

Darrell Stiles

A true pioneer, George Stiles, Sr. staked a claim for his family in the Oklahoma Land Run of 1891.

Chapter 1 – 1:30

Introduction

Announcer: It was high noon Tuesday, September 22nd, 1891, when George Stiles, Sr. was riding Topsy, a black mare with white on her forehead. The United States Marshals fired their guns and George Stiles, Sr. was off to stake claim number 4 on 160 acres. Since the first land run April 22, 1889, there had been a steady push for surrounding Indian reservations to be opened in similar fashion. President Benjamin Harrison issued a proclamation declaring the Sac and Fox Indian reservation and other reservations open for white settlement. In the three-day land run of 1891, approximately 20,000 anxious souls were anticipating this event, which meant the end of waiting for many months to secure a possible claim in the Promised Land. The 160-acre plot George Stiles, Sr. claimed became known as the Cabin Creek Farm and in addition to crops of wheat and rye grass it was operated as the Cabin Creek Dairy serving Cushing and the surrounding area. The Cabin Creek Farm was designated an Oklahoma Centennial Farm in 1992. Dr. George Stiles, Jr., the 14-year-old boy who assisted his father and wrote about the experience, graduated from Oklahoma A&M which led to five generations of Stiles family members attending Oklahoma State University. Darrell Stiles and his sister Nancy Stiles Chipukites, great grandchildren of the original homesteaders, tell the story on VoicesofOklahoma.com.

Chapter 2 – 4:40

Cushing, OK

John Erling: Today's date is February 23rd, 2013, and my name is John Erling. Darrell, would you state your full name, your date of birth, and your present age.

Darrell Stiles: Darrell Lee Stiles, born November the 8th, 1940. It makes me 72 years old.

JE: Tell us where we're recording this interview.

DS: We are two and a half miles west, one mile north of Cushing, Oklahoma, Grand Staff Road.

JE: And, Nancy, you'll be joining our conversation today. State your full name, your date of birth, and your age, and your relationship to Darrell.

Nancy Stiles Chipukites: Okay. I'm Nancy Stiles Chipukites. My middle name is Jane. I was born November 16th, 1946, and Darrell is my oldest brother, and only living sibling at the moment.

JE: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

NSC: There were four of us. We had one other brother and one other sister that have passed away.

JE: And just a little bit about Cushing. We're in Payne County. What's the population of Cushing right about now?

DS: I can't tell you for sure. I imagine it's somewhere around eight thousand, maybe eight to ten. It used to be much large—very, very big in the oil field back in the early days.

JE: And, in fact, it was established after the land run of 1891, which your family is involved in.

NSC: Correct.

JE: By William Billy Ray Little.

DS: I believe that's correct.

JE: And there seems to be a lot of people with the middle name Ray around here, so I don't know if that's the inspiration or not. And then as you people know, it was named for Marshall Cushing, private secretary to the US Post Master General, John Wanamaker. And then, yes, it was an oil boom back then in 1912 that led to...can either one of you comment on that, what your knowledge of the history of that is?

DS: I just know that it was a big rush. Some guy by the name of...What was it? Slick? That he hit a gusher, and after that it really boomed, and a tremendous amount of oil production around in the neighborhood, all over this area. That was probably one of the main reasons that they started building tanks. Of course, that's all changed, and they've built thousands and thousands in this area. It's unbelievable if you drive around east of town and southeast of town the amount of oil tanks that are down there, and they're still building them. That's pretty well advertised because up on Highway 33 to the west, and 33 to the east, and 18 to the north, they have big signs depicting...the signs are welded up out of large pipe, which depicts Cushing as the pipeline crossroads of the world. The only way we continue to make the news with all the pipelines that come to Cushing and, of course, the biggest newsmaker is Keystone, which some people in Texas are now trying to block. A little bit misleading to the public, because the news media continue

to talk about blocking the Keystone pipeline coming to Cushing. In fact, that pipeline to Cushing, one of them, has been in place for about two years. I think they started putting oil through it in November of 2011 probably. It crossed everything we own but one quarter. The reason, of course, it's making the news is because they're trying to bring a leg from Alberta, Canada down through Nebraska, and actually flow into the line that's already present. Of course, it keeps making the news because from Cushing south toward Houston they're having some problems in the Texas area, including people chaining themselves to the track holes and stuff like that. It's quite interesting to see it on the news, and some things you know and some things you don't know, but Nancy and I know that it's already to Cushing.

Chapter 3 – 9:19

Stiles Family Comes to OK

John Erling: Okay, let's talk about the Stiles family coming to Oklahoma. We talk about George W. Stiles Sr., who I understand was native of New Jersey?

Nancy Stiles Chipukites: Yes, that's correct.

JE: Was born October 26, 1852, and his wife was Alice M. Merritt.

Darrell Stiles: Right.

JE: April 22nd of 1857. So what would he be to you?

DS: Great grandfather.

JE: What stories have you heard about him, and can you start to tell us the story then as you, as it was his idea then, I guess to come to Oklahoma. Maybe you two can help me with that.

NSC: He had, he also had a brother named Steven. And between the two of them and probably some others, they decided that they wanted to leave New Jersey and come to Oklahoma.

DS: Some friends of theirs had already come, and that's what inspired them, I believe, to come.

JE: And we should point out that the Oklahoma country was open to settlement. Our major land run of this state, which of course was April 22, 1889, known as Land Run Day. And that's when 50,000 people lined up to stake claims. So then the word was out to these people that they have land runs in Oklahoma, and they're going to have another one. And so do you know the story about how they then actually brought a team of horses and all that, and headed out to Oklahoma, with his brother Steven. Are there any stories that you know of that.

NSC: Well there was a lot of things that happened on the way, with them just like it did many of the other people. The settlers that come from back in the East. They had wagon fires, and they got stuck in the mud, and etc., etc. They had trouble with thunderstorms, rainstorms which made a lot more mud, caused them a lot of problems that away.

DS: And swollen creeks. That Stillwater Creek was the one that they crossed and Grandma fell out, Great Grandma fell out?

NSC: No. Actually, according to our Great Uncle's writings, they encountered a large ravine somewhere on the trip. It was down here close, but it was up by Stillwater Creek somewhere. It had a big ditch in the bottom of it, and in order to get across the ditch he laid a bunch of. It would be like planks or logs or something like that, and he laid them in the bottom so that the wagon could actually get across this ditch. And she had the lines of the mules, they had a team of mules, and she had the lines of the mules and was sitting up on the seat of the wagon with her feet up on the dashboard. And when he was prepared to cross the ravine or the ditch, he lead them down, lead the mules down there, and she had ahold of the reins. And when they actually hit the logs in the bottom of the ravine, it was quite a bump. So she went out over the wagon, and was passed over by the right front wheel. And later on, she told them that she evidently had the presence of mind to roll, to keep the back wheel from hitting her. And then several days later she became quite ill. I think he refers to it as deathly ill. But anyway that's when she lost a child.

JE: And she again is?

NSC: Our Great Grandmother.

JE: Who was the wife, you're talking about Alice.

DS: Alice.

JE: Alice Merritt.

NSC: Right. Which lived to be 99, and we both knew her. And she used to sit and tell my youngest Uncle, which is four months older than I am, a lot of stories about the early days, and sing songs to us, and things like that.

DS: But she was a large woman, much larger than Great Grandpa. And she would sit in the swing down at our Grandmother's house, the place that they settled on. And, even though she was blind, she could shell peas. And she knew when they were bad. She knew which ones were good. And she could sit there all day, shelling peas. Swinging in the swing and singing, the whole time.

JE: Wow. How fortunate you were to be able to know her.

DS: Yes.

NSC: Yeah we obviously didn't think about it at the time, because we were just kids. But later on, it got more and more meaning.

JE: And then you said your Great Uncle, which would have been George W. Stiles Jr.

DS: Yes.

JE: And he was born June 14, 1877.

NSC: I think he was what, about 13, 12 or 13 when they made the run.

JE: Right. And he's actually the storyteller, and has written the book, the booklet that we've all seen. So we're seeing this through the eyes of this 14-year-old boy at the time. They met then, a couple who helped them out as they came in their journey here to Oklahoma. Let's talk about that.

NSC: Well they, the name was Mansfield, they become quite close to them. And I think they stayed with the Mansfield's somewhere over by Stillwater, and prior to the run when they finally got down. They had a real problem crossing Black Bear Creek, that's up South of Ponca City. He did mention that in his writings.

JE: Right. And so it seems like the Mansfield was a camping ground, which would have known as Squatter's Camp.

NSC: That's correct. There was a lot of those people that had gathered, came early and gathered over there, they called it a Squatter's Camp. If I see the map correctly, it's just South of Stillwater Creek, which runs into the Cimarron, right over there just a little bit West of what's now Ripley, Oklahoma. So somewhere just to the Northwest of Stillwater Creek was where the Squatter's Camp actually was. And that's where they stayed until the day of the run, which was September 22, 1891.

JE: Right. Well then I understand George, when he established himself at the Mansfield place, he went back to Kansas. And then the next March 1891, he loaded everything into this big canvas covered wagon and whatever stories that you know about that. And then they had the team of mares hitched to a spring wagon, while George Jr. brought up the rear with the livestock.

DS: Correct.

JE: And so that's how they then were getting themselves in place for the big run. Then they actually lived there, in that Squatter's Camp for some time, I believe, didn't they?

NSC: That's the way I understand it. They had all their big wagon and all their belongings. Had to have been a pretty good size. I imagine most folks would refer to it as a covered wagon, because I think it did have a covering for it. Then they also had lose livestock, which our Uncle George was in charge of getting them to follow along, or however he did it to follow the wagon, to get them down here.

DS: They stayed there at that camp so that those who had horses could explore the Cimarron River, and find the best place to cross. What they thought would be the safest for that time of the year. And when they would be opening up the South side of the Cimarron River, which was the Sac and Fox Territory. But I believe they only had one

horse, so anyone that wanted to go surveying had to go on foot. And a good many of them were on foot.

JE: I think they helped the Mansfield's; they helped build a log, a dugout covered with earth while they were living there.

DS: Yes.

JE: Then you think about the elements and the mosquitoes, and the snakes and the flies, and all that. Did you hear stories about how? And then malaria that came from that.

NSC: Yeah, it's, Uncle George mentions it in there. And some of the people that lost their lives. And they lost several head of livestock to different kinds of things. I don't remember the specific names he used in there as far as what caused the livestock to die. But it was very trying.

Chapter 4 – 7:50

Land Run Day 1891

John Erling: Then, finally, the big day comes for the land run, and it was announced then that President Benjamin Harrison had issued this five-day proclamation, which declared the second Fox Indian reservation and other lands to be open for the white settlement on noon on September 22 of 1891. So the stories that you may have heard then from the land run and the race was at noon, and the US Marshals fired their guns. Can you share what you've heard about that?

Darrell Stiles: Well, some of it great-grandma told us. Of course, that was 60 some years ago, so it's hard to remember, but Uncle George was a pretty prolific writer so he later on put all this down in writing. According to his writings, his dad, George Senior, and some other gentlemen left squatters' camp early in the morning. He recorded that he saddled his horse, which is Topsy, a mare, at daylight, and they headed out. They had to go up Stillwater Creek a ways to fjord the creek, and then they went to the east and back down. Apparently, come back down the creek, the way I read it, somewhere right north of Ripley. Then they headed east along the Cimarron River and actually wound up down here across the river from Cabin Creek, which is about less than a half a mile from where we're sitting right now. We actually own the property on both sides of Cabin Creek where it runs into the river, and he spoke of Cabin Creek several times. They were waiting on the north side of the river, which was the starting point. The horses were fidgeting down at the edge of the water, and he actually referred to the quicksand with the horses stomping around. So he turned around to get his horse out of the

quicksand and asked a friend what time it was, and he said, "About five minutes to go." About the time he turned around and repositioned his horse, why then, the government people fired the guns from over here on the south side up on the big hill, and away they went. They had already been down and explored enough to know that there was only one trail up the south bank, he called it a cattle trail, and only room for one horse at a time. He wasn't first in line. I believe he said a guy by the name of Joe Young was the first one across the river. There was another guy that was probably second, first or second, and he staked a claim, which later turned out to be Indian land and couldn't be a viable claim, so he lost his claim. Then Joe Young settled the place where we're sitting right now. My dad bought it many, many years ago. So anyway, then the next property was the quarter to the south of where we're sitting, which has a Highway 33 frontage now, and that's where he settled. There was other things that happened. They had kind of had a wreck going up the path because they were riding like crazy people, and lost his coat and lost his lariat. Anyway, he got them dallied up, and away he came. When they got up there, if I remember correctly, there was already a squatter there. A squatter they referred to as the people that snuck over here early...

Nancy Stiles Chipukites: Also called Sooners.

DS: ...and tried to be there and make it look viable, but there was some witnesses that knew the position that he came across the river, so they later testified to the fact that he was...be the legal settler.

JE: Isn't it true that was contested for a long time, and it took about 10 years before it was finally settled?

DS: It took quite a time.

NSC: Two years, I think, according to the Guthrie records. That's where they had to go to testify.

JE: But let's go back here when they actually laid claim because this is interesting, how they traveled about a mile from the river boundary line and they staked claim number four, and he just used a flour sack containing grain for his horse and used it for a signal that this is a claim, but the grass, the blue-stemmed grass was so tall that he actually went to a tree and hung his coat from that tree to make sure that everybody could see that. I don't want to be using my words, but if you people know the real stuff.

DS: Well, I think this mini wreck that they had down on the river bank is where he lost the regular flag that he was supposed to use, so when he got there, he didn't have it, and so he improvised and made another flag to stake his claim.

JE: It's interesting. That's just how simple it was to show that, but then it was contested. So then back at squatters' camp, we had his son, George Junior, and he, then, is supposed to gather up a mule team to the big wagon with the side boards and all and set off across the river to meet his father.

NSC: Yes.

DS: Yep, but he...They actually crossed up somewhere...They called it some kind of ford, and I believe that that was a little bit west of the mouth of Stillwater Creek, where Stillwater Creek pours into the Cimarron. He actually crossed up there and would have come down across somewhere south of Ripley, would be my guess, what's now Ripley, and made his way over here to find where his dad was and where he had staked the claim.

NSC: And brother Steven must have been right there alongside because he staked a claim immediately to the east in that quarter section of where great-grandpa staked his.

JE: The original acreage, then, of the claim was what?

DS: All of them then, to my understanding, were 160 acres. The actual property now is less than 160 acres because it had something to do with the correction line whenever they was doing surveying and things like that, so now it's only, I think, 140 some acres.

NSC: Mm-hmm.

JE: But then while the land was being contested, George Senior had four men who testified for him that they had actually witnessed that he was there first.

NSC: Correct.

JE: And so we might give credit to those names because it was Charles S. Gibson, Edward L. McCoy, his brother then, Steven B. Stiles, and then Joseph Young witnessed to whomever that he, indeed, was there first.

NSC: That's correct.

Chapter 5 – 6:23

The First Winter

John Erling: We talked about how they spent the first winter and, maybe talk about this. They lived in the dugout, their early garden crops of okra and black-eyed peas. Any of those stories come to mind?

Nancy Stiles Chipukites: Potatoes and I don't remember the other crops, but just—

JE: Peas and cotton.

NSC: Whatever they could grow that would sustain them through the winter months. They made several trips to Guthrie, buying lumber and some of the goods that they needed to build barns and homes that they intended to build.

Darrell Stiles: He also kind of had that as a second job and did a lot of hauling in the wagon for other folks too, and that's why they made a little money. Uncle George, that we refer to, was quite a hunter and a trapper and he talked about, I think first morning or two they

were actually here, hearing the gobbles of wild turkeys and things like that. There was all kind of wild game back in those days.

JE: They had such delicacies as squirrels, too?

NSC: Yes.

JE: Had probably rabbits, quail, that type of thing that they lived on.

DS: Yes. He'd tell stories about going out and hunting with his old shotgun and bringing back those kind of things to put on the table.

NSC: I think sometime they even tried a raccoon or a possum, maybe both, but it was so horribly greasy they decided they really would pass on that; they'd stick with the other game. There's kind of an interesting story about Uncle George before we move away from going to Guthrie. He was between what is now Stiles Road and Brethren Road on his way to Guthrie in the wagon and a gang of bank robbers needed a ride and he gave them a ride, I believe, Darrell, is that right, on his wagon?

DS: Yes.

NSC: You may remember that story better than I.

DS: Anyway, they did confront him and need a ride so he'd give them a ride.

NSC: Was it the Dalton?

JE: The Dalton gang? There were three brothers that were known as the Dalton gang?

NSC: Yes.

DS: We found out later that—

NSC: Were they headed to Guthrie to rob the bank at that point? That kind of jogs my memory as being possible.

DS: They may have already just robbed the one and something happened to their horses, I don't know, but that was a story. He didn't know at the time but he did mention that they treated him okay. They might be a little obnoxious but they actually treated him okay and he found out later it was the Dalton.

JE: As I recall the Daltons were actually lawmen at one time and then somehow they got into a fight, they decided to go into the other side of law, that's how they became outlaws. Let's talk about a sawmill that came at the north end of the land.

NSC: That's mentioned, I don't remember all of the details on that, but that was one of the ways that they got their lumber and of course they probably sold some of it for the other settlers to make some money.

DS: He also mentions in there about going east of town which would be over by Euchee Creek, which is now Euchee Creek and Euchee Creek Road over east of Cushing, helping the Indians clear some land and work the land for them in some fashion but they also made a little extra money driving over there, helping clear some land.

JE: That would have been the Sac and Fox for the land...

DS: That's correct.

JE: I believe the diary says that they moved into their second home then, made of the native lumber, from the homestead March 4 of 1893. We talk about the style of homes, you're wondering, talk about that, that they all seem to look alike.

NSC: Yes, they seem to all have the same architecture and we've seen pictures of the house in New Jersey that they had and evidently they were fairly well off and some of them were lawyers. It appeared for that day and time that they didn't lack for funds and the financial ability to have pretty much what they wanted. That house in the picture in New Jersey looks almost identical to the house that Great-Grandpa George Sr. built, and his family. In that house they made special provision for a cellar. At that time the vegetables were kept in a dark, cool place, so that's where they stored many of their vegetables. There was also a storage area where we remember sheep being mostly. It was a few yards away from the house and it was just a big hole in, I think there was rock on the sides but that's where they kept many of their onions and potatoes and those kinds of things that needed the cool storage. In the cellar in the house, that became George and Alice's home. Then they left the home to their children and their children so that they could have the main part of the house. Great-Grandpa and Grandma then lived and cooked and did everything in that cellar area. They had a stove and all that they needed down there. It's still there.

DS: I'm not sure that we're, maybe she is, that we're perfectly clear how many houses they had before they had that one, but that's the one we remember.

Chapter 6 – 4:38

Butcher Hogs and Chickens

Darrell Stiles: It was certainly true. You've heard the old phrase when it turns off cool in the fall, it's time to butcher. That was very true because he would go out there and we'd kill four, five hogs at one time. Because he had a huge barrel and he'd fill it with water, build a fire under it and hand him my thermometer. When the heat got right, he'd already killed the hogs, knifed them to bleed them. Then they'd drag them in there close to this barrel. The second floor of this old wagon house was a big, what he called, block and tackle. He would attach it to the hind legs of those hogs and lift them up a trough and down in this barrel of water till the hair come off. They didn't skin them—they pulled the hair. He'd lay them down in the trough, everybody would jump in there. It was kind of a community thing as I remember. Just like thrashing, when you'd go to thrash, everybody

would come to your house and then you'd go to somebody else's house. It was kind of that same way with butchering a little bit. Plus there were several kids left around. They always got to help pull hair. Later on, they had to process the meat. They did different things to the bacon. Probably the only thing that was lost out of that deal was the squeal of the hog.

(laughter)

DS: Because they kept all the fat and grandma made what they call chitlins...

Nancy Stiles Chipukites: Chitlins, yeah.

DS: ...and lard. Made lye soap, the whole works.

NSC: They canned the feet. We had pickled pigs feet...

DS: Pigs feet.

NSC: ...and knuckles.

DS: We'd lay them hens out and rub them with a salt and brown sugar mix of some sort. Rub that all and them hams, to cure them. I think they even took them to the smokehouse and give them a good smoke them. Then hang them down in the cellar and they'd be fine till needed some.

John Erling: Was it real delicious?

DS: Oh yeah.

NSC: The pork was great.

DS: You can't even buy ham this day and age that tastes as good as that did.

JE: Yeah, I'm sure not.

NSC: While we're talking about butchering, the one thing I can remember, people are amazed at how chickens are processed. But back then, we would pull the heads off of the chickens with a wire hook or something, a rod that would be over their neck. Hopefully the Humane Society won't come after me because I don't do it anymore. But they would pull the heads off and then we'd hang them up or they'd flop around and then you'd hang them up by their feet so that they could drain. Then you would scorch the feathers off with fire and hot water and pull them off. Kind of like the pigs hair Darrell was talking about. Then you'd have your fresh chickens.

JE: There's a saying that they run around like chickens with their heads cut off and the chickens would do that wouldn't they.

NSC: They would, they would flop around, yes.

DS: Actually, that was a progression thing because in the early years that's the way they did it. They'd just take a live chicken, put something over their neck, pull on them and throw them out to flop and bleed. When I was up in high school, one of the projects I had was burros, raise some burros. We did it in much the same manner then. We'd hang the chicken up on a clothesline and then cut their throat and they couldn't flop around

on the ground. When they flopped around on the ground, that bruised the breast and things like that. If you was going to take three birds to a broiler show, you didn't want any bruises on them or anything else. That was a progressive move.

JE: Right.

Chapter 7 – 6:04

OSU Family

John Erling: Your great-grandfather, George...no, this would be Junior, your grandfather.

Darrell Stiles: Well, we call Uncle George.

JE: Uncle George, right.

DS: Our great-uncle.

JE: Great-uncle, because he was the brother of your grandfather, Lee, Senior.

DS: Right.

JE: But it was his aim to enter college. During the spring of 1896, I believe, he joined the freshman class of Oklahoma A&M College.

DS: That's correct.

Nancy Stiles Chipukites: It was the first class. I believe there were like four or five, four to six students.

JE: We try to get people to go to college today, and it was his aim in the late 1800s that he needed a college education. That's pretty progressive. You talk about that.

NSC: He struggled to, of course, have the finances. He worked a lot, and he was very smart. He had two doctor's degrees. He wanted to be a surgeon, but I believe his health, his back, was such that he wasn't able to stand and do the surgeries that he wanted. So, then he studied veterinary medicine. Very intelligent. He worked in Washington, DC many years, and in his later years then moved—

JE: He attended George Washington University.

NSC: Yes. In his later years moved to Denver, and that's where he passed away. But he would always come and visit us long as he could every summer. And he loved to fish. And very vivid picture in my mind of him in his coveralls, his cane pole, and he was walking across the hill to go to his favorite pond and fish. It seemed like he would always come back with a catch. He was a great fellow.

JE: Your grandfather, Lee Roy Stiles, Senior.

DS: I think it was supposed to be Lee Roy, but somebody misspelled it back along the way, so they just went ahead with the Lee Ray. But then our dad was Lee Ray, Junior.

JE: Okay. But your grandfather was born on the homestead.

NSC: Yes.

DS: Right.

JE: And then he was a farmer.

NSC: Yes.

JE: But what else did he do?

DS: At some point in time he, also, become a deputy sheriff, and served in that capacity for at least sixteen years. I know in 1938, or no, it was a '38 Ford was one of the early cars that he had, and it was put together to be a deputy sheriff car. It had holders in there for a sawed off shotgun, and had the radio, as good as it was in those days, a two way radio, and other things that a deputy sheriff would use.

NSC: And they would be totally worn out, probably used as a deputy sheriff's car, and dad would buy them, and so we got to use an already used vehicle. For many, many, many years that's what Mom and Dad drove, and us kids remember riding in.

JE: Let's complete the story about George, because...which is again, you called him—

NSC: Uncle George.

JE: Uncle George. He would be George, Junior, wouldn't he, that you're talking about?

NSC: Yes.

DS: Correct.

JE: Right. But he was married to Bessie Loud, and then the children were Merritt, Sibley, William and Alice Stiles, and I wanted to point out that Merritt was born June 28th, 1903 on the Oklahoma land homestead, and was the first male student of an alumnus to attend the A&M College in Stillwater.

NSC: Correct.

JE: Until we begin that generational attendance of what is now OSU.

NSC: Yes. I'm a generational—

DS: Our dad, Lee Ray, Junior, went to A&M, too. And then he had a brother, our uncle, named Bob. The way I got the story he actually lacked one field trip, and he couldn't make that field trip. And I think he was probably already married before he got out of school. They lived in those married student housing in those days which are those bit old wooden structures up there. You probably remember them. Up there northwest of campus at OSU. But they had a sister named Gladys. She did not attend OSU. After Bob, there was Dean. He did not go to college. But then there was a lull in the childbearing here, and Mary comes along. And Mary was about two years older than me, or a year older than me? Anyway, she goes to OSU. Bonnie comes along, which is the uncle that's four months older than I am. He went to OSU. I went to OSU. Nancy and Janice, our older sister, and our brother, Glenn, went to OSU. And then my

daughters, LaMecia, Mona and LaDawn went to OSU, and so did their husbands, all went to OSU.

JE: And then you have grandchildren who aren't ready yet, but headed that way?

NSC: One of his granddaughters graduated from OSU.

JE: Okay. All right.

DS: Yeah. My oldest granddaughter, LaMecia's daughter, graduated from OSU.

JE: How many generations is that? Is that five or six?

DS: I believe it's five right there.

JE: Probably not all that many OSU generational families that have been that long.

Chapter 8 – 8:50

Milking

John Erling: Out on the farm, that was a dairy that was operated?

Nancy Stiles Chipukites: Yes.

JE: Who started that dairy?

NSC: Great Grandma and Great Grandma...uh, Grandpa and Grandma...Lee.

JE: Name me them again.

NSC: George and Alice, and they always had the dairy farm and it was called Cabin Creek Farms. We have a picture of several...I think it's two or three families, actually, on their wagon, and it's got Cabin Creek Farms on the side. They sold milk, or peddled milk, as they called it in town. They milked, Great Grandma and Grandpa milked, and then Grandma and Grandpa Lee and Jane...we called her, well we called her Grandma, but many people called her Jane and some, Grandma Jane, but her name was Mary Jane, married to Lee Sr.; And they dairy-ed. Grandma got to milk all of the time that Grandpa was off being Deputy Sheriff. She was lugging the milk up and down the hills and into the milk house by herself many days.

Darrell Stiles: Then our folks milked, starting milking in about 19...geared up a milking business in 1953.

NSC: What does that mean, geared up?

DS: Prior to that, we milked in an old stanchion barn and they milked by hand. In 1953, they expanded it and Dad went to Wisconsin with some other people in the county, or in the area, and they purchased some Holstein dairy heifers in Wisconsin that bred heifers, and brought them back and they canned, and that's when they...I use the term "geared up" and really got started milking and—

NSC: They were all registered weren't they Darrell?

DS: Yes.

JE: Is that the point where they quit milking by hand and they began using—

DS: Pretty much. I don't know exactly the time frame but it became evident. Some of the heifers had such small teats that it was extremely difficult to milk by hand. Prior to that they had a mixture of Jerseys...or they were all Jerseys, and they had quite a bit larger teats and it was easier to milk by hand. When that deal transferred, why it was extremely difficult to milk those heifers, cows by hand, and that's when they started looking into milking machines. We also changed the barns and made concrete floors, and things like that. Then it just transpired and evolved over the years to pipeline and that old stanchion barn. Of course, in the beginning, there was what they called surge... we used surge buckets. Surging goes over the back and I'd held the bucket, and when the bucket...you got through milking the cow, you took it over and dumped it into a strainer that run into a 10-gallon can. Then, it just evolved from there. We later put in a pipeline that run straight through the wall into a bulk tank and expanded. Actually, we milked in that barn until 1969. That's when I moved back here and we was still milking... we was milking 60 head of cows a day in that situation. It was a six-stanchion barn. You'd milk three cows, turn over and put your machines on the others, go get your three more. Actually worked quite well on animal—

JE: Sixty a day.

DS: It worked pretty fast.

JE: Was that twice a day?

NSC: Twice a day.

JE: Twice a day.

NSC: Twice a day.

JE: Right.

NSC: Those ten-gallon cans that Darrell referred to, had to be carried into the milk house. You had your milk barn where the cows came in, and then you had your milk house. We had, I don't know, probably a ten-foot water cooler, and those cans were set in the water cooler, and that's how the milk got cooled until whoever we sold the milk to came and got those cans. They had to take them out of the cooler and carry them up the steps and load them on their truck, and then take them wherever they took them to process them. The cows were kind of unique. Sometimes you think of animals being dumb, but the cows didn't seem to be very dumb because they knew their name, they new what order they came into the dairy barn, and some you could milk from the left side and some you could milk from the right side. You kind of learned what their preference was or else you got kicked or squashed or something. Anyway, you bring

those three in that you milked on one side and then get them all ready; then you'd bring in the other three. It was always interesting to me that those cows knew, and they would come line up and they would wait, and every morning and every night when it was milking time, almost always they would head for the barn. Not too many days you had to go find them, because they were ready to get the pressure relieved, I guess.

JE: I've heard stories from my father about cows as well, and he lined up personalities of cows much the same as people, and he could name people that matched Bessie or George the Cow, or whatever; that they were similarities in personalities.

DS: There's always occasions whenever you deviated from the normal and called them something else.

JE: You two talk about it because you were involved in the chores of milking, at a very young age I suppose. That was, everybody worked.

NSC: When Mom and Dad started milking, they lived right across the road which is now Stiles Road, and they didn't have a milk barn so the cows that they had that they wanted to milk, they brought down here to...or took them down to Grandpa and grandma's barn and milked. Then, they'd take them back over to the house. That's how they started their early dairy operation. They both milked cows. They came from dairy farms. They both sold milk; their families sold milk in town. Mom was raised just about a mile from where Dad lived. They met at a church activity. They both knew what hard work was like in milking cows and I never could believe that they wanted to operate a dairy, knowing what hard work it was, but they did.

JE: Let's name them. Your mother's name was—

NSC: Ruby...Ruby Mae Stiles.

JE: Ruby Mae Stiles. Then, your father's name then was, for the record?

NSC: Lee Ray Stiles, Jr.

JE: Right. The children then, that were born to that marriage, can you name them?

NSC: Yes. That was Darrell Lee, born in November of 1940, and then Janice came; Janice Janette came in June, first day of summer, June 21 of 1942. Then, our other brother... and I always call him Shorty, so it's a little bit confusing for some people; but his official name was Raymond Glen Stiles. He was born October 21 of 1944. Then, I was born Nancy Jane in November of 1946. It's kind of easy to keep our ages straight, and I always knew how many years older or when Darrell's birthday was because I knew that if it was an even year, well...and Janice would start the trend. When she changed ages, then I knew if we were going to be odd or even, so that's kind of how I kept track of the birthdays and ages.

Chapter 9 – 3:29**Harvest**

John Erling: Let me bring you back to your younger days. You talked about threshing crews that came through and it's a whole lot different than today the way they thrashed.

Darrell Stiles: It kind of involved...I had some equipment when I was really young called binders. Of course the bumper crop then, major crop was oats. They would pull those binders with horses, put the grain into shocks or bundles. Then you would go out by hand and pick up the bundles and stack them in a teepee formation with the heads up at the top. That's where they continued to dry and they left them there until they got ready to thrash. When it come your turn to thrash, they pulled the thrashing machine into your place and all the neighbors would come in with what they called bundle wagons in the early days here anyway. They were pulled by teams of horses. They would be a 2-man crew; one up on the wagon and one on the ground with pitchforks. They would drive to these shocks, teepee shocks, and throw the bundles up on the wagon and then the guy on the wagon would stack them in such form that they would get to the thrashing machine. Then they'd pull up next to the thrashing machine and throw the bundles into the separator, a lot of them call it a separator, thrash the grain and wagons on the other end, as the grain come out of the separator would haul it to the granaries and scoop it off.

JE: The energy to operate that separator came from a steam engine was it?

DS: In the early days there were steam engines and it kind of evolved to tractors and things like that, but the first one I remember was an old steamer. Very slow moving, but the pulley belt is what drove the separator.

Nancy Stiles Chipukites: How did you get them in the barn?

DS: We hauled the bundles via wagon to the separator, dumped them in the separator, the trough on the separator, and it thrashed the grain and the grain come out the other end. You hauled that with a team of horses and a wagon to the granaries then hand scooped them into the granaries.

JE: Why hand scooping? Shovels?

DS: Yeah, big scoop. In those days they were metal and they were heavy. Now days they're aluminum and kind of light, but in those days they were all metal and very heavy.

NSC: Scooping is the pits because they are so itchy.

JE: So you did that, both of you.

NSC: I did, not quite in the same time frame but I do remember scooping into dad's bin on his place.

DS: You didn't worry about all the itching and everything then. It just went with the territory. Plus when you got done had to go to the pond. It was certainly primitive to what it is now days.

Chapter 10 – 2:24

Bath Time

John Erling: Speaking of baths, did you have bath time? Was that once a week or when was that?

Nancy Stiles Chipukites: (Laughing) Yes.

Darrell Stiles: Later on it got to be once a week. You could get one once a week.

JE: Because before that it was what?

DS: Whatever you could it.

JE: So what did you do at bath time? Saturday night, was it Saturday night?

NSC: It was in the kitchen and it was I an oval shaped tub, the one I remember. We probably used a round tub early on, but I don't remember that.

I was the youngest and I guess mom would guess I was the cleanest because I got to go first. But I know I played in the dirt and made mud pies a lot so I'm quite sure I was probably dirty most of the time.

So I was first and then Shorty, Glen, and then Janice and then Darrell.

JE: Darrell, you were the last one in that tub because they didn't change the water out did they?

NSC: No.

DS: Just kept adding to it. It was heated. It was heated in some form on the stove. Of course in the early days it was a wood stove and they just keep adding water to it. I wished you wouldn't tell that story.

NSC: It's a part of our history. Goodness sakes. My dementia may kick in and I may not remember that in a few years.

JE: Can I just say here, we have an audience here. Why don't you tell us who's in the room enjoying this.

NSC: Darrell's wife, Billie, is here and his oldest daughter LaMecia, LaMecia Rae. Then we have Mona Rae, his second daughter, second oldest daughter.

JE: So if you hear laughter in the background, it comes from...

NSC: We have an audience.

JE: Right. Were winters tough out here? Did you have lots of snow way back then?

DS: I think it was similar in a lot of ways to what it is now, but I've heard them talk about the bad winters and stuff. Those straw piles that was left over from the thrashing is where they wintered cattle. Those cows would go in there and just eat that oat straw to you wouldn't believe it. They'd have great big old holes eaten into those straw piles.

Chapter 11 – 12:42

Dust Bowl Days

John Erling: Our dust bowl days were 1930 to 1936. Did your parents, grandparents talk about those days at all?

Nancy Stiles Chipukites: They talked about them just in general, how hard they were, how difficult it was. No money. It was the Depression and hard to get by. I always felt like that was a time that they really just wanted to forget and not repeat. I'm sure it was very, very difficult, but I don't remember any specific besides...

Darrell Stiles: I think the largest struggles for the dust bowl were west of here more so than here. They'd started to get mechanized and through the wonderful government, they were promoting, very heavily, plowing up all the sod which larger acres were in western Oklahoma. More suitable to plowing up and farming than actually this area in here. The government was promoting plowing every acre you could up and planting it to wheat because of the war effort, wars and stuff like that. Then it happened again in the '40's with World War II. This is going to sound kind of bad, but it was actually kind of the government's fault because they really promoted that heavily, wheat in those days, as a commodity to sell for the war effort. Caused it to be a large price. They had started to get quite a bit of mechanization out in those areas. We didn't have it here on our personal property, but they did out there. Due to the fact that they had initiated the plowing and planting of so many acres out there when they turned off and had that drought and then started having those wind storms, it really got devastating. More so out west, western Oklahoma and up in the panhandle particularly is the worst effects of the dust bowl.

NSC: We've talked a lot about the work and we all put our time in milking or plowing fields or doing whatever, but we had a lot of good times playing. Darrell has referred to our uncle that is 4 months older than he, his name is Donnie, and he was just like a brother to us. We played with him a lot and he and Darrell particularly like to ride horses. We all did. It was big in the family. Mom and dad, they met riding horses. Dad would ride his horse a mile or two to go see mom. They had something called the pony express and I think Darrell ought to tell you about his adventures as pony express.

JE: THE pony express we're talking about?

NSC: Their pony express.

JE: Their pony express. Maybe not THE pony express, but their pony express.

DS: We considered ourselves to be excellent horsemen even though we were just kids. We had watched the pony express on these television shows where they carried the mail. In those days many of them riders had a running mount. They would run from one horse to the other whenever they changed. Throw the bags over, grab the saddle horn and away they went. They were still on the ground running along side the horse. They would get a few steps into a dead run, lift their leg some, bounce, and up on the saddle they went and just kept on trucking. We decided that it would really be nice for us to learn how to do that. It worked quite well. We taught both horses to take off. We'd grab the horn and give them a cue and away they'd go. The bad part about it was that my dad rode the same horse and after we had taught them that, every time he'd go get on that horse, when he'd reach the saddle horn he'd take off. He knew something was wrong because the horse didn't used to do that. We finally had to confess and we got in trouble and had to quit that and retrain the horse to stand still while we mounted. we had gobs of things like that that we did by horseback. Even persimmon fights, green persimmon fights. We were told not to do that because every time you went out they'd tell you, "Be careful with each other. Don't do that because you'll hit somebody in the eye." That was a big deal then, hitting somebody in the eye. We did it anyway one night. I hit Donnie in the eye and it started watering and watering and watering and we had to stay out there until dark before his eye quit watering so we wouldn't get in trouble.

NSC: Not just persimmons, but rocks. We used to throw rocks at each other playing cowboys and Indians.

JE: Did anybody get injured from that activity?

NSC: I don't remember any injuries with that. We played softball in the back lot. Grandpa and grandma's lot, there was a nice level place up there. It was a little bit rocky and of course there was always sheep piles and cow piles and horse piles and other things up there, but we just kind of dodged them. Or they became our first base, second base, third base, you know.

JE: We talked about horses and all, but there had to be a day when a tractor finally came to the farm.

DS: Yep.

JE: Do you remember the first tractor? What was that?

DS: We still had...It was prior to 1947. Our first tractor was a Ferguson, a little gray tractor, quite small. But we started pulling the binders to bind the grain and the bundle wagons to haul to the thrashing machine. They still had thrashing machines, but that's the first

tractor we actually owned was prior to probably about 1946. I think our dad got to be friends with a guy in town and almost a year later, a little more than that, he bought the first Ford tractor. I'm pretty sure it was a 1947 model.

NSC: Don't we still have it?

DS: Yeah.

NSC: Many hours spent in the fields going round and round with about a three-foot implement. You talked about that once before.

DS: The first plows we had were what they called 214's. They were a two bottom plow, 14 inches apart. You can relate to that, but some people can't. Then as we progressed and got a little bigger tractors, we got a 314 and elevated up from that, evolved. He went to the field and stayed there all day.

NSC: When I was very small, I can remember dad hitching the draft horses. He had a set of draft horses, I guess two. But he would go out and put the tack on them to get ready to go work the field. I don't remember very much about that. I just can remember those big draft horses and him getting them ready and he'd go to the field. He'd probably take his lunch if he was too far to come back. He and mom in the early, very early stages of their marriage, she said, "I will have dinner for you at twelve o'clock if you're here to eat." Dad said, "I'll be here to eat if you have lunch for me." So it was dinner everyday at twelve o'clock, regardless. Then we had supper whatever time we finished. But Darrell may remember more about those draft horses than I do, how long he had them, but I can remember them.

DS: They'd go out real early in the morning and they'd work until ten o'clock, something like that. Bring them home, put them in the barn, feed them and then go out again, depending on the temperature, go out again later in the evening and work them some more and then bring them back to the barn. The other big thing was to go to the field when they were done and we'd get to ride them draft horses back to the barn. We did that a lot. That was easy to do. We was just little bitty kids, but you had two hames sticking up there that you could hang onto so it wasn't a big deal at all.

JE: You're reminding me, I rode a horse, a draft horse on our farm named Rose. You just now reminded me of that. That's when I found out that a horse was afraid of a pig because I tried to run that horse into the pigs and she jumped on me. She didn't like that at all.

DS: That's really strange as old as you and I are that you can remember the names of them horses. We had Jewel and Queen and Rex and Brownie. Then they had an old saddle horse named Chief. Other things you can't remember at all, but it's strange how that works.

NSC: Darrell had a chicken or a duck that had eggs up there where he's talking about. Janice and Darrell were the only two that lived up there. A big snake came along and got in

that egg nest. Mom loved telling this story. She grabbed that snake and squeezed so that those eggs would come out. I guess, was it a chicken or a duck?

DS: This is a duck. They were getting...Black snakes were getting in the chicken house and eating the eggs. There was also an old Pekin duck out there that had a nest. Every time she would go to check there'd be some eggs missing. One day she caught a black snake out there with an egg inside him, the snake, he'd already sucked it in. She cut it in two with a hoe, squeezed the egg back out of it, put it back in the nest and it hatched. But we only got one duck because that's all the eggs that was left was one. The snake had already got all the rest of them.

NSC: Did he sleep with it?

DS: She loved telling that story.

JE: That's a pretty heroic story, isn't it?

DS: Yeah, yeah. That was later on I had a pet duck.

JE: What was the name of the pet duck?

DS: I don't remember.

JE: Mom was a tough cookie. She wasn't afraid of much. Back then you couldn't be to survive.

Chapter 12 – 7:10

Future of Farming

John Erling: You know, when you look to the future, and do you believe that the younger generations...Are we going to get them interested? Are they interested? What you see for the future of farmers and ranchers here in Oklahoma?

Darrell Stiles: It's a tough deal because if you don't inherit a bunch of land, or have a bunch of them oil well jacks going up and down or submersible pumps down in the ground, it's just really, really tough to make it. They have got loans now for young farmers, and things like that, but land prices are getting out of sight. There is land, for instance, up...Well, all of over the country, but the highest prices are up in Iowa, and Illinois, and Ohio, and you can read in Progressive Farming where that stuff is \$8,000 an acre. You go and figure that up. The price of commodities like wheat, corn, background up there would be basically corn and soybeans, and they are pretty high right now. But, if you pay that kind of money for land and you've got to go out there and buy at least \$100,000 tractor, or more now, and the combine a few years ago cost \$80,000 to \$100,000, and I don't even know what they are now. So, it's a really tough deal. Cattle prices are up. They are good. They are the best I have ever seen, but everything you have to buy from medicine to feed to hay...

Nancy Stiles Chipukites: Water?

DS: Yeah, now water is a problem. It is just a tough deal.

JE: But, you know, there is a lot to be said about those of you who live in the farm, and you came from these early settlers. George Sr. or Jr. who wrote this, that we referred to earlier. It says, "The honest home seeking men and women who largely made up the population in the early settlers were courageous - ventured from comfortable firesides to establish new frontiers." You know, my grandparents came from Norway and came over here to settle, and they had some of that same spirit that you have been talking about here today. How much we admire that spirit. Then he writes, "When it comes to superior merit in the field of human endeavor, record the fact that Oklahoma boys and girls rank high if not in the fields of athletics, stock judging four H club, and future farmers organizations. Also, the state's colleges, and schools, and universities, rank among the highest in the nation. Personally, I am proud to be an adopted son of Oklahoma, and I believe in the future and welfare of the state."

DS: That's true, that's still true today. You know, you can make headlines every day, and we have in athletics or our judging teams, and Oklahoma FFA is one of the strongest in the United States. So, I don't know how he figured that out back in those days, but it is still true today.

JE: In the 30s he was writing that I believe, right?

NSC: Strong, strong stock.

JE: And, you know, you have Darrell, because of your farming...Were found family of the year, I believe.

DS: That is correct.

JE: You were Oklahoma Conservationists, at one time?

DS: Yeah. When we want our county award for conservation efforts.

JE: Payne County expo head and head of the fairgrounds.

DS: Yeah, I've been chairman of the Payne County Fair Board for probably 20-plus years, and also chairman of the Payne County Premium Sales, which has been a pretty successful endeavor to a forage and FFA members of that County.

JE: You're the Fair Board President for Payne County? Not only have you been good to the land, you've been good the community as well, so you should be congratulated on that.

DS: Thank you.

JE: Yes. You know, I'm not going to read it all here, but, if you saw and heard the commercial that Paul Harvey did for the Dodge trucks and Chrysler...

DS: Owe it to the foreman?

JE: "And, on the eighth day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, I need a caretaker, so God made a farmer." And, I'm sure that, we don't know who wrote this, but

Paul Harvey produced it on his show back in the 70s originally, when it was played. But, I'm quite certain. Let me just read one paragraph that you will nod to or maybe have a comment to. "God said I need somebody to get up before dawn and milk cows. To work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper, then go to town, and stay past midnight and meeting the school board, so God made a farmer." And, when I'm reading that, that just relates to everything you've said here today. You can nod your approval.

DS: It's all true.

NSC: That was a great commercial. I think the first time I heard that was during the Super-bowl, and I was just in awe that they actually played it. I felt like they were paying a big tribute to farmers. And...

JE: Yeah. Cause I like to read, I'm going to read one more here because I think you'll relate. "I need somebody with strong arms, strong enough to wrestle a calf, yet gentle enough to deliver his own grandchild. Somebody to call hogs, ting cantankerous machinery, come home hungry, and have to wait for lunch until his wife is done visiting with the ladies and telling him to be sure to come back real soon and mean it, so God made a farmer."

DS: That's all true, and when I heard that, I listened to every word, and everything he said in that...

JE: Was right on, wasn't it?

DS: Yeah...it was just right there. If you think about it hard enough or give enough thought to it, it just about brings tears to your eyes.

JE: Yes. I can understand that. I think I did when I first heard it because well, you've put in a lot of work here on the farm, and I want thank you both for visiting here today. This will be heard by generations to come and they'll probably shake their heads even presently and say wow, how do people live through all that, but you did and you are strong stock, and you passed it on to your children as well. So, thank you Nancy, thank you Darrell. I appreciate it very much.

NSC: You're welcome.

DS: Thank you John. I appreciate you taking the time and getting this story out there.

JE: Absolutely. My pleasure.

NSC: Thanks.

Chapter 13 – 0:33**Conclusion**

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