

Frederick Ford Drummond

Frederick Ford Drummond discusses his love of ranching, his family and the Nature Conservancy.

Chapter 1 – 1:08

Introduction

Announcer: “Come trade with me.” Those are the words that brought the Drummond family to Oklahoma and Osage County. Frederick Drummond came to the former Osage Nation, Indian Territory, at age twenty-two in 1886. The Drummond name runs thick in the vast ranch lands of Osage County. The branches of the family tree--cousins, brothers, uncles--are extensive and storied.

No one understands the family legacy more than Frederick Ford Drummond, a third-generation rancher, who walked among pioneers as a child. Later, he paid homage to his father, Fred Gentner Drummond, and his grandfather in the only way he knew how--by carrying on the family business and by becoming one of many Oklahomans who strove to keep the state’s heritage alive.

A member of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association since the age of seven, Fred began training his son, Ford, in 2002 to become a fourth-generation Drummond rancher. In addition to many honors he was inducted as a member of the Oklahoma State University Hall of Fame. Listen to Fredrick Ford Drummond talk about his family, his love of ranching and the Nature Conservancy on VoicesofOklahoma.com.

Chapter 2 – 1:08**Come to Osage**

John Erling: Today's date is March 30th of 2009.

Frederick Ford Drummond: I'm Frederick Ford Drummond, age seventy-seven.

JE: The year and date you were born?

FFD: July 13, 1931.

JE: Where are we right now?

FFD: John, this is the First National Bank of Pawhuska, Oklahoma. It's an old established bank; it's been here since year one.

JE: The Drummond Ranch, where is that located?

FFD: There are lots of Drummonds'. There's a misconception. My grandfather was an Indian trader, came in from Scotland in the early '80s and was looking for a place to go. Went to Texas, lost what money he had. Working his way back east, got to St. Louis, ran into an Indian trader by the name of Charlie Skinner. Mr. Skinner said, "Well, come trade with me in the Osage." He was probably eighteen or nineteen years of age. He didn't know where the Osage was but he needed a job and somewhere to go. So he wound up here in Osage County. Probably one of the very early white men could have been the first three or four. So the Drummond Ranch is Frederick Drummond, that was his name. He had three boys and one daughter. And all the boys wound up all in the cattle business. My father was Fred Ginter Drummond. There was Roy Cecil Drummond, called R. C., another one called Jack Drummond, A. A., which were his initials, Alfred Alexander. The bedrock for the Drummond family was, of course, Grandfather Drummond. He married a young woman from Coffeerville, Kansas. She was a full-blood German and there he was a full-blood Scot. He traded her early in Pawhuska, and then went to Hominy, and with two other men founded what they called the Hominy Trading Company. And that was the super Walmart of Osage County at that time. They had everything from groceries to ladies and gents furnishing, shoe department, hardware department, furniture department, groceries, they had everything that you needed to be a farmer or a rancher at that time. So, of course, ranching kind of began. The history of the ranching business, though, was the trail drives from Texas with all the cattle after the Civil War were practically innumerable down there. The drivers would gather up cattle and drive them across Oklahoma to the railroad in Kansas. And then they would be shipped to the abitwars back east. And that's where the early beef for the eastern part of the United States came from. Cattle drives came through Osage County and they leased the lands from the various members of the Osage tribe. The grass here in Osage County was the tall grass prairie, which starts here and goes up through the center of Kansas. Very

nutritious and great for grazing. Now those cattle that came from Texas, they'd practically take all summer to get them up to the trains in Kansas. So they would graze the grasses en route across Oklahoma on their way to Kansas.

JE: Was that a certain trail then?

FFD: No there was no, the Chisholm Trail, of course, is a very famous trail but that was more west of there. And there was never any particular trail that was here in Osage County because they were just scattered from one end of the area to the other. And they came across the Cherokee's land and the Choctaw's. The Chisholm Trail and some of those trails, they were specific trails where you could almost still see the wagon marks in the ground from where they went. But here, they were just scattered over such a large area. They stayed quite a while here.

JE: Were you too young to remember your grandfather?

FFD: He died early so I do not remember him. No, he died at age forty-nine.

JE: Wow.

FFD: A very young man. He had appendicitis and if you had appendicitis or something like that, you died. If they operated on you that was not a very good thing. That probably just made sure that you didn't live.

JE: So then your grandmother carried on for many years?

FFD: My grandmother and, of course, those three boys were old enough that they were able to fill in and do things. The oldest boy, R. C. Drummond, was more the cowboy. My father, he was in the third business school class at Harvard. Went to Harvard to go to business school. After graduating from Oklahoma State when he was sixteen. And then when Grandfather Drummond died he came home to run the trading company. R. C. Drummond who was the oldest, became the cowboy. And then A. A., he got to the age, he became a rancher too. Now you could lease the land from the Osages and buy cattle in Texas and bring them up here. Had to be cattle traders, really, so to speak. And my father wound up doing more of that later on too. So there were three different Drummonds that were all involved in the ranching business and had various ranches here in Osage County.

JE: Their own individual ranches?

FFD: All individual ranches and all independent. One of the unfortunate things is that we all get painted with the same brush. And some of them do a better job than others. And some claim each other and some don't. But the families get bigger and larger and it's difficult to keep ranches together. So some of them have come and some of them have gone. But still there are several families that are still very involved in Osage County ranching.

Chapter 03 - 5:25**Education**

John Erling: Your father, Fred G., to graduate at sixteen?

Frederick Ford Drummond: Yes, from Oklahoma State early on.

JE: And that was a full—

FFD: Well, yeah, because in those days there were no schools so it was kind of home-schooling. So he was more or less home-schooled in certain respects. And he had one teacher that probably taught all the grades in Hominy. So he passed all the tests to go to Oklahoma State when he was thirteen. Education was very, very important in the Drummond family. Quite often they would move to Stillwater or wherever it was to take their family. The R. C. Drummond family, they just moved down there. But my father went down and stayed at a boarding house. And then he wanted to get an advanced degree and there weren't really that many universities that had advanced degrees. So he wound up going to Harvard.

JE: At sixteen?

FFD: At sixteen, um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: What year about would that have been?

FFD: 1913.

JE: How many years was he at Harvard?

FFD: He didn't complete his degree because Grandfather Drummond died. And so that's when he came back. He was there probably about a year and a half. So he completed the first year and part of the second year. And then came back to take over the trading company. Which again, that was the Walmart of Osage County. That was a pretty big deal. And even if you needed to be buried they also had coffins that you could get. Ah, I always thought that was kind of funny, all the old trading companies that if they had a furniture store they were usually in the morticians as well.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

FFD: Probably the same thing happened in the Dakotas.

JE: So your father then was really into retail to begin with?

FFD: Yeah.

JE: And then gravitated—

FFD: Then gravitated to the ranching business, yes. There seemed to be more profit in the ranching business than there was in the retail business.

JE: Your father lived to be how old when he died?

FFD: Oh he was fairly young when he died. He died at age sixty-three. After I graduated, got my advanced degree from Stanford, once upon a time. I got an MBA. And knew I did not

want to be a rancher. So I wound up in the banking business in Kansas City. And then when he developed lung cancer and had six months to live, why it was my job to come back to become a rancher and take over the cattle ranches.

JE: Your job, meaning the family expected you to do that?

FFD: The family expected me to do that.

JE: How did you feel about that?

FFD: I felt it was the thing for me to do. That's what you do what you do.

JE: But you had grown up, obviously, the son of—

FFD: A cattle rancher.

JE: But very young you just did not want to be a rancher, did you?

FFD: Well, I'll tell you what, during World War II I rode si-jillion miles, I'll never forget. It was hot, dusty, we'd gotten up at two o'clock that morning and ridden eleven miles to go where we were going to help rounding up cattle. And it was hotter than blue blazes. Finally got some water and a cheese sandwich at lunch. We're coming back that evening at three o'clock and going down an old dusty road. My horse had its head between its legs. And I said, "Frederick, I'm never going to be a rancher." Famous last words.

JE: So you were how old?

FFD: Probably fourteen at that time. But you're a kid then. Whenever you got on a horse you got on a horse to work. There was never any fun and games, you were out there doing what you needed to do. Roundups and building fence and hauling hay, everything that you have to do as a rancher. To be a rancher you've got to be pretty physical. I thought, Hey, there's got to be an easier way, working your bones off.

JE: So then when the call came to you that the family really expected you to come back, all of this negative feeling that you had about ranching had to come washing over your brain.

FFD: It did, it all—I got away. I thought, Well, you know, I need to come back. I had a friend in a bank up there at Kansas City. He'd run the cattle loan department, and that's what I was doing at that time. I came back to be under him. And he said, "Frederick, better to run a peanut stand and be a peanut vendor and own your own stand than to work for somebody else." So I came back to run the peanut stand.

JE: But before that, you got your master's degree in business administration at Stanford University. So you knew how to run that peanut stand.

FFD: I had a good education, yes, I had a good idea on how to run a peanut stand.

JE: But didn't you go to Texas there in the '50s?

FFD: No, I spent a couple of years in the military in the '50s. In Germany. After I came back from the military, that's when I went to get my master's from Stanford.

JE: After your master's at Stanford, then what?

FFD: Then I went to Kansas City.

Chapter 04 - 2:25**Ranching**

John Erling: Then you came home to the Drummond Ranch. Talk about ranching back there in the '50s, the '60s, 70s, then we'll compare that to the way that it is today.

Frederick Ford Drummond: Everything has changed so much. As you know, we had three railroads in Osage County. And all the cattle back in the, up until the middle '50s were shipped by rail to Kansas City, St. Louis, St. Joe, that's where the markets were. So the pastures were big and the cattle came in from Texas and by rail and they summered here. And that's when everything was grass-fattened after World War II. During the war, of course, there were no corn-fed beef. And during the early '50s most of it was still grass-fed. There were these fat steers that were grazed on grass in Osage County and up through Central Kansas all the way up to Manhattan, Kansas. And then, of course, they went to Kansas City to the stockyards there. They'd have up to twenty or thirty thousand head on a Monday and a Tuesday that were in carload lots. Packers' representatives would come through and pick out the fat cattle in these pens and then they'd drive them to the packing plants. Which were right adjacent to the yards there. So this is kind of the name of the game in the early '50s. And then the trucking industry came in, and that made it possible to move cattle where you didn't have to do it on horseback. So a lot of the stockyards would open up in the various smaller towns. Tulsa had a stockyard, still do. The first one was at Sand Springs, but it's now over there on the east side of town. Bristow, Pawnee, Coffeerville, every town practically of any substance has a stockyards. And, of course, the cattle were moved by trucks. So that revolutionized the cattle industry. The mobility of the trucking industry and the vehicles had made it revolutionary. Because back in those early days you would have to ride to wherever you were gathering roundups or doing that. Today you have your pickup truck and horse trailer, open up the gate, the horse jumps in, you can go twenty miles, the horse jumps out. You get on your horse, do the things that need to be done, and you don't have to spend four hours riding back home in the heat and the dust. So a cowboy's life is much different than it used to be. The things that really revolutionized the industry, again, were the trucks, the gooseneck horse trailers, and the fact that the feed used to be early on in hundred pound sacks. Then it went to where they had the overhead bins and you could put it into a feeder on the back of a pickup truck. So the cowboys did not have to wrestle hundred-pound sacks of feed all day long. And I'm not sure there's anybody that could do that today, but back, you know, up through the early '60s, that's where most of the feed would come in and we'd call it cake. Which was cottonseed cake, cottonseed pellets, high in protein that you'd pour out in the wintertime to feed the cattle. Then when we

did have the pickup trucks with the feeders on the back so you didn't have to lift those hundred-pound sacks. And you didn't have to have feed pens that you brought out to in the middle of a storm or wet weather and feed the cattle. It revolutionized the cattle industry. So you could be an older guy and still be a cowboy. We have some cowboys that are second, third, or fourth generation cowboys. Interesting guys, wonderful guys. I love our cowboys. We have one cowboy that's been with us forty-six years. We've got another one that's been with us forty-two years. Another one has been with us at least fifteen or sixteen years. These guys are all very conscientious, neat people, and they consider themselves elitist. If you had to put them in an office or in a factory somewhere they'd wither up and die. But they like the outdoors, they love what they do, they like their horses, it's kind of a fraternity. Cowboys are a fraternity. Willie Nelson had a song that said, "Mothers, don't let your daughters grow up to marry cowboys." They still do.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative). Is that a dying breed?

FFD: Well, I don't think so. I think so long as we have open spaces and horses. They tell me it's romantic; there's a romance to it. I've never felt very romantic but I still got some great thrills in life riding a good horse and being on the top of a hill at daylight and watching the sunrise and the wind blowing across your face. That's about as good as it gets. And not everybody has that opportunity, you know, being physically tired, and yet, the things you see. A prairie storm come across is something that, it's wonderful. I was involved with the Federal Land Bank for years, thirty-seven years. We used to have an economist up there that was a very bright guy, out of Wichita, Kansas. And I'd always respect his judgments when I said, "Well, Larry, I've been running these ranching properties for quite a few years." I said, "The best I can ever get to the bottom line is 2 percent, at best." And he said, "Frederick, you'll make 8 to 10 percent every year." And I said, "Well, boy, somebody's got to be a lot better manager than I am." He said, "Well, 2 percent in real money." He said, "The other 6 to 8 percent is just having the opportunity to be a real rancher." So there lies the tradeoff. There are a lot of things that money can't buy, but having the opportunity to be out in the wide open spaces, I think there's always going to be people that like to get out in the wide open spaces and commute with nature.

Chapter 05 - 4:16

Cowboys

John Erling: Way back when in your younger years, you were around cowboys that were older than you. Did they actually sit around the campfire and sing songs?

Frederick Ford Drummond: Well, none of them could sing.

JE: Did they try anyway?

FFD: Oh no, no they didn't sing. The cowboys, if you'd get them together they'd always play a lot of tomfoolery. You might be somebody on a kind of a young horse and they'd throw a hat between the horses legs to see if he could buck you off. You know, where we'd all go. Usually a cowboy's wife would feed us at lunch and the camaraderie would be breaking bread and eating with each other and everybody telling stories. But if there ever was a singing cowboy that had to be Roy Rogers or somebody else.

JE: It wasn't your people?

FFD: I never heard one.

JE: Here you are managing a ranch now, but you have really worked as a cowboy.

FFD: You better believe it. I have worn out a couple of saddles, I mean, literally wore them out. Yes. I think I've probably written since I was just a little kid up until five years ago, till I broke my neck. I was still riding all that time except for two years in the military. And whenever I was away at school.

JE: You broke your neck working as a cowboy?

FFD: Yes, yes I did.

JE: Do you mind telling us how that happened?

FFD: Oh I was trying to make a hand, you know, seventy years of age, and trying to keep out of the way of my son who had taken over the ranches. A cold January day, frozen ground. I got off my horse and I was in the middle of a big pen trying to count some cattle and a young yearling bull decided he would take me out. He was disturbed; he didn't like being penned up. I knew I couldn't get to the fence fast enough so I thought I could face him off and maybe jump sideways. Or maybe he'd come at me and back off and go away. He didn't, he decided he'd take me out. So he just came at me full speed and hit me in the chest and threw me up in the air. And I fell on my neck on frozen ground. I thought he had crushed my chest but I didn't know what had happened, I knew I couldn't do anything. Ford, my son, dragged me out of the pen, loaded me in the pickup and made sure I didn't get mauled. The cowboys did. Took me to Bartlesville and I wound up that evening in St. Johns. I had a hangman's break. Wound up encased and immobilized for four months. But basically I'm okay today except that I sure miss being a full time cowboy.

JE: You haven't faced off with a bull since then, have you?

FFD: No I haven't. I haven't faced off with anybody since. I sure haven't.

JE: You've talked about ranching in the '50s, '60s, and '70s; it is what it is today then?

FFD: Yes it is, John. It's what it is today. And, you know, again, there are still a lot of cowboys that like to be on ranches. There are a lot of wannabes, but usually the ones that make

the best cowboys are the ones that grew up in the country. Shoemakers' children wind up being shoemakers. And quite often that's the case with cowboys. Cowboys come the same way. They know what they know and they like what they like, so we still have some very good cowboys.

JE: So there's a difference between cowboys and stockmen?

FFD: That's a good question. You would hope that all cowboys would be stockmen. Stockmen refers to ability to really take care of livestock and make sure that they're content, well-fed. The cowboy is supposed to do that but every now and then you'll get hold of some that wild hoop, and chase them down and rope them. Sometimes you have to defuse those guys and say, "Hey, you're defeating the purpose of this place." In fact, quite often you want to take their ropes away from them and say, "Okay, now let's don't disturb these animals. We want them to be content, like their home, don't cowboy them too much."

JE: You have to have a softer touch then, is what you're saying?

FFD: Yes you've got to have a softer touch. You've got soften the touch up a little bit. You can't be quite as wildly and woolly as they sometimes would like to be.

Chapter 06 - 5:50

Estate Taxes

John Erling: Why have so many family ranches disappeared?

Frederick Ford Drummond: Primarily because of the fact you could not create enough cash flow to pay the inheritance taxes that the government has levied upon farms and ranches. Ranch and farm real estate has inflated at quite a great rate over the recent years. And you could not create enough cash flow to pay the taxes on those inflated values. So there's no choice but to sell those ranches or to split them up. And you could not keep them in a family 'cause there was just no way to pay those taxes.

JE: So today it's impossible for a young man, say graduating from OSU, and he says, "All right, I've got a degree and I want to go buy myself a ranch." That's not going to happen?

FFD: Practically impossible. The old saying is you've got to either inherit one or marry one. Hopefully you can hang on either way.

JE: But those people, if they wanted to be close to the cattle and be on a ranch they just have to decide, "I need to go work for a ranch somewhere."

FFD: That's a good way to get started. If they're a very good trader they can sometimes lease enough grass and be a good trader, buy cheap, sell high. But that's the exception rather than the rule today.

JE: So you buy into the famous saying, "The ranchers live poor and die rich"?

FFD: That is right. And that goes for ranchers and farmers, they usually will live poorer and die rich, correct.

JE: The Drummond Ranch, your son Ford, is here now and there's no problem with your past that the land is taken over by him and all this is taken care of, obviously.

FFD: Ford, as you know him, is a very nice young man, well educated, decided that he ought to come back and relieve me of duty. Which I was very grateful for. With his beautiful wife, Vanessa, and three grandchildren. And, of course, I've been giving away because of the estate taxes, everything every year, all my life, to try to get away from the government confiscation of our ranches. I've done a pretty good job of giving everything away to my son, Ford, and three daughters. I think Ford was hoping that the politicians in Washington would realize that groceries don't come from grocery stores. That they come to the grocery stores from the farmers and ranchers. And they should try to keep the farmers and the ranchers on the land. I think Ford felt that perhaps they would come up with a more lenient estate and gift tax bill for people that are producers of agricultural products. As you know, primarily, I think it was initiated back in the '30s, the estate and gift tax, and there was a social tax. A social tax to keep people from getting too rich. I don't know if that was successful because most of the mega-rich people have trusts and estates and offshore investments that pretty well insulate them from estate and gift taxes. But it seems to be middle America that bears a big part of that brunt of the death tax.

Chapter 07 - 7:00

Osage County

John Erling: Let's talk about this county, Osage County. It's known for oil and ranching. Tell me how big Osage County is.

Frederick Ford Drummond: Osage County is one million five hundred thousand acres. It's larger than the state of Rhode Island, the state of Delaware. The Osages wound up buying it from the Cherokees, making their deal in about 1866. Moved there in 1871. Two thousand two hundred and thirty-nine allotted Osages, each wound up with about 651 acres, more or less. And they kept the minerals intact for the Osage tribe so that all the minerals are owned by the tribe. And all the individual Indians had their own particular homesteads and allotments. A lot of them lived on them, a lot of them leased their properties out to ranchers. Because the Osages really picked this Osage County out because it was too rough for the white man's plow. And the hunting and fishing was good. Little did they know that it was probably the birth place of the oil and gas industry in the state of Oklahoma.

JE: So when they were dealing with mineral rights they had no idea they were dealing with oil?

FFD: They had no idea they were dealing oil. That's was before oil had really been discovered.

JE: Oil was first discovered in Osage County?

FFD: The old Nellie Johnson was really just next-door. That was in Bartlesville, just across the line. In the late 1800s, I think it was 1890-something, I'm not sure just exactly what that date was, but most of the early development of the oil in Osage County was after old Mr. Foster of Foster Petroleum, which it later became, he leased all of Osage County in one mass called the Indian Nation Illuminating Oil Company, ITIO. He knew he could not develop it all at one time so he parceled it down in blocks to other people, which was kind of the beginning of putting out leases. So that's how the oil and gas industry really got started in the teens. And in the '20s when it really blossomed big time, big time.

JE: So it's interesting from time the Osages developed their rights to the minerals there was many, many years there before oil was discovered. And nobody sold their mineral rights.

FFD: Well, they couldn't because they were held intact. Nobody thought they were any good, you know, they couldn't sell them. They couldn't sell—

JE: So the individuals couldn't sell?

FFD: Individuals could never sell.

JE: Because it was owned—

FFD: By the tribe as a whole.

JE: As a whole, okay. So that's what preserved it. And to this day?

FFD: Oh still the same.

JE: Still the same.

FFD: Um-hmm (affirmative). Those mineral rights are divided up, of course, they've been split up to the various families. Very few hold mineral rights, you know. If they had four children they'd have one mineral right and one head right and so it would be divided four

ways. So each one of the four children had a fourth. The head rights, which is a piece of the Osage tribal oil and gas has been split up in many, many, many ways among many, many Indians. But still it was from the original 2,239 head rights, or shares. The same thing as a share.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative). This region is known for being stocker country.

FFD: Yes. Stocker country means bringing cattle in that weight four to six hundred pounds, then grazing them on grass in the summertime. And they would put on maybe another two to three hundred pounds. If they came in weighing six they'd go out weighing nine hundred pounds. The grass gain is very, very cheap. Then they're ready to go to the feedlots where they'll be fed for 120 days with corn, soybean ration. They'll go out of the feedlots weighing about twelve to thirteen hundred pounds, which is the beef that you'll get in your local grocery store. Which is usually the best in the world. It's really a growth program is what it is today. Early on it was a fattening program, when they had only grass-fed beef. But now that we have the corn-fed beef the America public seems to want the more tender beef. And that's how they wound up calling it a stocker program. Getting ready for the feedlot program.

JE: Is that what double stocking means?

FFD: Full stocking is to come in about the middle of April and keep them there until about the middle of September. That was all during the grazing time. And they'd put on a little more weight. But double stocking would be putting twice as many cattle on the same amount of grass. And then taking them out halfway through, going out no later than the last of August. So they were only there for half that time. But twice the cattle would put on two-thirds of the weight that you'd put in on a full stocking program. So really, you could do a lot better with a double stocking program. More pounds of beef per acre. The protein in the grass goes down dramatically from about the first of July to the middle of September. Protein is the important building block and that's from grass. That's the interesting thing about cattle; they're the only thing that has four stomachs. So they can convert grass into something useful, which is the protein, which we all need. Chickens and hogs, by the way, you have to feed them corn and soybean full time. But cattle can graze those acres in the world and turn it into something very, very useful. Anyhow, the cattle putting that three hundred pounds of gain very cheaply, they can put it on for at least half the price of what it costs to put it on in the feedlot with corn and soybean and alfalfa.

JE: So then it turns out that Osage County is also a great location for growing grass.

FFD: Osage County, John, is a great location for growing grass. And Mother Nature is usually pretty good. We'll have an average of thirty-five to forty-five inches of rainfall a year. But distribution of the rain when it comes is critical. About every eighth to tenth year we'll have rain all summer long and the grass in the fall will be as tall as a man on a horseback.

I've got a picture there on the office that I'll show you on the way out of one of our men on his horse and you can't hardly see the horse because the grass is so tall around him. So that is the tall-grass prairie. Tall-grass is the big blue stem, little blue stem, switch grass and Indian grass. But they're all wonderful grasses, very few acres of that is left. The state of Illinois, Indiana, southern Minnesota, Iowa, back before the white man came those were all states that had the tall-grass. And, of course, after you went to the western part of Oklahoma, the western part of Kansas, western part of the Dakotas and Nebraska, you got into the short-grass areas. So you go from the cross-timber sites of the eastern part of the United States to the tall-grass areas of the central United States to the short-grass areas of the west. All that's left of the tall-grass of any size is from Osage County up to Manhattan, Kansas. Just like the back of a fish, and that's it. And that is because it was so rough, it was too rough for the white man's plow. So it was those limestone hills that made this such a wonderful grazing area. And still is.

JE: Kept the white man out from developing?

FFD: Well, it kept anybody from developing, yes.

JE: So when it rains around here, ranchers—

FFD: They like it. Yeah, we prefer it, we prefer the spring rains and we'd just love to have some in the summertime. Of course, it seems like they always shut off about the fourth of July. And we have a hot, dry August. But every now and then we'll have moisture in August. And, hey, we love that.

Chapter 08 - 2:30

Shaping/Herbicides

John Erling: Talk about shaping cattle. What does that mean? Shaping cattle.

Frederick Ford Drummond: Boy, that's a good word. You've picked up these words from John Hughes, I'm sure. Shaping cattle. That means if you're a trader and you're bringing in all this cattle that you're buying from the south and the east and the west and they're all different. They might have different breeds, they'll be different weights, everywhere from 350 to 600 pounds. When you shape cattle you'll get these things in, you'll try to get them healthy. Then you put them in pastures or pens that are all shaped up the same. You'll want the five hundred-pounders here, you want the six hundred-pounders over there. You want the peewees down there. You'll get in some TLC to try to get them going well, but that's shaping them up. The eye of the master is how good he can shape these

cattle. He can run them through there and he can cut them two or three different ways and decide what they're going to use. Shape them into pen-lot loads. Pens in the feedlot will hold about two hundred head of cattle. So you like to have at 150 to 200 shaped up a certain way that they'll all fit. They'll be like peas in a pod.

JE: What type of cattle do you run?

FFD: We have basically two ranches. We have a cow ranch down near Tulsa, near Prue and Osage, south of Hominy. That's a cow/calf ranch. It started off as a Hereford ranch. If you didn't have Herefords you didn't have anything. That's white-faced Hereford. Since then we've gone to Angus because Angus are supposedly the best carcass cattle. And that is true, they are the best carcass cattle. So we have Angus cows down there. And we have some Angus cows out west. But then, we have mostly yearlings because the country west of Pawhuska is limestone underpinning. And the limestone seem to create stronger grass, and that's where the best cattle gains come from, is the limestone country.

JE: I'm just thinking now about the grass. Is there anything you do, well, of course there is, herbicides?

FFD: Yeah we spray.

JE: So it's not just letting it rain, I mean, there is something the rancher does to help grow the grass.

FFD: John Hughes will tell you that, of course, he was very interested in that and did it professionally. In recent years we have started spraying the pastures with 2-4-D to kill the weeds. That way you could stock more cattle per acre. If you got the weeds out of the way then you'd have the pure grass, which is what they like. Cattle don't like weeds. Buffalos don't like weeds. And ladies don't like weeds in their garden. Weeds are broadleaves, they're universally broadleaf plants. And there is a large misconception about spraying pastures for weeds, and that's strictly for the broadleaves. The spray that we use, 2-4-D, was basically developed in Germany during World War II. And the Germans developed it so they could grow their gardens faster. The 2-4-D that you spray on your pastures, the way that it kills weeds, the weeds, or broadleaves, they grow themselves to death. So there's nothing poisonous about it, but it's still convincing the American public that what you're doing is a terrible thing, that you're poisoning. Well, you're not poisoning anything. You just kill by growing themselves to death. And it was developed to try to make gardens grow faster in World War II. So, anyhow, old cowboys, they don't do anything wrong. They're just good guys, John. You know that.

JE: Do cowboys never die, they just fade away?

FFD: They just fade away, that's exactly right. Some of them wish they'd fade away a little quicker.

JE: But the use of herbicides and getting rid of the weeds, obviously, helped the production

of grass and it's helped everything?

FFD: Yeah, that's absolutely right. And the trees, it'll kill some trees. It's pretty hard to kill a tree with 2-4-D, because it's not that evasive.

Chapter 09 - 5:08

Water

John Erling: The cattle business has been good to you, hasn't it?

Frederick Ford Drummond: Well, I'd say it's been a wonderful trail to go down. I've made a lot of friends, met a lot of people. The camaraderie is good, it's been good to me and I hope I've been good for it. But I'll tell you what, I think most of the ranchers that I know of, they want to leave their ranches better than they got them. They all want to try to leave the world a little better off than it was before they came.

JE: And you feel this ranch, this land that you largely own, do you lease land too?

FFD: Oh yeah, we lease quite a bit of land.

JE: But you've improved all that, haven't you?

FFD: We'd like to think we have. We've tried.

JE: By building roads and eradicating, obviously, weeds?

FFD: And building ponds, it's better water than it used to be back in the '30s, before they had the days of the big bulldozers and heavy equipment you couldn't build a pond that was big enough in any location to hold water. Which is so important for stock. You know, you like to have at least a good pond every 640 acres so they can walk to it. They don't have to walk too far to get good water. Back in the '20s and the teens, they didn't have those ponds to water cattle. They had to water out of the creeks as they were. So they would just destroy all the grass around the creeks. And then out in the broad prairies, unless you have a summer with lots of water and the draws you could not graze your pastures as well. But now with the placement of ponds in strategic spots throughout the ranches the cattle can water better and you can improve the grass and do a better job of taking care of the grass. So that's a very important thing, the water situation to improve Mother Nature and what she had.

Chapter 10 - 4:40**Chicken or Beef**

John Erling: Envision fifty years from now, which isn't all that long.

Frederick Ford Drummond: It goes by in a hurry.

JE: It does. Do you see the ranch land, even your own ranch, how do you envision it?

FFD: That's a good question, how do you envision it? I'd like to envision, I think, that we still need to preserve the wide-open spaces. And the ranchers are the best to do it because they love it, they like what they do, if they make a living off of it they'll take good care of it. And let's hope that government as a whole realizes that. I think that one of the reason that some of us were actively involved in the tall-grass prairie north of Pawhuska, which is approximately forty thousand acres of the tall-grass. We've wanted to see it, or no, I've personally felt that it's important to keep it intact, because it would have been tragic to have it split up into 40s and 160s with junk car bodies. It's why we need to have our national parks. We need to preserve these places that are very important to the tradition and the heritage of our country.

JE: What else could encroach on a ranch maybe other than family members who thirty, forty, fifty, sixty years from now lose interest in it.

FFD: Well, if they lose interest in it they'll sell it to somebody else.

JE: And then are corporations coming in to buy?

FFD: Basically, no. Some of the big corporations have done this in the past and they have found out that they're not willing to accept the low rates of return from agriculture. And that they can't get people to go out and do that hard, backbreaking work for a salary. It takes somebody that's born on that land and will stick with it through thick and thin, through cold and wet and dry. But a corporation, this does not fit into their game plan. And they found that out.

JE: Aren't you glad?

FFD: Well, I'm glad too, but, you know, that's a good thing for them. Because you look at Cargill, Archer Daniel Midland, Continental Grain, and Bunge Corporation, those are the four largest agricultural, and go ahead and throw Tyson in there. None of them own any land or try to farm or raise crops. They just buy the product from the farmer or the rancher and then process it, sell it, and take the markup on that end. So they let all these dumb farmers and ranchers just get out there and work their heads off and buy from them.

JE: You mentioned Tyson. The chicken industry, are they ahead or behind the beef industry? Or do you think you're on the same level in producing your products?

FFD: Well, as a traditional rancher, you know, I don't even eat chicken.

JE: Are you're—

FFD: I'm convinced it's just not an acceptable product, pardon me. But, of course, they can convert grain to product in almost two to one rate. And pork, I could be wrong on these statistics, I think they can convert grain at maybe about a three to one, three and a half to one. Cattle, we convert about seven to one. So cattle are not efficient converters of grain, whereas pork and chickens can convert grain very efficiently. And as well can fish in the fish farms. I think they're one to one. But the difference is that they are so tied to grain, we can cheapen down our product with grass. None of the pork and poultry cannot use grass. So if the price of grain goes up it's in competition with the grain for human beings. As we have less farmland and less arable land in the years to come, which we will have, the price of grain invariably is going to go up. The price of groceries are so cheap in the United States of America we don't realize what a bargain box we have. All you have to do is travel outside the United States to appreciate how cheap our groceries are.

JE: Does it make you cringe when the medical world will come out with reports questioning how good beef is for you?

FFD: You know, we've never had a cowboy die from eating too much beef, strangely enough. But if you lead a sedentary life, you know, we've never gotten a good rep because PITA and Animal Rights people just don't want you killing cattle to eat any protein. And, of course, they have a tremendous lobbyist group, PITA, People for Ethical Treatment of Animals. They've got more money than just about any entity there is. They're always lobbying against beef. And some of those medical reports that come out are ones that they have sponsored. You can shade statistics any way. But the fat in beef, which really makes it good, you know, if you have something that has been corn-fed and it's got that little white, which is interior fat, that is not hazardous fat. Outside fat is something you always cut off, that's the kind that you don't necessarily need. So really, you look at beef, you look at the Adkins Diet, you can eat all the beef you wanted, it was good for you. You're getting protein. Beef is one of the best sources because you get essential amino acids. It's the best source of iron there is and zinc, and it's all-natural. So you get all of that in protein, you don't get fat on that, you stay lean. If you lay off the carbs and the sugars and stay with good old protein, beef being right up there, you're going to be a lot healthier. But they don't want to tell you that because it's an Animal Rights issue.

JE: I can say for a man who eats only beef you're very lean and very, very slender.

FFD: Well, thank you. And I'll tell you what, I have to have my beef fix about every day.

JE: So over all then, this is more than about making money. It's a lifestyle of ranching that just makes you feel good.

FFD: That's absolutely right. It's a lifestyle because of success in life. And it's not money, it's the friends and the family and the relationships that you have in this world while you're here.

Chapter 11 - 5:54**Nature Conservancy**

John Erling: Let's talk a little bit about the Nature Conservancy. Tell me how it came about.

Frederick Ford Drummond: Well, the Nature Conservancy started back in the early '80s when the National Park Service realized the importance of the value of this large block of land, which belonged to the Chapman-Barnard Ranch. Mr. Chapman and Mr. Barnard were two wealthy oilmen in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that had at one time, this ranch in the Osage. They had over a hundred thousand acres and they sold off it down to around forty thousand. Sold off various parts of it. And they put together probably one of the finest ranches in the world. In fact, it was quoted the ideal ranch at the World's Fair in 1936, in Brussels, Belgium. And they had photographs of this wonderful ranch that they put together. And it was their favorite thing that they liked to do. They liked to come out to the ranch and play cowboy. They had another large ranch in Texas and two more in Oklahoma and one in New Mexico. They made a lot of money in oil and gas business but they had diversified into the ranching business, which they kind of liked being out with the cowboys. Of course, they grew old, Mr. Chapman died, and Mr. Barnard did too. And the Bank of Oklahoma, which is the surviving entity that was their trustee for the operation of these ranches, realized they could not operate them. So National Park Services decided they should come down and check it out because they knew this was one of the largest pieces of remaining tall-grass prairie in existence in the United States of America. Some of the ranchers thought it was going to be a rip-off for the government. They were going to take all this land and they'd never have a chance to buy it. Everybody wanted to buy it. So they got the government's bill to make it a national park and waylaid, so it was still up for sale. And Joe Williams, of Williams Company with the CEO in Sherman had just formed the Nature Conservancy in Oklahoma. He formed the Nature Conservancy of about six or seven of us at that time. I thought it was a good thing. It was such a beautiful place that it just seemed like it needed to be kept like a national park because it was so unique. I didn't know if any of our ranches would be around a hundred years from today. But if it was in Nature Conservancy's hands it would probably be there a hundred years. So your grandchildren could come back and say, "Oh what a wonderful thing this is." So between the Nature Conservancy and the Kerman Ghee Corporation, the Williams Companies coming together with the Nature Conservancy because of Joe Williams, they were able to raise the money to buy the property from, really, the Barnard family. Which is about half of the amount, it was about thirty thousand acres at that time. Where they've borrowed some more since then, but still, that's how the Nature Conservancy wound up. It was the largest landscape vista that they had accomplished at that time, so it really set a precedent for the National Nature Conservancy. And they have since gone on to

a lot of other large-scale acquisitions in the United States. But this was really the first of their major large-scale acquisitions. But it all started right here in Oklahoma. And really, because of Joe Williams of the Williams Companies.

JE: But it did meet with some resistance, I believe, from area ranchers. Is that true?

FFD: Yes it did. And still, my friend John Hughes is not too happy with it today, I don't think.

JE: Why was there resistance?

FFD: Well, it was because everybody thinks it's a quasi government and that one of these days that they will sell it to the federal government, which I doubt. Who knows? But I think it will be kept intact. The main thing is that it should be kept intact as the Tall-grass Prairie Nature Preserve.

JE: Wasn't there a reason that they resisted it because it took all these thousands of acres of grass out of production and leasing availability?

FFD: That's exactly right. You know, if you could split up into five or ten or seven or eight thousand acre ranches or ten thousand acre ranches there with five or ten ranchers. But in one generation those would be split up and they'd be sold. And you'd have a whole lot of small properties that could be junked out pretty quick and you would lose the wide-open spaces. That's the thing that needed to be preserved in my way of thinking. That we needed at least one piece of this beautiful tall-grass prairie that needed to be preserved for future generations as the home of the tall-grass prairie and the wide open spaces.

JE: So whatever may come, we don't know what's going to happen even to the Drummond Ranch two hundred years from now and so forth.

FFD: Oh yeah.

JE: People can come back and say, "This is the way it was, this is the way the ranches looked."

FFD: That's exactly right, that's exactly right.

JE: And now buffalo are roaming.

FFD: I got twenty-two hundred head of buffalo up there. And then they take in quite a few cattle too. They take in cattle for steer operators as supplemental income. The tall-grass prairie, they'll lease out at least a third or 40 percent of their acreage for cattle. Research projects are done with livestock up there as well, particularly for burning. You know, burning was an integral part of Mother Nature's way of taking care of the prairie. Of course, the Indians used the tool to burn parts of the prairie so that it would be better grazing for the wild game, for the buffalo and the deer. Mother Nature did it for years. And since they quit making it to where you can burn in a lot of parts of Oklahoma you see how these areas have grown up in red cedar and other noxious plants and become utterly useless. So cattle ranchers still burn and the tall-grass prairie, they do experiments with burning. They try to burn all of that prairie up there once every three years.

JE: You've served as chair of the Nature Conservancy, haven't you?

FFD: Yes.

JE: Are you now?

FFD: No, I am just an emeritus member of the board.

JE: Well, you've given time to it. And that was honorable.

FFD: Been involved for a long time, from day one.

Chapter 12 -2:05

Boy Scouts

John Erling: You've been involved in Boy Scouts for many years.

Frederick Ford Drummond: I've been in there for many, many years. I was an Eagle Scout once upon a time and still active with the Boy Scouts.

JE: Where did Boy Scouting start?

FFD: Glad you asked that question. Boy Scouts in America started in Pawhuska, Oklahoma. An Episcopal minister came here to Pawhuska in the late 1880s as a missionary to the Osage tribe. And he had been associated with Baden-Powell in England when the Boy Scouts were founded over there. And so when he came to the States he was here in Pawhuska and thought that would not be a bad thing to do to have a Boy Scout troop in Pawhuska, Oklahoma. So he formed the first Boy Scout troop in the United States of America, but it was under an English charter. So that was really the first Boy Scout troop. The next year after that there was a troop founded back east and they formed the first Boy Scout Troop of America. So it had the number one charter. But Pawhuska was always the home of the first Boy Scout troop in the United States. And there's been one ever since. We've having the 100th birthday the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of July, here in Pawhuska. The celebration will be a big dog and pony show. They expect thousands of Boy Scouts and their families to come and camp and celebrate. There will be fireworks and all kinds of things going on. It's going to be a big deal.

JE: Did you and John Zinc work together for the Boy Scouts?

FFD: Yeah I worked with Jack Zinc, sure have. Jack was very, very generous with the Boy Scouts in Tulsa. He certainly was. Yeah, Jack was a very dear friend of mine, neat guy.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative). You seen young lives be shaped through the Boy Scouts, haven't you?

FFD: Yeah we've had a lot of Eagle Scouts and a lot of young guys. Camping experience, outdoor experience has been great for them. I've seen a lot of good things. My son, Ford, is an Eagle Scout. So anyhow, it's sort of been a family tradition in certain ways.

Chapter 13 -2:47**Drummond House**

John Erling: Well, I admire you. You've not only chased those cows down but you've gotten yourself involved in other areas of life that have improved the community. And you're to be respected for that. You're still a young man.

Frederick Ford Drummond: Seventy-seven years young, thank you, John.

JE: You are, well, when you talk to people who are eighty-seven you're young.

FFD: Well, thank you, that's true, that's true, it's in the eye of the beholder.

JE: For those fifty years from now when they think of you, how would you like them to think about you?

FFD: Well, I don't think they'd be thinking about me. They'd be looking to their own future, John. Which is the way it should be. We learn from history, but you know, you can't predicate your decisions on the past, you've got to look forward. So everybody is going to be looking forward, I hope, and planning to make this a better world.

JE: Yep, very good. The Drummond home in Hominy—

FFD: Have you been there?

JE: No.

FFD: You ought to go by there on your way back. Let's see, today's Monday, it won't be open. It's open on the weekends, Thursday through Sunday.

JE: Who built that?

FFD: My grandfather, and it's a time warp. It's a time warp. If you go an afternoon on a weekend you ought to come over and see that thing. It's really interesting.

JE: As a young boy, were you in that house?

FFD: Oh yeah, yeah, 'cause it was my grandmother and she made awfully good cookies. Her candies were great too. My grandfather died early but she was there for a long time. And she never threw anything away. It was probably a mansion in its early day, but not that big today. But they'd have a sleeping porch with seven beds upstairs. They'd have house parties, you know, people would come in the team in wagons and so they'd stay two or three days. They had probably one of the first indoor bathrooms. Had a reservoir up on the third floor. They'd pump water up to the third floor so they had running water in the bathroom. They'd made their own gas so they had gas lights.

JE: You're talking about a cistern?

FFD: Yeah.

JE: Water from a cistern.

FFD: Big, enormous big system, yeah. You know, on so many of those early ranches you couldn't drill a well like you do today, so you had to have a big, big cistern to catch the water. You

know, you could dig one twenty or thirty feet deep. Being a well-digger was really quite a profession in those early days because, you know, that was a heck of a deal. So a big cistern was what you had for your water.

JE: As you think back as a small boy playing in that huge house, this had to be a thrill.

FFD: Well, we didn't play much. Because Grandmother didn't want anything messed up. We played outside. And they had a playroom, of course, but she had a lot of things that she was very proud of. And if you go to that house you'll find out that still a lot of the original things, they're all there. Grandfather Drummond was a great reader. He had a wonderful library. That was important, of course, he was well educated and he wanted everybody else to be well educated. So all his children got a college education, every one of them.

JE: Very good.

Chapter 14 - 0:33

Conclusion

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