

ARTHUR TEMPLE, JR.

Interview 56e

Ca. 1993, at Exeter Investment Company, Lufkin, Texas

Carolyn Elmore, Interviewer

Patsy Colbert, Transcriber

ABSTRACT: In this interview with Carolyn Elmore, Arthur Temple, Jr. recounts the history of Scrappin' Valley clubhouse and the reasons it was built. He recalls several stories about hunting deer and turkey, as well as the efforts to stock the area with game, as well as parties held at the clubhouse. He tells of events hosted by the Sportsmen of Boggy Slough and their chili cook-offs and plays, including a mock initiation in the style of Jim Jones and ones that featured Lady Bird Johnson and Liz Carpenter. Betty Burkhalter is also present for the interview. Ms. Elmore also interviews John Booker on the same subject at a later date.

Carolyn Elmore (hereafter CE): The history of Scrappin' Valley is what I'm here to talk about.

Arthur Temple (hereafter AT): Okay.

CE: You want to just start talking?

AT: Start talking, all right. Do you know what year it was built first?

CE: I don't.

AT: Well I think it was about 1951 or maybe even a year earlier, but Eck Prud'homme, who was the Vice President and General Manager at Pineland Operations for Temple Lumber Company had seen our club house, which I built, at Boggy Slough some years before that and he felt he would like to have a similar facility at Scrappin' Valley, which is part of a very large tract of timber that the company owned in a beautiful area. He got in touch with me and I personally drew the first plans, which I think were very good. However, every manager since that time that's come in thought it was necessary to rebuild it and remodel it and have their wives decorate it. It is very nice but I think it was better before it was so fancy because it was built for a place for men to have their hunting parties and so forth. It was used primarily or almost entirely for entertaining customers or the personnel of the company at Pineland. I don't know why you are bothering to write all this down.

CE: Just so I'll have my notes. It helps me remember it.

AT: You take short hand?

CE: Well I take my own short hand, not the other kind.

AT: It just happened that there were about 21 springs down in the little valley in front of the club house location and Eck Prud'homme dammed this up and made a beautiful little lake which is spring fed and stays full to this day. I don't know what all you want.

CE: Well mainly that. I really didn't know that history of how it was built and why it was built and that sort of thing.

AT: The only thing that has any particulars is when he decided he wanted it he asked me to draw it off so I did. I did a little floor plan.

CE: Do you have any idea where those plans are?

AT: No.

CE: Do you think they are still around somewhere?

AT: No, I don't. They decided they...well no, I'm sure they are gone. In those days we didn't hire fancy decorators and architects. We just drew it and told the contractors to build it. But, it was pretty keen in one respect. When it was first built it had a large living room which overlooked the lake and then it had I think six bedrooms on each wing across the main room and had community bathrooms at the end of the hall, of each hall and later we decided to build the cottages which are little duplexes. I believe there are three of them, detached from the main building.

CE: Do you remember when those were built?

AT: They were probably built about '75, 1975. And then because we had adequate sleeping quarters we took every other bedroom in the main clubhouse and converted it, each bedroom to two individual bathrooms with tubs and showers etc. which meant that each bedroom in the main clubhouse had its own private bathroom. The rooms had sliding doors to the front porch and also an entrance door off the hallway which ran along behind the bedrooms. A game room was built between the kitchen and dining area, for instance a separate building.

CE: It was originally a separate building, the dining area was?

AT: Yes, that was separate but then we added the game room between there and the main clubhouse (unintelligible) and we did that in order to keep the noise down so the people visiting in the living room, when a crap game was going on in the game room it got pretty loud. It's been a wonderful facility and a beautiful spot although somewhat difficult to come to, you know.

CE: Is there anything unique or unusual or maybe memorable about the materials that were used to build the original building?

AT: Yes, it was but I'm kind of scared to start telling it because they're still there and I'm not sure I'll get it right. I'll try! Of course it was all built out of our own building materials, frame building. I believe that is log cabin siding which we made and the place has a lot of history. A number of famous politicians have had meetings there.

CE: Such as?

AT: Well such as (unintelligible). He was the one that...he was on that yacht called Monkey Business [Transcriber's Note: this might refer to one-time presidential candidate, United States Senator from Colorado Gary Hart.]

CE: Yes, I know what you're talking about.

AT: And of course John Connally frequently was out there and had a lot of well known people that (unintelligible). Also, a few years after we started the Sportsman of Boggy Slough, SOB'S, we started making our famous chili at Scrappin' Valley rather than at Boggy Slough. In the last few years we've made it at North Boggy. Time Incorporated, even after we spun off, one thing they wanted to do was be able to come down there and use the clubhouse with some of their customers. There were very few deer in that area at the time, but by putting a high fence around about ten thousand acres out there we were able to propagate the game. And also we raised mallard ducks and released them over a fly-way where people could have a duck hunt. That worked very well and later on they put in a sporting clay. Jim Shepley when he was president of Time spent a lot of time down at Boggy Slough and Scrappin' Valley. He was an avid hunter and I think a bloodthirsty fellow. (laughing) I called him The Assassin. And but anyway, he came around one day and he said, "Arthur we ought to thin out these woods so we can have a good quail shoot here." And I said, "how big are you talking about." He said "oh about 200 acres." I said, "Jim we are in the timber growing business and this is a sideline and we don't have that to do anyway." And he said, "Arthur do you mean to tell me that if we have over a million acres of land you can't provide 200 acres to hunt quail on?" So we did! They release quail on it now but it never has been a success as a wild quail. Then even later we built a separate meeting room and some tennis courts which were beautiful courts, or were, I guess they still are, and we've had lots of meetings there. Let's see, Lady Bird Johnson and what is her name? Betty what is the name of Lady Bird Johnson's side kick that writes all the books?

Betty Burkhalter (hereafter BB): Liz Carpenter.

AT: Lady Bird Johnson and Liz Carpenter attended the chili making for several years and seemed to have a wonderful time. On those occasions Jim Shepley would write a script for a musical, usually politically oriented, with the original words and put to some well known music and we even hired a piano player to come over and accompany. We had a wonderful time. I've got movies of it and all of us took part in it and we just had a wonderful time. Everybody was...another year right after...what was the name of the guy that assassinated all the people in South America?

BB: Jim Jones.

AT: Yes, the year after Jim Jones poisoned all his followers in Uruqua or wherever it was.

CE: Guyana.

AT: Yes, we had an induction ceremony and I was the great chili maker and had a headgear with horns. It was actually a football helmet and we glued these big horns to it. Later we got a costume maker to make one that wasn't so damn heavy. (laughter) And one year we had the induction ceremony for members of the Sportsman of Boggy Slough, S.O.B.'s, at Scroppin' Valley and we had a big open fire and the initiates were brought blind-folded to the fire and were forced to drink kool-aide.

BB: I was one of them. (laughing)

AT: Yes, I remember it so well. Betty nearly died. (laughing)

BB: I did! (laughing)

AT: Forced to drink kool-aide but fortunately we were not using the formula that Jim Jones was.

CE: Oh that is funny.

AT: Everybody was in costume of course during the theatrical and Mrs. Shepley went down in lower Village in New York and bought costumes or rented costumes for the entire production. I'll probably give those films to the library but we have films of several of them. We had participation by not only members of the covenant but Lady Bird and Liz Carpenter, who took part enthusiastically and Jim Shepley of course and Yvonne and we had Lottie and Jim Shepley's wife, Yvonne. And...who was the other old hag?

BB: Beg your pardon? Who were the other hags?

AT: Yes, it was Lottie and Shepley and?

BB: Ann Shands.

AT: Was she one?

BB: Yes and Donna Fleager.

AT: Donna Fleager were dressed as old hags with long stringy moss under their witches hats and they proceeded to break up the ceremony. We had a good time! Of course today they use it for meeting safety and otherwise, customers. I hope they use it for customers.

CE: So that building has been there all of this time since the fifties?

AT: Yes, a little over fifteen years. They put in a first class kitchen now. I thought we had a first class kitchen. It was a dandy.

CE: Have you been over there since the remodel?

AT: No, I don't get invited.

CE: Sir?

AT: I don't get invited.

CE: You don't? Well, I bet you could get one if you wanted one but I haven't been over there either.

AT: I try to stay out of their hair.

CE: I hear its real pretty.

AT: Have you seen it?

CE: No, I haven't been over there.

AT: Oh it is really nice now. We had the experience of building several club houses and we knew certain things to do. That one has been a very good one. They keep prettying it up to the point that I think they may be going too far but that is none of my business.

CE: I've been out there but I haven't been since they've redone it.

AT: I imagine as many meals as they serve out there they needed the kitchen and I think the dining room has all been changed. It was pretty if they hadn't put in (unintelligible).

CE: Jack asked me to do this. He wants the history of it and to my knowledge we've never written the history of Scrappin' Valley.

AT: Well that is about the history of it. See Temple Lumber Company and Southern Pine Lumber Company were two separate companies and both of them had similar stockbrokers and after I was made President of Southern Pine Lumber Company I proceeded to put them together. I didn't see any point in having two (unintelligible) and I was very active over there and Eck Prud'homme really wanted a party place for entertainment. It is a lovely place. Scrappin' Valley is really the name of that area. There was an old feud there between different families, I've forgotten the names.

CE: Yes, I've got that. Robert Wilson from over at Jasper, he sent me somebody's history of the feud. I've got that but, I really wanted the company history.

AT: Well it was part of 40,000 I believe it was 40,000 acre tract that we bought from the name of Gilmer. And that land, timber there was too (unintelligible) but anyway you know the ecology over there is totally different. The land is sandy. There is sandstone and various out cropping and the little streams, little creeks run clear. You can drink out of them. It is just gorgeous. Of course, it's a long leaf area and their beautiful trees and each year millions of people go out there and pick up the pine cones, you know those great big ones. And we used to have a little picnic area down on one of the streams but I think they've abandoned that now. We used to use it, just small picnics with the family. Oh yes, King Ranch wanted to get a tract of land up near Pineland, which we let them have a lease on, and they fenced it with a high fence and they stocked it with deer from south Texas. We got to be good friends with the Kleberg's and they sent us, at my request, some axis deer, black buck, nilgai and we had already gotten...I forgot where I got those damn elk, but I got a few elk and put out there. They're still out there, which we keep them thinned down to about 35, but at least we did, I don't know what they do. The only thing that survived well were the axis deer and the elk, but the black buck didn't do at all well and the nilgai did pretty well for a few years and I think if we had a lot of them but they didn't last. Let's see what else?

CE: Are the Kleberg's or the King Ranch people still around now?

AT: Oh, they never were, they organized a club in there. The employees had that club on the road that goes back from Pineland to Broaddus but they helped get it started and stocked and set the rules and all that, but after awhile they spent a lot of money in there fixing it up for them. I've got a lot of great memories but you know, the kind of things you would be interested in.

CE: The land then, was it the Southern Pine Lumber Company land or was it the Temple land?

AT: Temple Lumber Company. Oh another thing on Scrappin' Valley, we introduced the first eastern turkeys that were introduced in this part of the world, which we imported and placed in there about 1945. It was before I went to Diboll and before I was over that operation. But nobody cared about hunting then but for me and Alexander and Henry Temple who was my cousin that lived in Broaddus. He asked me said, "would you like to look after all that?" And I said, "I would love it."

CE: Where did they come from the Eastern Wild Turkey, from Georgia?

AT: I think they are probably from Georgia, but I've really forgotten. Everybody thinks they were introduced in the seventies but we put them in there in about '45. We had experimented with (unintelligible) turkeys out at Boggy Slough without success. So, this is a true story that is kind of interesting. Carl Dupree, who lived in Lufkin, he was the Cadillac dealer, Chevrolet and Cadillac dealer. He was much older than I was and he said, "Arthur you keep trying to introduce these damn turkeys" and he said, "I want to tell you, I remember when I first came to East Texas as a young man we had a few turkeys

and of course the farmers all killed them out” and he said, “those Rio Grande turkey’s aren’t going to do but if you will get those big black Eastern birds that we had they were the ones that were native here many years ago.” He said, “if you’ll introduce those, they will do all right.” And, they did and we have had a good many turkeys. Everybody in the game department down there they’d think we were going to introduce...well they did bring some more in but we first put those eastern turkeys in there about ’45, I believe, maybe ’46.

CE: Well I think they are doing real well.

AT: Yes.

CT: Don’t they have hunting season?

AT: Yes, well we have got them at Boggy Slough but nobody hunts them. We’ve got a good many out there now. We’ve tried every kind of experiment in the world to get those turkeys started. It takes the turkeys...

CE: Well they are real different turkey...takes a range (unintelligible).

AT: Yes, we built a fifty acre pen twelve feet high out at Boggy Slough, at Rayville, and I brought in I think 100 or 150 young turkeys and we put them in that pen and took some of the feathers, which would grow out, and for awhile they had to stay inside that pen. Not only did that hold them together but protect them and we fed them in there until they, a year later they were mature and they’d fly out of there. We thought that...somebody told us that would work. Well it did work for about two years.

CE: Okay, anything else about Scrappin’ Valley you can think of?

AT: Well I can’t think of it.

CE: If you were kind of deciding as I see it, and I think Jack wants something for the wall and if we do like a history...

AT: Well I might do one for the wall. Maybe if he wants too...we’ve got a lot of use for it. From time to time you will find use for it.

CE: I’ve done a number of...I’ve done a lot of environmental education deals out there. They’ve always been real generous.

AT: I tell you another thing, Garland Bridges worked for the company but he was a very sensitive...he moved to Jasper later but he worked for Pineland and I recognized the fact that he was very environmentally sensitive person. So, we were having a lot of trouble with the environmentalists, not a lot but they were always picking at the big companies, so I put him in charge and we created an arboretum down there below the lodge. I’m telling you, plant one of everything you could find that was native and he did and we

would have all the environmentalist from Houston and all over the state come in for two days and we really made a lot of friends because he was just the right person. He would take them on a walk through the little twenty five acre area down by the lake and we had a lot of very interesting individual plants. They also discovered the only known at that time, the only known Sepia Vermillion and they were just about to log it and tear it up. Geraldine Watson called me and she called me, I was to testify before Congress and she had me call the day before I went up to testify and she told me off, she tore me up she said, "Do you realize what your people are about to do?" And I said, "Well tell me about it." And so I picked up and I said, "Well you just wait a minute now, everything will be all right." I go down to Booker and I said, "you go down there and stop that, and you put up little fences around it where they can tell where it is."

CE: They are still there.

AT: I said, "you do that." And they became our best friends. It was a little (unintelligible). But she called, I was in Washington sitting there waiting to testify. (laughter)

CE: You know, we've got a number of foresters that are like that, really environmentally friendly.

AT: Well they should be like that. Their...they wouldn't be foresters if they didn't love the forests.

CE: There is a bunch of them.

AT: Well Garland Bridges is dead now but he was really good. They just, he was a very timid kind of guy. The kind of guy you wouldn't think would be that way but when he met with those environmentalists it was never any question but that he was one of them. We won every one of them and we didn't have any when we started. I'm sure I'll think of something else.

CE: Okay.

AT: I think that little arboretum we built out there was just a little fenced area to protect it but it was convenient to walk down to.

CE: We had a teacher tour not too long ago. These teachers came in from West Texas and TFA brought them in for something but anyway they brought them out to Boggy Slough and we took them on a tour out there and they just loved it.

AT: Boggy Slough is good but it's not as good as Scrappin' Valley. Scrappin' Valley is the little clear brooks and the species that grow over there are different.

CE: Yes, the long leaf.

AT: Yes, and there is bay trees everywhere.

CE: That is my favorite eco-system is the long leaf.

AT: I just love it. You know, I've got a hundred acres, a hundred twenty five acres back by the treating plant in long leaf right now. It's doing real well. I think it will be pretty.

CE: What is it the blue stem grass? Is it growing?

AT: I'm sure it is.

CE: I just wonder if all this area is long leaf.

AT: No, the long leaf came over as pretty well as in (unintelligible) but still you can find trees maybe even a little past it but not much. That is kind of where it stops. It stops going north about...below Shreveport and then goes all the way across the southern but it's beautiful stuff.

CE: Okay, is that it. Anything else?

AT: Well I can't think of anything else.

CE: Well I'm going to work on this a little bit and if you don't mind if I've got questions I'll call you.

AT: Sure! Do you want to send it to me after you draft it? I'll be glad to look at it and see if it doesn't come back quite the way you want it to.

CE: I'm supposed to talk to John Booker on Tuesday.

AT: He can tell you a lot. He can probably give you better dates than I did. Now John wasn't over there during those earliest days but he took it over about '55 I bet and he was sort of the top of it.

CE: He still seems to be a busy man.

AT: You can't hardly put it in your write up but I really do think the reason Prud'homme wanted, it I think he had a girlfriend. (laughter) And I think he wanted it to have a place to take his girlfriend, but I made sure it was useable for our purposes.

CE: For something else! (laughter)

AT: Thanks a lot gal!

CE: Thank you so much!

END OF INTERVIEW