-c-o I believe.

JM: They were doing that in '51 too.

JG: In the early fifties as well huh?

JM: Yes, who is that guy there?

JG: We just had pictures from...that is Clyde Thompson there.

JM: I haven't heard of him. That is the way those tree planters were.

JG: Riding behind the tractor to plant the seedlings, yes. Well, let's see here. I've got a few other questions. What about the Big Thicket? Do you remember much about the establishment of the Big Thicket Preserve?

JM: Not really because it wasn't in my Kirbyville District.

JG: It wasn't in your scope of work, okay.

JM: I remember I forgot to tell you, but I was in the Kirbyville District, but in '75, January 1, 1975, they put me over the Silsbee District too so I had two districts. I had an office in Kirbyville and one in Silsbee. I remember a woman came in there and she, I can't remember that woman's name, but she was real big instrument or she wanted that Big Thicket to be established.

JG: Was it Geraldine Watson?

JM: That is her.

JG: Geraldine Watson.

JM: That is her. It was a big thicket I can tell you that. (laughter)

JG: What about Bruni? Did you ever go to Bruni?

JM: Oh yes, I went to Bruni.

JG: Tell me about Bruni, what was Bruni?

JM: I'm trying to think of the county.

JG: And it's B-r-u-n-i.

JM: Oh yes, I've been there. They had a company with that account.

JG: Was it Southwestern?

JM: Yes.

JG: Yes, Southwestern Settlement built that.

JM: I don't know whether, I don't believe Houston Oil Company was involved but the first time I went there was in 1952.

JG: It had been around for a long time before that?

JM: I don't think it had been around all that long.

JG: Oh, well okay, okay.

JM: Because there is some history about the housing moved in there and they were old housing from somewhere else.

JG: Where was it located?

JM: North of Laredo. I'm going to guess ninety miles. I might be wrong but I went down there first in 1952 and I remember I carried J. W. Jones. That is where they took the county officials.

JG: To keep the taxes low.

JM: The county judges, but I called J. W. Jones, he was commissioner of precinct three in Jasper County and I believe the man that was in Hardin County over at Kountze was Mr. Overstreet. I remember I took them down there and I don't remember how many days we stayed but most of those guys they liked to party you know, and that is what they do is entertain. They had lakes where they could fish and you'd catch some fish there too.

JG: What kind of fish did they have?

JM: Bass primarily.

JG: Did they do any Florida large mouth?

JM: They didn't have them.

JG: They didn't have them so just the native northern bass.

JM: Southern black bass.

JG: Okay.

JM: Then they could hunt. They could hunt blue quail. It was primarily blue quail. I guess they had some of the other type, bob whites, and deer. The deer were big down there. They are bigger than the deer here. I guess it's...I was always told a cow could survive on one acre it would take five up here for them. It was probably this East Texas soil is very acid and we took them over into Mexico and entertained them over there. They could eat and do other things and...

JG: What kind of other things? (laughter)

JM: I don't really remember.

JG: So, it was...

JM: I think, I never did but I think they even took a highway patrol down there too, some of them. But, it was strictly for entertainment. We had a place over here at Forest Lake. You know where that is? It's across the river.

JG: Forest Lake?

JM: Yes, it was initially Joe's Lake that Southwestern had.

JG: Joe's Lake?

JM: Joe's Lake.

JG: J-o-e?

JM: But, it was later changed. I believe Ollie Crawford came in and changed it to Forest Lake. Joe's Lake was when that oil field came into production there at Spurger. I believe that was in the forties and they even had a little gasoline plant there.

JG: What about you were in personnel when Time or when Temple and Eastex merged?

JM: No I wasn't.

JG: Oh you weren't, I'm sorry. You weren't?

JM: No.

JG: Okay, well what were you doing when the merger happened?

JM: I was over the Kirbyville District.

JG: Oh okay, over all the aspects of Kirbyville.

JM: Just land.

JG: Just land, okay.

JM: See like I told you they had inspectors Southwestern did. Temple didn't have inspectors, foresters did the work but they had inspectors in Kirbyville, one in Jasper, one in Newton. I forgot about that but one in Newton and one in Silsbee and later one in Woodville.

JG: What exactly were you inspecting?

JM: We had a lot of land problems.

JG: All the land issues, okay.

JM: See they started out they called them inspectors because in the old days they had squatters.

JG: Right, right, encroachments and everything.

JM: Yes, a squatter can get on that land and you can get on that land and if you stayed on it ten years he can get 160 acres.

JG: If he was unchallenged, yes.

JM: But one thing in the statute of limitations you had to be open and adverse in your claim. You couldn't lay behind a log. You had to let people know you were claiming it. But, back then you didn't have any...when they put those inspectors they had people on the land. Houston Oil Company they were all back there in Houston and that was before they got Southwestern and some people was on that land already and they had some problems too.

JG: The Diboll operation started a ranch there in Trinity and Houston County, a big cattle ranch in the twenties to deal with some of that and they put barb wire fences up and said everybody keep out. Part of it was to, the thought then was that, you know, you could graze cattle and that would keep the underbrush down so it protects the second growth from fire and that kind of thing and then the forest would re-grow on its own and meantime you could raise cattle as well. It had some success but it just didn't work out.

JM: Well see I leased a lot, see I handled all that.

JG: Did y'all do leases for livestock?

JM: Oh yes, and I leased quite a bit of it and most of my district was fenced up.

JG: Now who would have built the fences, the people leasing it?

JM: Yes, I tried to get people who lived next to the land that I could hold them responsible. Not only that they could tell me of any problem that might arise there. It really got a lot better because when I was there we began the hunting rights. I really like that. I leased it to the man that lived next to it, not in every case but in a lot of the cases and they would help me look after the land. If there was any problem developed they would come in my office and tell me.

JG: Did you work any with clubs, hunting clubs?

JM: Oh yes, oh yes, started them.

JG: Started them. How many hunting clubs would you say you were involved in starting? Twenty or more?

JM: Fifteen or twenty off hand.

JG: Okay.

JM: The Papermill had one over on the Neches River and really I didn't have anything to do with it. They had a guy over it name Hargrove in Silsbee that really got that rolling. But I found it, of course people didn't like the idea of the land being fenced up and really the hunting rights but the people I leased to they could select who they wanted to be members in that hunting club. I remember when I first went to Kirbyville there in '51 and on Saturday morning, Monday morning I would go to work and went to Evadale there would be dead cows on the road and everything. You didn't have the stock law then and that is when we really started fencing the land up.

JG: Tell me about when the stock law came into being.

JM: It was in the fifties.

JG: Was that good or bad?

JM: Oh it was a lot of opposition to it especially the people that had cattle and all out there, but I always tried to deal with them. I never lost my temper with them, you know. I said look this is coming, you got to accept it. If it's somebody who lived next to the land I would try to lease it to them. The longer I stayed in my district they usually leased from me because I got to know so many people. I knew who I could trust and who I couldn't trust. Most of them you could trust. Most of them were pretty good people.

JG: What would you say were the biggest changes that happened during your career? I know we've talked about some already but, I mean just, you know, if you had to look at it from that standpoint from when you started out to when you retired just a couple of the biggest changes that affected the way business was done.

JM: The biggest changes occurred when the Papermill started up because it just increased in activity. When I first went to work it was primarily sawmill, sending the timber to the sawmills and after the Papermill it was an explosion of pulpwood.

JG: So after the Evadale mill plant started.

JM: Yes, and it just expanded and got greater after the merger.

JG: With Temple, yes.

JM: Yes, because you had the sawmill and the industry at Diboll.

JG: They had a lot of fiber stuff too, particleboard, fiberboard, solid wood, paper.

JM: Yes, and I remember later on they built that new sawmill up there at Pineland.

JG: Right.

JM: Then they built that sawmill at Buna and it was just an explosion of activity really is what it amounted to. Everything was pretty laid back when I went to work. The land sales when I went to work in 1951 and gradually got less and less and I believe, my recollection is that the last sale that J. L. Lock made there in Kirbyville was 1954 because as Time progressed they realized the value of the land in growing timber.

JG: Right, it took them all that time to realize that.

JM: Yes.

JG: Yes, that is interesting that it took that long to realize that money could still be made.

JM: I wanted to tell you about that Forest Lake over there. See, that later developed into they had two camp houses there, one for the employees and one where we took county officials and highway patrol's and stuff like that and entertain them. We had the employees had the hunting rights in there but after Temple came they were integrated into the hunting club, the employees were.

JG: So, they didn't have just their own anymore, the employees didn't have exclusive rights to it they had to be included with the club?

JM: No, the Temple employees had exclusive hunting rights, that was the salary and hourly people okay.

JG: So, Southwestern didn't have access then?

JM: Yes, we were merged then.

JG: Okay so everybody did, okay.

JM: That is when like I told you that Joe's Lake was initially that was an oil field over there. But, I sit here for awhile some of this stuff comes back to me.

JG: I'll just ask a final question. It may be several parts. It won't be one question but, basically just to see what's been going on in the last couple of years, have you been keeping up with International Paper and Georgia Pacific and all that?

JM: Well, the only thing I have with International Paper Company is I got a letter from them. See I had company insurance (JG: Yes sir) and after International Paper bought

them out, bought Temple out, I lost my insurance, but International Paper Company had a deal that they were giving \$3,000 through its insurance company and I went through AARP and got AARP. But they gave me \$3000 to pay my premiums that is the only thing. And, who else did you ask about?

JG: Well Georgia Pacific now has bought the Diboll-Pineland operations of Temple. I.P. mainly wanted Inland, the paper side. They didn't want the old Temple manufacturing, the solid wood, the building products so they divested themselves of the building products and Georgia Pacific has now said that they will buy it. Anyways, I'm just wondering from your perspective, you know, is that a shock or you saw it coming or?

JM: No, I didn't see it coming. It really shocked me. I never dreamed that Temple would ever turn loose and to see what is happening to the lands now. It's obvious that Campbell is going to cut it.

JG: Yes, because Campbell wound up with the lion's share of all the land and of course when Temple and Eastex merged Eastex had a lot more land than Temple did but when Temple Inland spun off it all came together and then now Campbell wound up with most of it. Now Forestar which was a spin-off from Temple Inland still has a little bit of land but.

JM: No, I go over to the office maybe once every six months.

JG: Campbell, here in town, here in Jasper?

JM: Yes, every since I retired. When I leave I always tell them keep paying that social security tax. (laughter)

JG: I don't know too many people over there. I know Keith Stevens. He is a real good guy. Do you know Keith?

JM: Oh yes I knew Keith. He was in...he had the surveying crew when I retired.

JG: When you retired, okay.

JM: Yes, they were primarily going out and remarking paint lines is what they were doing.

JG: I dropped by to see him right before I came over here and the office was open but there was nobody there.

JM: Well they out working.

JG: I guess. I went down the halls and said "hello, hello," and nobody was there what so ever.

JM: After I retired I stayed until January 1, 1987. I stayed on a contract for four years and three months and helping the young man that took my position. We worked over all the lands. We went over in Louisiana checking all the lands, all the improvements or anything that may be on the company land. We did that. One time they called us in and told me said we want you to go to Georgia, we got a lawsuit. It was over there we had to go to Rome, Georgia. We made four trips over there. We didn't know anything or anybody. They said we have a lawsuit and we want you to do some investigation. We went over there and we met the forester and he brought us up to date, what little he knew. The problem was that they had a contract on some land. They cut the timber, an ongoing contract and they were scaling the timber and brought it up to the mill. Well, in the process over the period of time they started going to tonnage and that is what the suit was about. We wound up finding out who, we did get some information about it. That was over there on that land but we didn't know anything about the land we just talked to people. There was a lot of young timber over there in that country, juvenile pine. What else did you ask me?

JG: I think that was about it. I wanted to thank you again for letting me visit with you. Do you have any closing thoughts? I'll let you have the last word if you want to.

JM: Well my closing thought is I cherish the days I had, the people I met. I don't believe I ever met anybody with the companies that I didn't like. I never did really find anybody that wasn't cooperative. If you see old Bob Baccus tell him hello. I thought a lot of him.

JG: Oh okay.

JM: He was a big duck hunter and a fisherman.

JG: Yes.

JM: Do you ever see him?

JG: I see him occasionally. I've been trying to get him to sit down with me and do an interview. So, if you see him before I do you tell him that it's not that painful.

JM: Well I think he had to move over to Pineland, I mean to Diboll about '79 I guess. I don't know for sure when he moved over there but, he came to Kirbyville and he came out of Lake Charles. I remember, turn that off.

JG: Okay, well I wanted to formally thank you again and I appreciate it very much and we will stop the interview right here.

END OF INTERVIEW