

HHA # 00172
Interviewee: Jim Florstedt
Interviewer: Steven Wiltz
Interview Date: June 5, 2003
Interview Site: Lafayette, LA
Interview Module & No.: MMS: SW053
Transcriber: Lauren Penney

[Transcriber's note: The majority of the interviewer's backchanneling and "uhs" and "ums" have not been transcribed for the purposes of readability. About 30 minutes into the interview the audio become choppy and words have not been recorded while others seem to be repeated. At that point I recorded what it sounded like they said; this continues for about 10 minutes before transcription attempts were discontinued.]

Ethnographic preface:

Jim Florstedt was born in 1944 and his father was in the State Department; the family moved frequently, never staying in a location for more than four years. He received a bachelor's degree from Eastern New Mexico University in geology and zoology in 1967. After graduating Texas Tech in 1969 with a master's degree, he went to work for Humble Oil Company in New Orleans. After spending four years in New Orleans, he quit Humble and moved to Denver where he worked for Tenneco Oil Company. In 1977 he asked for a transfer to Lafayette and has been there ever since. In 1989 Chevron bought out Tenneco; he retired from Chevron in April of 1999. He describes changes in technology and communications over the years and the impacts of regular layoffs in the 1980s and 1990s. Because of poor audio quality, verbatim transcription is not possible on the last 30 minutes of the interview; 10 minutes have been "transcribed" as best as possible.

TRANSCRIPTION

Interviewer initials: [SW]

Interviewee initials: [JF]

SW: It's, there we go, it's started. This is an interview with Mister Jim, is it Florstedt?

JF: Florstedt.

SW: Florstedt.

JF: German.

SW: 'Kay. It's uh, June fifth, 2003, in his home. And, you said you started uh, mentioned on the phone, you said you started in 1969?

JF: Yeah right. I graduated from Texas Tech in 1969, started working with Exxon in New Orleans. Well actually then it was Humble.

SW: Okay. They go through those changes. [Chuckles]

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JF: It was Humble. [Pause]

SW: What did you major in in college?

JF: Um, I went undergraduate to, I actually went to three different schools. I, I spent my first two years at Texas Lutheran College. Small uh, school near San Antonio. And I didn't have a major. Um, the dean of men had come down from New Mexico, new dean of men who was a geologist, so he taught Geology 101 and 102. So I took that my sophomore year and decided I wanted to get into geology. And uh, so I went to the school he had come from, Eastern New Mexico University. And um, spent three years there. Uh, that's, that's what we call hard rock school compared to a soft rock, which is petroleum. Hard rock's more mining. But I still got the basic geology courses, so I ended up with a degree, just a bachelor's degree from Eastern in uh, 1967. And then I went and got my masters then in Texas Tech, which was more oriented towards the petroleum side of the business. So uh, so and then in '69 I graduated from Texas Tech with my masters.

SW: How did you uh, it sounds like you started to say how you'd end up gravitating towards geology. What, what moved you to that?

JF: Uh, well, I love the outdoors. You know, and I, I look back on this too wondering, you know, trying to see well why did I end up geology. And, and I think it's probably because uh, I just uh, I'm an outdoor person, uh, I enjoy outdoors, I, I enjoy just seein' the, you know, I can drive through west Texas where there's nothing and, and enjoy it. [Chuckling] You know, I mean I just, I just like the outdoors and I think that's probably why I took uh, I, I don't know exactly why I took, you know, Geology 101 and 102. Maybe it was uh, just to get my science uh, course curriculum, you know, fulfilled or whatever. But once I took those I realized that I, the-, that it interested me. But I'm an outdoor person and um, uh, I think geology that's probably what, what got me goin' uh, on geology. And it's sort of ironic that we, find most geologist probably get into geology because they like the outdoors and they end up sitting in an office [Chuckling] you know, most of your, most of your life. But uh, we do get to go outdoors even though we do often work in the offices. N-, not too many of us do fieldwork, you know, the field mapping.

SW: Okay.

JF: Which, which would, meaning you'd spend most of your time outdoors. But I think that's why I, why I probably [Inaudible].

SW: Was there a, was anybody in your family, maybe your father or anybody-

JF: No, nobody. No no.

SW: No. Anybody else connected to the oilfield at all or anything?

JF: Nobody. Nobody, no friends uh, well, I mean, no, there's uh... not, not really. It just uh, just sort of happened. I'm glad it happened.

SW: [Fell?] that way. [Chuckles]

JF: I'm fortunate because I ended up with a career that I enjoyed. You know a lot of people go through a career that they really, you know, don't enjoy. To me g-, geology is uh, is really neat. [Chuckles]

SW: The study of rocks. [Chuckles] But most-

JF: Yeah, but there's a lot in the rocks. There's a lot of information in the rocks.

SW: But uh, are you originally from this area?

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JF: No, I, I moved around. My father was with the State Department, the government, U. S. government. And actually I never lived anywhere more than uh, four years of my life until I got here in 1977. And I've been here ever since. But we travel. And then I went to those three different schools and, you know, New Orleans four years, Denver [Sighs] four years, and then here in '77.

SW: And then you ended up here.

JF: Yeah.

SW: You stayed here from then on?

JF: Right. So we've been here since 1977, in this house.

SW: Have you uh, workin' for separate oil, different oil companies. They moved you around a lot?

JF: No not really. Um... I, I didn't like to move for one thing, so I didn't put myself in a position or I didn't ask to be transferred a whole lot. Um, and it, most, from what I've seen, it, it's more a management, you get in the management line you moved a lot more than the technical side. And I stayed on the technical side the whole time. You know, I didn't get into management as supervisor or, and, and all that. So uh, I never did get transferred. In, i-, except for when I requested and that was only one time. When I got out of school in '69 went to New Orleans with Exxon for four years. And I quit and went to Denver. So that was, not really transferred. [Chuckles]

SW: Wasn't the company moving you in other words.

JF: Right. Then in Denver, in uh, let's see that would've been in 1973 is when we moved to Denver. May of '73 is when I quit. I didn't like New Orleans. Exxon wasn't all that, I mean, Exxon was okay. I just didn't like New Orleans and I just wanted, I wanted somethin' fresh.

SW: More of the city than the company or anything like that.

JF: Yeah, right yeah. Yeah, right. Um, so we moved to Denver where my wife had an aunt. And we didn't have any kids, we both workin', so we just put everything in the U-Haul and went to Denver, to the mountains, you know. [Chuckling] Look-, lookin' for John Denver. Uh, and that's when I got on with Tenneco. Tenneco Oil Company. I don't know have, have you heard of Tenneco?

SW: Uh hm.

JF: You talk to some Tenneco people? Yeah, Chevron bought Tenneco in 1989. [Inaudible]. So I got on with Tenneco up there in uh, '73 and then in, in '77, four years later roughly, we decided to come back down to the South, which, which is, my wife's from New Orleans um, and my fam-, my, I have a sister and parents at that time were in San Antonio. And we just, we knew that, we knew we weren't gonna spend the rest of our lives in, in, in the Mile High City. Oh it was a beautiful place, you know, but we realized after four years that we, that we were gonna come back. So I requested a transfer with Tenneco in, their office was here in Lafayette. They ne-, their uh, they had a big office here in Lafayette. They had an office in New Orleans, too. But I wouldn't go back to New Orleans, so uh, I requested, and I had some friends with the company that transferred from uh, Denver to Lafayette. So uh, I did, I got, uh, you know, I asked to come back down here. They were lookin' for people 'cause this office was just growin'. I mean Tenneco at that time in the, in the uh, late '70s was just BLUH. I mean it was exploding, it was just growing so fast. And they were lookin' for people.

SW: The oilfield altogether was still growing at that time?

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JF: Y-, yeah, yeah. Uh, it was, you know, it was the early '80s, it was probably '82, '83 when people started seein' signs of the, you know, that hey, somethin's not right here. You know, then by '85 it was just, it was gone. But in the late '70-, in the, in the mid to late '70s um, maybe even early '70s when Tenneco went from basically nothin' to a, one of the top 10 companies in the business. Uh, so we got down here, it, it wasn't too hard to get back down here. So I asked for that transfer and I've been here ever since with Tenneco and Chevron.

SW: It seems to me you were, you were goin' where you wanted to go, versus what I've heard from a lot of guys that I've interviewed it's been more the company tells you go and you go. [Chuckles] So you've kind of called your own shots almost.

JF: Uh, well, like I said, I didn't want to get into management. So, so that eliminates that, moving every three years, which, which they do if you wanna get into management, every three years you're gonna go where they train you and they want you to go. 'Kay, I was on the technical side, which has its drawbacks.

SW: Are you, you're sayin' that for not just your company but maybe for the industry as a whole that they move those managers around a lot more so-

JF: Well, I mean I worked with Exxon which was the biggest, I worked with Tenneco which was the top 10. So, and I worked with Chevron um, you know, I, I worked for some pretty big companies and the trend has been up and, you, they stopped doin' this probably uh, I don't know, eight, nine years ago. They seemed to stop this, you know, every three year kind of thing. Just, just like clockwork. Um, but, yeah, in, in the '70s uh, I started workin' in '69, so I saw, was with Exxon for four years, I was with Ch-, uh, Tenneco for uh, you know, until the bottom fell out in '85. So I worked almost 15 years and, and that was, that's usually, you know, what, what happened is the management side would, if you, you know, if, if you wanted to get into management, you, you might as well tell your wife, "Okay now, you know, you better be ready every three years 'cause we're headin' out to a new," [Chuckles] you know.

SW: Don't put any roots down. [Chuckles]

JF: [Chuckling] A new place. Uh, you know, it, it's, that may be simplifying it a little bit, but it was pretty um, it, if you stay on the technical side they, there still was no guarantee that you wouldn't get transferred. Um, but it didn't happen as much. You know, they would transfer technical people if they needed some help in, in some offices. But, but it wasn't near as uh, near as much as on management side.

SW: I see.

JF: So I, yeah, I did um, I did, I was able to control my own destiny to a point, yeah.

SW: To some extent, s-, that's what it sounds like to me.

JF: And that's, that's what I wanted. That's what I wanted, so uh. I mean, it wasn't all bed of roses. I mean it wasn't all, there, there were some bad times, but uh, uh, I was uh, like I said, but not gettin' into management, I, I would be able to cut out that part of it, with having to move.

SW: When, when you were working, whether it was in New Orleans or Denver or even back here, what kind of, what kind of schedule did you keep? What kind of hours did you uh, did you, you had the office eight to five or?

JF: Uh, we ha-, we, we had, yeah, we had a, basically an eight to five job. Uh, it might've been seven-thirty to four-thirty or somethin' like that. But uh, we were always um, we, we, you'd go out in the field when the wells were drilling. And um, that, I w-, I, I really enjoyed getting out of the office, like I sa-, like I told you at the beginning, that's why I got into geology, 'cause I, I wanted to get out and see the outdoors. Uh, in the early days especially with the technology so primitive [Chuckles] you know, it, we, we went offshore a lot. Well, we went out on wells a lot, depending on where

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I was working. Um... when I started working in New Orleans uh, I, I'll give you an idea of where I've been out on wells, which is, to me it's probably pretty unique, I don't think you'll find too many geologists have been as many places as I have out, out on the wells that are drilling in, in this very, throughout the country I. Uh, when I started workin' we were drilling some wells down in uh, Florida, south Florida. So I got to go out uh, wells in uh, south Florida. Exxon was drilling at the time. Exxon then was drilling wells north of Pensacola in the Jay Field back at that time. And I spent a lot of my time there. Uh, when I was workin' in Denver I went out on wells up in North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, New Mexico, uh... Te-, west Texas. Then when I've been workin' offshore, I've been out on wells all the way from uh, or platforms all the way from, oh, just off the coast of Corpus Christi, you know, all the way to south of New Orleans. So I've been around, uh, I don't think you'll find too, too many people that've been, had that varied uh, uh, well sitting experience. Which is great. It fell right in my, well what I wanted to do.

SW: Got to be outside. [Chuckles]

JF: 'Cause I love to be outside. Especially that Pensacola. Yeah, that was pretty good because those were deep, deep wells, 18,000 foot wells. And it would take uh, we'd usually go out when we were gonna do some coring. Uh, and it would take, it would take a long time to, well, you know, when I would go out and pick the coring point and from that point to when the time I was needed for them to come out and bring it all to the surface we look at it, it was sometimes it would take 18 hours to tw-, 24 hours. So I had, you know, there I was stuck in Pensacola with nothin' to do for 18, 24 hours [Chuckling] it was a horrible life. And I was gettin' paid for it. Now, I was just out of school, I thought I'd died and gone to heaven [Chuckling] you know. It was good.

SW: Is that what you uh, yeah, can you describe to me what you, what you did onsite or at a well or what you? What, what exactly were you guys as geologists doing specifically?

JF: Well, there, there's a number of things we do. Um, um... the main thing we do when, when we go out on wells is to what we call "run the logs." The wireline tools that, that get the information to help us evaluate the, the hole we just drilled there. Um, Schlumberger, which you've probably heard of, is a wireline company who'd, who's probably done half the wells that I've sat on around the country. Schlumberger's one of 'em. Um, that's what we, you would do mostly is just go out, once the well gets to where we think we've gone through our target zone of interest, the, the, what we're goin' for, then we've got to see what's there. So we run these wirelines down and get the information and we look at it and, and analyze it and um, and see, you know, basically what we got. Uh, sometimes uh, we would go out and cut what we call a "core." You would actually go in with a barrel that has a s-, uh, a center, open center with these cones around this open center and they cut, they cut a solid piece of core that, that goes, it, it goes over this rock and the rock, this, this round s-, piece goes up, fills up the barrel uh, I think about 30, 60 foot, whatever you're lookin' for. And then when they come out, bring it up to the surface and lay it out, then there's, there's a piece of the rock. See other than that all you end up with are just little chips that the drilling bit chew out. So we would go out and core. Not, not as often. That's uh, that's not really uh, that common to see what they call conventional cores. But that's, that coring and logging are the two main things.

SW: [Inaudible].

JF: Yeah.

SW: And of course that's out of the office, so you're not in that eight to five routine. Have you ever had to go to a rig where you had to stay overnight or something like that?

JF: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

SW: Oh yeah, you said 18 to 20 hours, so that kind of maybe upset your, your eight to five routine at the office.

JF: Yeah, but it wasn't upsettin' me, I loved it out there.

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SW: Oh I didn't mean-

JF: You know and the, the, it, it would last, it could last four, five, six days. And the thing is they, that one that I was telling you about, about the 18 hour, 20 hour [free/pre?] period was, was sort of a, uh, more of an exception than the rule. I mean, I that, that was nice. Uh, on these others um, sometimes there would be continuous things goin' on for, you know, two to three days and we would have to be o-, be up during those say two or three days. Not, not constantly, we, we'd catch naps, two hour nap here, three hour nap here. But that, that's sort of, you know, the other side of the coin from having 18 hours laying on the beach or somethin' [Chuckles] is where we'd have to uh, we, we catch, catch a nap whenever we could for two to three days. In that two or three day period. But, you know, I mean, it was, it was okay. It, it would only last-

SW: [Inaudible]-

JF: It would only last for, like I said, three, maybe four days. And then finish and you come back on in the office.

SW: Do all the reporting and [Inaudible, overlapping speech] stuff out.

JF: Right. Right, right.

SW: Okay. So... yeah, that was a question I had wanted to ask, if you had ever done any work offshore, so obviously you've been out there before.

JF: Oh yeah. Yeah, I've actually, in, in most of my experiences offshore, of, of the uh... of the 30 years I've worked, twenty... twenty-f-, 25 of it is offshore. Twenty-four of it's offshore, so, so it's, you know, the four years in Denver and then a year when I was workin' in New Orleans in the onshore division. So actually, yeah, twenty-, of the 30 years, 25 of it offshore. And I've been out on a lot of wells.

SW: Did, did having to go out to those wells for extended periods, did it ever interfere with your personal and your family life in any bad ways?

JF: I've been out a lot of Christmas days.

SW: Sometimes.

JF: You learn to live with it. And, and it uh... I was single, when I was single is when we were drillin' all those wells over in Jay, Florida, I was living in New Orleans. And uh, and there, there were lots of 'em. Um, yeah, I'd be gone a lot of weekends. Um, but it, it's somethin' that you, if you can't accept you're in trouble and you better learn that's gonna happen [Chuckling] you know. It's gotta learn, it's gonna happen and uh, just learn to live with it. See, but nowadays it's not so bad because with the, with the technology, I, I mean I don't even know if they go offshore anymore. You can, back in, with Tenneco, back in uh, the late '80s we were gettin' the data right in office on the screen. Instantaneous data. The, just like they were seeing it out there on the rig, the, the, you know, the drilling rate, the gas units, the... you know, everything they were seeing right on the rig, we were gettin' it right in the office. And, and they can log a well now, and you can get the, you can, you can get the information via satellite, I mean right in your office. So, I, I know there's a lot less geologists goin' offshore and, and, you know, what, it's not near what it used to be.

SW: I know they're goin' a lot further offshore now, too, so that trip would be a lot longer.

JF: [Inaudible, overlapping speech] deep water, yeah. Yeah, from the deep water. It's interesting that the, in 1969 when I went offshore we communicated by a two-way radio, you know like you, you push the little thing to talk. Sort of like some of these little police, old police movies have. Everybody in the Gulf could hear ya. I mean, it was not

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private. So if you were talkin' to your wife, anybody that was listenin', you know, could hear it. So you'd have to, you, you had to be uh, you had to be aware that everybody was listening. And in fact when we'd call in information from wells, sometimes you'd have to use a code uh, and I think of now of how that's changed. We've gone from that, speaking via uh, we didn't even have telephones. I mean, it was a two-way radio. And now it's satellite, you know, it's instantaneous, satellite [information?] so, these guys now have it made. The guys and girls have it pretty, I consider it pretty, pretty easy. [Chuckles]

SW: You, you said "guys and girls" now, did you see many females uh, in, as geologists when you were, when you started out or?

JF: No, in '69 there were none. When I started workin' in, in New Orleans there were none. Um... in Denver is when I first started, the first girls and that would've been in the, the uh, '73 to '77. So in the mid '70s is when you started seein', started seein' the girls in, bein' hired. Yeah.

SW: That uh, that cause any friction or have any problems or, you know, sometimes when there's quarters offshore if you had-

JF: Well it, it, it took awhile I think for, for the uh, for the companies to, to really uh... accept them, you might say, offshore, because you've got about 70 hard-nosed, you know, roughnecks and driller and things like that, and this girl all of a sudden appears for the first time and it's somethin' completely new to 'em, and uh, I mean I've never seen anything happen. I, I really haven't been around that many, but I mean now it's commonplace, you know, so, so here comes a girl in, no big deal. But I'm sure, I'm sure when it first happened uh, they, 'cause they had to have their own rooms. You see, we, we would sleep and bunk with four, six, eight guys in a room, you know, the same bunks and the same, in, in bunks, double, two bunks. Uh, so they had to have their own room, so I'm sure there was people complaining and, "Why," you know, "Why do they have to have their own room?" You know, the hard-nosed type. But uh, I mean it's, it's worked out.

SW: Like you said, now it's pretty commonplace.

JF: Yeah, right.

SW: But maybe at that time it was seen as almost an invasion.

JF: I'm sure.

SW: Of a man's world.

JF: I'm sure it was. Yeah. Sure it was.

SW: We just had, I know on TV the uh, the woman golfer played that PGA event, same thing there. You know, that was a man's world and she's comin' in.

JF: Uh hm.

SW: And so that throws everybody into disarray for a little while. [Chuckles]

JF: Yeah. Yeah, but it'll, I mean, it's, it's, it's gonna happen. You know, it's just little small steps at a time.

SW: What about uh, along the same lines, uh, not necessarily women, but what about uh, Blacks or other minorities?

JF: Not many. Uh-

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SW: [You didn't see many?]?

JF: Not many. We uh... well, th-, I mean, there were um... let's see, there weren't any when I started workin' with Exxon, that I re-, I know there weren't any Blacks. There might've been an Iranian or two engineer, [no?]. Um... even now, and with Tenneco, Tenneco hired one in Denver. And he lasted about a year and they had to fire him 'cause he just wouldn't perform. Um, and even with Chevron, um... in terms of, in terms of geologists... there's more women than Blacks. Now I don't know how many Blacks are even geol-, in the geology field, there may not be that many.

SW: For you to pick from.

JF: But you do see them in some of the other uh, departments. I mean, I mean they're, they're hiring 'em.

SW: But from what you saw in your experience there was more women than Black geologists.

JF: Oh yeah. Oh yeah, in terms of geologists, oh yeah, yeah.

SW: Interesting. [Pause] What about um... we, I guess we'll shift, I'm shiftin' back to where you said you got into geology. When, when you first started, when that was comin' up to you and you were saying, "Hey, maybe this is what I wanna do." Um, what other, what other options for employment were available at that time to somebody like you? Um, fresh out of school or livin' in the area that you were living in at that point in time? What, what else could you have done if you didn't, if you hadn't chose geology?

JF: What, if I hadn't chosen geology? If I hadn't taken a geology major?

SW: What other, what other availabilities, I mean farming or?

JF: Well-, I, I really didn't go to graduate school for, for petroleum geology. I, when I was an undergraduate at Eastern New Mexico, I wanted to get into marine geology. Or actually, marine biology. I, I had a dual major in zoology and geology. And I wanted to get into oceanography, so I applied to three or four schools, in Hawaii uh, someplace in California, someplace on the East Coast, and at that time Texas Tech, Texas A and M, University of Houston, maybe T-, University of Texas were, were forming this uh, partnership to start up a, uh, oceanography degree out on the Gulf Coast. And I got an assistantship at Texas Tech to teach labs and, and, and I didn't get any kind of uh, help in any of these other schools. So I actually went to um, Texas Tech thinking I was gonna go into oceanography and that fell through at the last minute. And so I just ended up in petroleum geology, which for me it's probably a good thing I did, that it happened that way. Uh, so that's how I ended getting up, getting into petroleum geology. I mean at that time I had no idea about the oil industry, I, I didn't, you know, I, I, I knew nothin' about it. I, like I said, at New Mexico we were mostly uh, hard rock. Mining, you know, minerals, mineral, got a big mineral collection up there, uh, we would go out and run around the hills and find minerals and had nothing to do with petroleum. Um, so I sort of stumbled into petroleum geology, which I'm glad I did. So it worked out good.

SW: Was, was the, was the pay scale something that was attractive? When, when you got into the oil industry and you saw-

JF: When I got in, yeah, but that's not really why I did it. You know I didn't-

SW: It's not why you did it, but you could tell comparatively speaking at that time that the oil industry paid a bit better than other sectors that you could've been in.

JF: The, uh, they, well, with, with I guess mining, I guess you could've gone into mining. Which uh, some of the, some of the guys I graduated with at New Mexico who didn't go on to graduate w-, ended up in some of the mining aspects of geology. Um... there was mining, you know at that time [Audio is choppy around 30 minutes; the following

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is what I was able to hear and thus cannot be taken as a verbatim transcript] I guess the government maybe could have gone, gone with the government. Uh, uh, probably that's the three possibilities. Geologists graduated then uh, uh, [Inaudible]. There [much?] smaller, smaller, [Inaudible] part of geology they could've gone. I'm sure those were the big three. Government, USGS, private companies, or, you know, petroleum or mining. Guess that's probably, probably 95 percent of those who graduated went into those three [Inaudible].

SW: [Inaudible].

JF: Yeah.

SW: What about uh, gettin' back on your, your career in the oil industry. Uh, you [mentioned?] job security, would you consider [Inaudible]. [JF chuckles] Is it always up and down or-

JF: What's that word? [Chuckling] Security?

SW: Yeah.

JF: Uh, well [Chuckles] it wasn't too good. And then it got worse. [Laughs] When all the companies started uh, [Inaudible] then, I mean, this, the bottom fell out in, you know, in [Inaudible] the bust, these companies started like [went to?]. Tenneco, at Tenneco, in 1985 start, I think was layin' off, started layin' off people. I mean, everybody started layin' off. [Inaudible] started feeling it. I mean, ever since then it's been bad. So I, I guess you could say from, the '70s were pretty good. Because everything [Inaudible] and everybody was happy. You know, there was still [a lot of?] [Inaudible] within the company and [Inaudible] stock and stuff, you know. Uh, but the company, once the bottom fell out in '85, nobody had any kind of securities. I went through [Inaudible]. Between '85 and when they were sold. You know, not knowin' I was gonna have a job the next [day?]. Went through two or three of those. Between ['80, '89?]. And then [Inaudible] they tell us we're bein' sold. [Inaudible] gonna buy us. What's gonna happen tomorrow? Well we find Chevron's gonna [Inaudible] but we don't even know if we [have?] a job. You know, [Inaudible] seminars um, Tenneco bring in these, these [little tiny?] consultin' company tell ya, tell ya how you [Inaudible] life after Tenneco and how it's gonna be. [Inaudible for about five seconds] and then Chevron [Inaudible] no guarantee a job. I mean the whole time you're goin' through, "Am I gonna have to move?" And, and, and this is how it is in every one of these layoffs, so it, within that five year period between eighty-, '85 and '89, or '84 and '89, we went through three or four of these. And it gets pretty uh... depressing. You know, especially [Inaudible]. I mean it was really, I really feel [sorry?] for them. Because uh, they had to go through that trauma of goin' home and tellin' their wives. The estimate, I've heard a number, number of jobs lost [to the?] bust, which would be roughly, the, the, '82, '83 is when that started happening, you know. [By the?] late '80s somethin' like 200, 300,000 jobs were lost in the oil sector. It, I mean, the bottom fell out bad. So it was pretty traumatic. What, we had decided, me and my wife had decided that if I didn't get on with, with another company, when Tenneco was sold, that I was gonna live, we were gonna live here, we weren't gonna move [preferred/from here?] for 12, 13 years um, and I actually went to USL and, and found out I would have to [the hours?] I'd have to take to get my teaching certificate so I could teach in high school and [all that?]. You know, so I made plans. So here I'm havin' to, this life, this major life change thing. You know, uh, and go to work, you know, everyday and uh, and be in that environment. But it turns out [I got?] the job. That would've been like, that would've been-

SW: [Inaudible].

JF: Chevron retained us. Chevron re-, uh, they even, you know, even then in the '90s Chevron had every three years they had layoffs. Uh, I think everybody by that time was sort of gettin' a little used to it [Chuckling] not freakin' out, panicked, like you did in the '80s. In the '80s it was [all?] new. I mean by the nine-, I mean everybody lives with it. You used to work, go to work knowin' that it's comin' [you know, it's matter of time?]. You know, [Inaudible] layoff. Or when is your company gonna get bought by another company. You learned [Inaudible].

Interviewee: Florstedt, Jim

Interview Date: June 5, 2003

SW: And then you just work everyday and [Inaudible] anyway.

JF: You don't, you don't have [it in?] the back your mind as much. Uh, but it, I mean it's not a lot of fun. I would just [Inaudible] Ocean Energy merged with 'em and bought Ocean Energy. A lot of the guys over at Ocean Energy were Chevron, 'cause they went over there four years ago, went through that mess four years ago when um, when I retired they had some [Inaudible] but they also had some nonvoluntary layoffs. The guys in [Inaudible] Ocean layin' them off. [Inaudible] [transferred to Houston, some of 'em?]. And here they go through [Inaudible] and I think about these guys and their families, [they gotta go through?] this again. You know, you [worry about?] how you're gonna feed your family, you know, hopefully they've got [Inaudible] things they can fall back on, but it's not any fun. [Chuckles] [Inaudible] job. It's, I mean it's, I'm glad [Inaudible].

SW: When did you retire?

JF: Uh, four years April. Uh, 1999, yeah.

SW: [Inaudible] '99.

JF: Yeah, right, April of '99 is when I retired. [Inaudible] voluntary [Inaudible] payin'. They, they [Inaudible] selected few that were allowed to take this package. And [Inaudible], so they paid me to walk away. I, I was thinkin' about retiring at the end of the year, so this was April. There was, this was January or February [they came through?] with this.

SW: Worth [Inaudible].

JF: So, hey, you know, I took it. So things worked out great.

SW: [Inaudible] puts it right at 60 years, uh, I mean 30 years.

JF: Right. But, right.

SW: Thirty years-

JF: [Inaudible] '69, yeah right at 30 years. Yeah, I'm glad I got out. Uh, [Inaudible].

SW: [Inaudible] when you uh, obviously you don't just sit around [JF chuckles] [you love the outside?]. What do you do with yourself?

JF: These days [Inaudible]. I mean, I, spring and early summer I uh, my yard takes up a lot of my time. I mean, I, I do all, I do the yard entirely, my wife doesn't do any yard work. I spend a lot of time manicuring, planting in the spring, planting and now I'm sort of maintaining. Um, I have a workshop that I refinish [Inaudible]. We have this little motor home that uh, we're gettin' ready to leave next week for [three weeks?]. We do volunteer work [with Meals on Wheels?]. [Pause] Uh, we're never sittin' around tryin' to figure out what to do. [Chuckles]

SW: [Inaudible] did your wife [Inaudible] or?

JF: No, no, she, when we had our first [son?] she stopped workin'.

[TRANSCRIPTION ENDS at just under 40 minutes into the interview because audio continues to be poor.]