Ranching_Shupe_Oliver

Diana: Let's see to see if this will start, OK?

Oliver: Okay.

Diana: Now, you know I'm recording this, right?

Oliver: Yes.

Diana: OK, what is your full name?

Oliver: Oliver Perry Shupe.

Diana: And where do you currently live?

Oliver: 9231 Inslee Lane, Leewood, Kansas, 66206.

Diana: Now, when did your family come to Clark County?

Oliver: In 1985 (sic). My granddad came there and then my grandmother, she came in to Oklahoma across the border, and then they met at some function in Woodward, Oklahoma, in I think about '86.

Diana: So they came in 1885.

Oliver: Yeah, granddad came from Philadelphia.

Diana: And what was his name?

Oliver: Roy Sherman Shupe.

Diana: And what was his wife's name?

Oliver: Jeepers. Oh, yeah, my grandmother. Her name was Bond. Gosh, we called her "Granny". Gosh.

Diana: I can look it up.

Oliver: Her maiden name was Bond.

Diana: OK, now where did they settle in Clark County.

Oliver: Right in that area where Kirb Pike lives now. There was a section there that they

settled on and a very interesting thing that happened was that when he left Philadelphia, they were a family that had flour mills.

And so eventually the flour mills were made into distilleries because the liquor came along. And, of course, you use the same ingredients. So they had the bins and the storage and it finally turned into... But anyway, at that point, my granddad didn't want to have anything to do with that and there was five children in his family. So, he told his mother, "I'm going to go west. I'm going to go out west and settle." And so, she gave him some money.

Oliver: When he got out here, he bought some corn and his first crop was a corn crop and he made a big corn crop. Everybody did. The biggest mistake that ever happened, because you can't raise corn in western Kansas, but they thought they raised it once, that was going to be their livelihood. Well, it just happened that one year they got the rains and they raised corn. The next three years, they planted corn and they went broke. They ended up losing the land that he had actually paid for. Not very much, you know, dollar wise, I don't know. But whatever it was, because they didn't ever get a corn crop again, they ended up losing their land. And then he met my grandmother and they had connections down on the river where the ranch is now. You know, Section 16, 17. And they was able to buy into that with my grandmother's money. And then they went ahead and had 11 children and lived in a sod house for the first nine years of marriage. And then they finally built... the neighbors came in and they built kind of a shack and they lived in it for four or five years and then it burned down.

So then the neighbors offered some building and they moved it with horses and teams and it was made out of wood. They added on with tarps and everything and made a sleeping room for the kids. It was just an unbelievable life, but everybody lived that way.

Then they decided in… let's see, what year would that be? After the Dirty Thirties, they decided they were going to build a home and eventually they made blocks, cement blocks, all winter long. They'd make six in the morning. They hauled sand in and had the cement and they make six blocks in the morning. And then they'd take them out of the forms and they'd make six more and they'd set overnight. So they'd make 12 blocks a day.

Diana: So how big were the blocks?

Oliver: They're just like a stone block that you see today, about, I don't know what it would be, about six inches by 12. Yeah, and they were hollow. That was very important. And each one of them had a little bit of a piece of wire in it to kind of give it a little bit more strength. So they made those cement blocks all winter long, 12 a day. Then in the spring, they had a contractor come in and they built the house. It is a stone house. They put the roof on it and it's set there... In fact, I lived in it till I was 35 years old, and then we rented it out to the Barby's for a while. Eventually, it just felt like that I'd looked around at other homesteads where the houses would just start... the windows would break out because nobody was living there. So I just burned it and then I buried all the blocks. So the homestead is still

there, but there's no buildings left. The last building that was standing went with the wildfires four years ago.

Diana: 2017.

Oliver: The only thing left there at the homestead now is the corrals.

Diana: And you still use those?

Oliver: The corrals, yes.

Diana: When your grandpa did that first corn crop, how did he plant it?

Oliver: Oh, a one-row cultivator. I think it was about 15, 20 acres.

Diana: Did he have horses?

Oliver: Yeah. Well, oxen first. The first thing they used when he first came was oxen. Now I don't know when they stopped using the oxen and went to horses and then went to a tractor. A lot of people went to tractors in in '38, '39. John Deere came out. But Dad didn't like the John Deere because of the "pop, pop, pop". So he waited till Minneapolis Moline came out and he bought his... He didn't buy it, he traded 44 horses for his first 1941 Minneapolis Moline tractor.

Diana: OK, so when they moved down on the river, what type of ground did they have? What kind of soil?

Oliver: They had about 30 acres of farm ground and the rest was grassland there. There was more land that they could have broke out, but they never did break it out. They ran cattle.

Diana: They ran horses?

Oliver: Oh, yeah. They had like 60 horses.

Diana: So where do they get the horses from?

Oliver: Where did he get them from?

Diana: Did they buy?

Oliver: I wouldn’t know, but back then, you know, people raised horses. I imagine they just... Oh, I just realized that the name of my grandma was Lola, Lola Bond.

Diana: Oh. Where they've lived down there, was there a school?

Oliver: Not at the time that they moved down, but that would've been about 85. And let me see, I've got a sheet of paper I'm looking at. If people lived there back in '85, they all lived in houses or dugouts. And the houses were sod houses. There wasn't any wood at that time, in '85, out on the farms.

Diana: So where did they do their business? Did they go to Buffalo or to Sitka?

Oliver: Sitka was a trade town because they crossed the river. Well, actually, east of the Harper Ranch, where the Highway 83's at now. The main road was about a mile and a quarter east of there, and that's why our house was built back east off the road, because that's where the original road was in '85. It went to Sitka. Then later when the state came in and put in a bridge, they moved it over next to where Harper's lived because getting across the river was shorter. So that's what made the River Bridge go in where it's at now.

Diana: Was it an active river back then, have lots of water?

Oliver: Oh yes. The river was... you could see for miles up and down the river, there was no brush, no tamarack. It was just sandy ground with a big stream of water and it twisted around and made the Cimarron River. It was totally different than we knew it after the floods in '52. In ‘52, the floods came in and flooded all that and that's when the tamarack and the brush and everything grew up.

Diana: Did it change the flow of the river in the flood?

Oliver: Yes, the river would change because the ground was not a solid soil, it was kind of sandy. So, when they'd get those floods, the river would wash and make more curves, which you are aware of. Fifty-seven was the last flood on the Cimarron River because by then they'd started building terraces and taking water out in Colorado, unless you'd get a big rain in Englewood. Finally, in about 1972, '73, the river dried up and has had water in it very little since. It has stayed dry for sometimes four or five years.

Diana: Can you dig down to water.

Oliver: Yeah. Water table's not too deep. At times it gets within six feet of the surface but most of the time it's about nine feet. So we've got good water supply. We never did have any deep wells at the ranch, which was a blessing.

Diana: What type of cattle did they run?

Oliver: They had longhorns, but they eventually went to Herefords in the 40s and then in the 50s where we went to the black baldies. We started using Angus bulls on our Herefords and now we've got a cross of all three, Angus and black baldies and Herefords.

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Diana: When your grandpa first came out here, did he bring the oxen with him?

Oliver: I don't know. I would say no, but I do know they did travel by wagon, but a lot of them... I think he just paid to be a wrangler to get to come because he came by himself. He wasn't bringing a family. So I think he just paid on... Well, in fact, I know he did. He didn't own anything, except he did have money.

His family had money because they had a business there in Philadelphia and it was a growing business. So, he was able... he had money to buy corn when he got here and paid for land, I have no idea what he paid for it. They homesteaded some later. But to start out with, I think you could buy land pretty cheap. But the first land he bought, he ended up losing it. He just couldn't pay the taxes on it and he went broke.

And the thing was, if they hadn't got that first corn crop, they wouldn't have probably planted it again. So that turned out to be a bad thing that happened at that time because he didn't realize that there wasn't enough rainfall.

Diana: Then later when he moved over by the river, what crops did he grow there?

Oliver: They started having wheat and then big, big gardens. Potatoes, corn, you know, that's how they fed the family. You know, they didn't hardly buy anything when they would go to town, they'd go down once a month.

Diana: Did they raise chickens?

Oliver: Oh yeah, they had chickens and had hogs. They did all their own fresh, even when I was in high school, I ate fresh fried chicken three times a week because we just went out and wrung the neck of a rooster and cooked him. We had eggs and then we milked cows.

When I was in high school and even before, when I was younger, we milked cows and we separated the cream. Then we took the cream to Buffalo and we traded it for flour and things you needed for cooking that you couldn't raise on the farm. There was no money exchanged, just trading eggs and cream to get whatever product we needed. This was from 1945 to the 60's.

Diana: What was their first vehicle? When did they get a car or a truck?

Oliver: They got a Model T truck. I would say around 40, about 1940 or '41, about the same time we got the tractor, because before that, it was horses and buggies.

Diana: Yes, so with all that many children, they didn't have to have many employees to run the ranch, did they?

Oliver: No. Dad quit school in the third grade and took over being kind of the... The girls got out of high school at 16 and started teaching school, two of them in different schoolhouses. But they still lived at home. They rode horses from the ranch to the schoolhouses, which one was about four miles and the other was about two miles

Diana: Was either one of them on the ranch? Was the schoolhouse on the ranch?

Oliver: No, it's on part of the ranch now, but at that time the Ides owned it, **Sherm Ide**. It was the Redbank School and it's about a mile and a half north. We own the land now, but we didn't own it back then. They had fences the kids would ride the horses in and the horses would stay there. When school was out. They'd get on the horses and ride back home.

Diana: What size were their cattle? How many cattle did they have?

Oliver: Well, they had one hundred acres and, you know, you could you could run about 100 cows.

Diana: Did they grain feed them too?

Oliver: They raised feed and they'd bind it. They had a binder, and it was pulled by a horse or horses. Then they'd shock that feed, and that's what they'd feed cattle in the wintertime. I don't know when they started supplementing cake, but probably about '45, 1945, and they didn't have... they'd have it delivered.

But frankly, back in those days, cattle didn't get through the winter as fleshy as they do now, but they did feed a little bit of grain, but not a lot. It was mostly just hay.

Diana: Do you remember any cattle drives or moving cattle from one place to another?

Oliver: No, I don't remember any of those, but Dad does, because Sitka was a big headquarters for people coming out of Oklahoma. The railroad track came in there, so all the cattle come up from the middle of Oklahoma all the way to Sitka to get shipped to Kansas City.

Diana: Did they move any cattle up to Sitka to sell them?

Oliver: Yes, that's what dad would do whenever he'd get ready to sell steers or heifers, he'd drive them to Sitka and load them on a train. And then he would go to Kansas City with them. And back there in the 30s, he took a load to Kansas City, and by the time he paid the shipping bill and everything, he didn't get a penny for the cattle. Oh, there was no price for the cattle back then. The price went to nothing. So those were pretty tough times, and then the only way he got back was Stockgrowers Bank. Roach was the president. And he had certain customers and Dad who happened to be one of them, that he'd send them to

Wichita. Dad had no collateral because the land was worth nothing at that point. The Depression was just... everybody was broke, but they were still living off the stamps and of course they were raising all their own... the doctors and all the bills, they just forewent them. The doctor hardly ever got paid. Everybody just lived to help everybody else, and so Dad goes to Wichita and Roach gave him a good recommendation to the banker in Wichita, and so the Wichita bank did loan Dad money to operate on. If he hadn't got that loan, he would have left the ranch and just let it turn back to the state. That was right after the Dirty Thirties. But he wasn't the only one that was in that situation. But the banks bailed out a few, you know.

Diana: So how did they work cattle back then?

Oliver: Oh, real on the ground with ropes and they used horses, they'd rope around the neck and the back of the two hind legs and drag them out. It was usually neighbors helping neighbors. So it was just, you know, but people didn't have big herds like they do now. You know, they'd have 90 calves. Well, it didn't take very long to work 90 calves, about two hours, you know, about five guys would get together. The wife would always fix up a big meal for them.

Diana: What about medicine?

Oliver: Medicine for the cattle? Well, yeah, there was veterinarians, you know, but they were in the same situation as medical doctors. They didn't get paid. It was one of those things, everybody trusted everybody. And when Dad finally got some money, he went in and paid the vet. I'm sure it was a discounted bill. But he did pay them something.

Diana: When did they start growing the herd?

Diana: Oh, I would say that as soon as they moved there. Of course, you know, they had quite a few horses and then they started out with 100 acres. Then when Dad was about 21 years old, he went down into Oklahoma and bought 640 acres of farm ground. Then he had to get more horses because at that point, they just had a few horses around the ranch and oxen, you know, they farmed with them.

But then when he got this farm ground in Oklahoma, they had to add on a lot of horses and they actually had to cut back on their cattle herd a little bit because they didn't have enough grass for the cows and horses. And of course, they needed the horses for farming.

Diana: Do you know what kind of horses they got?

Oliver: Oh, yeah, they were quarter horses, mostly quarter horses. You know, back in those days, they didn't know what a thoroughbred was.

Diana: Did they use mules? Did they have any mules?

Oliver: No, no, no mules.

Diana: When they cut wheat, was that something they did with the neighbors, too?

Oliver: Yes. When Dad bought the farm ground, they had just bought the tractor. It was '41, probably. They had a pull-type Gleaner. They pulled it with a tractor.

I remember the biggest thing that happened back in those days, because there used to have to be a man standing up on the combine, running the wheel to raise the header up and down, and then the guy driving the tractor. They came out in about 1945 with a little electric motor that you could mount a switch on the fender of the tractor, and the tractor driver then could raise the header of the combine up and down. And that was a big thing, because that did away with one man at harvest time. And then that man could be driving a truck to the elevator.

Diana: So where did they take the crops, did they take them to Buffalo?

Oliver: Yes, they were eight miles north of Buffalo and nine miles south of the ranch. Just in the edge of Oklahoma, three miles into Oklahoma. My brother still owns 160 acres, but I traded my 320 that that I inherited from Dad for the Black Hall place there, south of town, that Hall's owned.

Diana: That was pretty common, wasn't it, for people to trade places?

Oliver: Yeah, it happened some, but I don't know if it was really common. The reason I traded was because I wanted to get all my land together and I had bought the Black Hall place, 640 acres, south of town. The Howell land hooked right on to it, so that it gave me 960 acres. Then that 960 acres hooks onto the Klinger land, which someday Nathan is going to inherit, he'll inherit all that land together. And that's why I wanted to get it. Gasoline, driving, I had a piece of land west of Ashland. I sold it off to buy the Black Hall, I didn't trade it. I just sold one and bought the other because I didn't want that mileage and pulling machinery up and down the highway like I had done for years. I just wanted to get it all in one place.

So now when David and Nathan take over, someday, all their land will be in two spots, the old ranch and then the Klinger place down south of Ashland. So, they'll have two spots and they won't be strung clear down in Oklahoma. You know, we had 38 miles between that I had to pull equipment back and forth for 24 years. And you're set up to do it… but gasoline's getting higher. Well, pickups are a lot faster.

Diana: What kind of machinery did you own? Did you own a tractor and drill and...

Oliver: Me? Oh, yeah. When I took over, well, dad was very fortunate, like a lot of people in

Clark County. In 1956, they hit oil and gas on the Oklahoma land and eventually they hit some on the ranch. Well, my brother, he went out and become an engineer and left. So Dad was able to help me get started on the farm, and because he was making this oil and gas money, he would transfer that over to me and then I bought land. We now have over 4,000 acres and it takes more land to operate. Had we not hit that oil and gas, we wouldn't have had the money. I would have survived, but not as well as I did because I was able to buy more land.

Diana: Was most of that land pastureland?

Oliver: Yeah, most of the most of the land I bought was grassland, right, and the Oklahoma land, when the Soil Bank program came out, there was 600 acres there and I put all that in the farm program.

Diana: Is that in the 60s?

Oliver: Yeah, and that helped people like me, it didn't help the communities, because that took business away from, you know, things we didn't need to buy. But right now, we was raising way too much wheat, we still do. Wheat is a weed, and that's why everybody in the world can raise it. So, we're always going to have too much of it.

Diana: Did you raise some feed or other crops just to feed your cattle?

Oliver: Yeah, I never did raise milo or corn or anything like that. I just raised something that I could bale.

Diana: Did you raise alfalfa?

Oliver: I did a little alfalfa at one time, but it was about a ten-year deal and it just didn't fit my program. So, I just went back to feed. In fact, I put the alfalfa ground back in the grass. And of course, now, as you've probably realized, the farming thing just isn't working with the wheat price at $5.30. Tractors used to be $85,000, now they're $300,000. Farming just doesn't work now, especially in Clark County. Eventually, it will all go back to grass, I imagine.

Diana: Yes. Did you put some grass into the CRP program during the 70s also?

Oliver: Yeah, I put it in when it first came out and I've left it in. And in fact, I've got that Blackhall place, I've owned it for, I think like 23 years, and it's been in the program ever since I bought it. Doug Graff was farming it and he put it into the program and then I bought it. I sold the place out on the highway west of Ashland. I bought it and I did that because location, location. So, I didn't add any more acres.

Diana: Yeah, do you keep much machinery now or do you hire stuff done?

Oliver: We don't farm anything now. I left there 20 years ago and we quit farming 15 years ago and, really, because the equipment that I had was getting to the point it was going to have to buy new stuff, new tractors, new this, new that. And I thought, gee. I'm not going to go into that. And just looking back at it, it was kind of not by choice, but it's just what happened and it turned out to be the right thing to do.

Diana: Have you increased your cattle herd?

Oliver: Oh, yeah. I was running about four hundred cattle cows and then when Nathan took over, Nation started running about 240. I think now he's enlarging that. I don't know where he's at now.

Diana: Is it more of a cow/calf herd or...

Oliver: Yeah, he's cow/calf.

Diana: Any steers?

Oliver: I used to keep everything to a feeder. I would put them back out on summer grass, but he pretty much sells everything after they wean. If he's got a little extra grass, he might keep some, you know, 60 days or something.

Diana: So how have cattle prices changed since you started to now? Is there a big difference?

Well, I don't know whether you'd say a big difference. It costs more to operate, you know. Your labor, your fuel, your medicine and everything to raise an animal. And the animal hasn't increased enough to really make that really work. So unless you've got your land paid for and some of your cattle, you're just not going to make it, unless you've got a good banker, and then eventually... you know, I tell all my Kansas City friends, I say, "You know, the only people that got to stay in western Kansas that didn't sell out, was the ones who got oil and gas. Very few people in the Panhandle, Oklahoma, Texas, all that area should have never been broke out and farm ground should have been left to grass." And anyway, to make a long story short. If you can get the grass paid for and get the cattle and you can make a living.

Diana: Were you hurt by the fire in 2017? Did you lose a lot of cattle?

Oliver: No, we didn't lose any. We were able to take them across the highway and put them out on wheat fields. We're very fortunate that Bouziden had a big wheat field right across the highway. They got down there and got all the cattle across on wheat. We didn't lose a head. We lost all our fences, which everybody did.

Diana: They've all been replaced, right?

Oliver: We didn't replace everything. Some of the cross-fences, we didn't do anything with them.

Diana: How has it changed your grass, the fire?

Oliver: It didn't hurt the grass at all, because, you know, we got the right rains afterwards and the people brought hay in and we was able to put the cattle on a 140-acre area and fed them hay until the grass came back. So we were blessed.

Diana: Do you have to do certain things to manage the grass? Do you rotate pastures?

Oliver: Nathan, my son's taking on a whole new program on the grass than I ever did. He grows more grass, but it's more labor intensive because he's using cross-fencing and that's a big thing. They're doing it a lot of places and it definitely grows more grass.

Diana: What is cross fencing?

Oliver: Well, you rotate the cattle, you put them in one area and it's a small area and you graze that off, and then you move them over to the next pad that they graze. You use electric fencing, it's really easy to move. And then the cattle get used to the fact that they move from one pad to the next. But you've got to make sure... you've got to move water with them. And it's more of an intense program and Nathan's taken it on and he enjoys that. I just kind of did the old, you know, put 60 cows one place, 60 in another place, and then in the wintertime run around, where he keeps them all together.

Diana: Do you have a lot of solar water?

Oliver: Yeah. The whole ranch is run by solar now. We changed out about 15 years ago.

Diana: Do you ever have trouble that you have to haul water with your solar?

Oliver: Very seldom, but if you do have to haul water, we've got storage tanks right now on the place that hold enough water, that all we have to do is haul a short distance on the ranch. Like when I used to run out of water, I'd have to haul it from Ashland. It's 17 miles out there. What we did when I was younger was we used a lot of ponds. Ponds are okay, but you've got to go in there and clean them out. And then sometimes, you know, if you don't get... If it gets too dry, then they start to dry up and then the cattle get in. So they're not the best way. But back years ago, we used them, got by with them. But today that's pretty much not the way to do it.

Diana: When did you put the water tanks out there? I mean, have you had those supply tanks for a while?

Oliver: Well, we got those supply tanks when we started doing the solar because the solar pumps in the daytime, it doesn't pump at night. So then you get a storage of water.

Diana: So how big of tanks do you have?

Oliver: Oh, actually they were given to us by the oil companies, so they're pretty good sized because when oil companies, when the wells started drying up, they said we could have that tank. And of course, it's a $1,200, $1,400 dollar tank. But they couldn't afford to come in there and load it up and move it. They're old, but they're fiberglass, so they'll last forever.

Diana: It didn't take much to adapt them?

Oliver: We've got about four of those sitting around on the ranch now.

Diana: You mentioned Nathan moves the cattle from one place to another. Does he use horses or does he use a four-wheeler?

Oliver: No, they graze off all the grass in that paddock, and they just go to the fresh grass. You have to leave the gate open for a day, but they don't go back, but they have to sometimes go back and get their calf.

Diana: How does he work cattle now?

Oliver: For five or six years, he had people come in and they had a big party. He'd buy all the pizza and the beer, and they'd rope them and drag them. He did that for five or six years. Who started that was Buster Carter. The Buster crew started that, and Nathan kind of picked up and did that for several years. Now he's back to just using a chute and branding, and of course he's got a helper. Once in a while, he'll hire extra help. But that's about the only time he ever hires any extra help.

Diana: Does he use a squeeze chute?

Oliver: Yes.

Diana: Let's talk about some of the disasters or storms that there have been. You mentioned the flood. Do you remember it?

Oliver: The flood in '57 was the worst flood that ever hit our place. It rained like, I don't know, 30 inches in Sitka. You were probably there. And all that water come from the north. Well, we were protected pretty much from the river, we had built a big levee all the way

around it, protected the ranch, but when that '57 flood came, that all came down Day Creek, came from the north, and it came into the back, it flattened all the fences around the house. It washed a big hole out underneath the chicken house and just did a lot of damage. We had a barn, it was an old, old barn and just washed it away. And so, I graduated the year of '57 and Jim Baker was my classmate. Jim and I built a new barn on the ranch in 1957, that was after the flood, and we worked all summer building fence back and cleaning it up. Then they had to bring in dozers and doze dirt back under the chicken house and raise it up, put a foundation under it. And there was quite a bit of damage. But that was the last flood we ever had. That was a blessing.

Diana: You said you built a fence. Was it a barbed wire fence?

Oliver: Yeah.

Diana: How many strands?

Oliver: Now the fence around the yard was woven wire, you know, and they were just flattened. So we put all new fences around. The old fences were old, so it was no big deal that we had to put a new fence around. We needed a new fence

Diana: Did the flood kind of mangle the fence?

Oliver: Yeah, we had dozers come in and dig holes and bury a lot of stuff. And that was how we got rid of it.

Diana: Do you remember any snow storms?

Oliver: Yeah, the worst snowstorm was... what was it, February the 21? Was it 1970?

Diana: 1971.

Oliver: I went out and we never did lose our telephone. I was living on the ranch and Dad was living in Ashland. So, I called Dad and said, "Well, I'm going to get a horse and go ride out and see where the cattle is at, and whether they can get the water and everything."

And there was snow banks that were eight feet high and then out on the grass, it was about two and a half foot or maybe 18 inches. You could ride a horse and of course, you weren't around where it drifted and everything. But I'll never forget Dad told me, "Make sure to take a scoop shovel with you."

And I said, "Scoop shovel?" He said, "Well, yeah," he said, "You'll come to fences and you won't be able to get through the gates because you won't be able to open the gate." And sure enough, the best advice I ever got. So, I had a scoop shovel and I had to go from... I could walk through the snow, but when I'd come to the fence, the fence would be piled up

with snow. The gate would be all piled up, you know, around the post. But then I could take the scoop shovel and scoop out enough room to get the gate open and get my horse through the gate.

And then I'd go around and I'd find big calves that were stuck in the snow. The cows kind of bunched together and they were kind of on little mounds of hills and things. But these darned calves, they'd run out into the snow and they just get so tired they couldn't go anymore. I would say I gathered about 20 of them. I'd walk up, I'd ride the horse up to them and some of them would start struggling and they would get out and get back to the cow herd. Some would try to struggle, but they were just stuck in the snow. And so I would take and loop the rope where I didn't have to have it, like, I didn't want to rope them because I could never get my rope back.

I just looped rope and put it around the calf's neck and then hooked it around the saddle horn. And I pulled a calf and sometimes I had to pull him for about two steps. Some of them, I might have to pull him for like eight or nine steps. And then they'd get their legs un-stuck from there and then they'd take off. And of course, they jump. And of course, by that time they'd rested and they'd get back. But I couldn't get them to the water tanks that first day, because the water tanks were too far and the snow was too deep and everything. It was about three days before I actually got everything to water. But I was eventually able to get everything to water riding around on a horse. So, we didn't lose any cattle.

Diana: Did you have them drop feed from the helicopters?

Oliver: No, I never did use the helicopters. I did go on the helicopter. I went and helped. The thing that happened with the helicopters, they didn't come in soon enough. They didn't come in until about the 10th, oh, I don't know what day it was. Well, by then, most of us had figured things out. You could run a two-wheel drive tractor and go around. But here's the thing about that. They brought in helicopters and of course, the farmers thought, “Hey, let’s get some hay moved.” There were places where they still needed help, down on the Tuttle Ranch. Right. And there was areas that they needed the helicopters, up north of Ashland.

But in our area down there, like John Rourke, you know, Dale Randall, and everything, the thing was people still had those helicopters come down here, land a helicopter right beside the stack of hay, load up the helicopter, and then they'd fly out and the farmer would be out there in his pickup telling them where to drop the hay. It ticked off some of the workers that were riding on those helicopters because they were just using the system. And of course, that happens. I laughed about it, but some people got... it was just a story. People took advantage of it.

Diana: Did you have any trouble? Did they do that for a couple of days?

Oliver: Yeah, the helicopter was there about six days, five or six days. Yeah. And they moved a lot of hay and helped a lot of people. And I'm sure, even at that point, they still saved some

cattle, but there was quite a few cattle lost because they didn't get there, or they didn't send them soon enough. And of course, that's what happens in disasters. They've learned so much from those days. And everything moves so much faster now.

Diana: Were you stuck at your place for a while? They didn't open the roads, did they?

Oliver: I had the place west of Ashland and I didn't get out there till the fourth day. And luckily out there, the cattle were all OK. The Kriers had come over and I had talked to them and I felt like everything was OK, I talked to Gib Krier and he had been over and he saw the cattle down around the windmill. He didn't go down there, but he said, "If you've got water in the tank, they're OK." And sure enough, I got out there and everything was OK.

And then we had the place in Oklahoma and we didn't go there for about another two days. So, it had been about six days before I got down there. And there was about 20 head of cattle that had gone without water for six days. But I got them to the tank and I didn't let them stay there too long because they were really thirsty. And then I drove them away. And then I went to go back to the tank and then none of them died. So, we never lost anything in the storm, having them in three different places.

Diana: Did it take them a long time to open the highway?

Oliver: Oh, the highway south of Sitka, it was closed. So, I rode a horse over to Mel Harper's house, and I got a Ford tractor. I helped Mel dig the Ford Tractor out of the way of the door. The snow was piled up at the door. I helped him scoop that out. We got the Ford Tractor out and I rode it. I rode the tractor up the mile to Sitka and then Jim Harper drove out in his pickup and parked on the other side. And we walked out into the McMinimy's field and went around that great big drift that was out on the highway.

He took the Ford tractor and went to his ranch and I took his pickup and went to Ashland. Dad had a pickup and then I went on out west and checked those cattle out. So, yeah, I think it was the fourth day.

Diana: I remember they opened the roads.

Oliver: They didn't get that open for about a week or maybe ten days.

Diana: They opened the road, the dirt road, from Ashland to Sitka, before they opened the highway.

Oliver: Yeah, but the bad place was right south of Sitka, on that curve. You know, where the ponds and those two great big trees. It blocked the highway there and they didn't have anything that would even touch that. They finally had to bring something from Garden City to open that up. That took them a long time. But, yeah, they opened up that highway, I imagine the first day, it seems like it.

Ranching_Shupe_Oliver

Diana: Was there another snowstorm earlier, like in the thirties or something?

Oliver: In 1912, there was a storm Dad talked about, that he talked about being the worst. When the train got stuck, he was just a kid, but he remembers that as being the worst. And of course, back then, they did have horses and carts. They opened up the shop, loaded shocked feed onto boards and drug it with horses over the snow to get the cattle fed. I haven't been talking about those days.

Diana: Yeah. Do you remember any tornadoes?

Oliver: Well, yeah, I sat on the front porch and watched tornado go down the river, about a half mile.

Diana: Oh, so you said you saw a tornado come down the river?

Oliver: Yeah, yeah. And it was about a half a mile south of the house. And I was probably about 16, 17 years old. That's actually the only tornado I've ever seen other than pictures. By the time we saw it, we could feel a little wind setting out there on the porch, but we could see that it was past us by that time or it was going past us about a half a mile. And there were no buildings, nothing down there that was blowing away. So we were safe. But had it been a half a mile north, it could have done some damage to our place because it was moving things, brush.

Diana: Are grass fires a common occurrence or have they been?

Oliver: No, we've probably had four different fires that started somewhere around our ranch or the area. And every one of them, we was able to put out. The neighbors would come in with spray rigs or the fire department with their gear.

Diana: Were they mostly caused by lightning?

Oliver: Well, yeah, that's how most of them would get started. But once you'd see it, you'd call the neighbors. And because we didn't have the wind, and maybe I'm just... And of course, we didn't have the growth of grass. I think years ago, people kept their grass shorter than they did in the later years, you know.

Diana: Did you keep gunny sacks handy?

Oliver: Well, we always had gunny sacks. I know that. I don't know whether we kept them on purpose for that, but we definitely would wet them and use them. And people would just show up whenever there was smoke. You would just show up and just get it taken care of. And I can remember myself going down there to Darrel Randal's and helping put one out. None of them ever got out of control, you know.

Diana: What was the average number of acres they would burn?

Oliver: Oh, I would say less than maybe 10 acres. You know, they'd just be small, anything that happened on around me. I didn't know, talking to the firemen, that there was some up on Bouziden's up there, they had some that got quite a few acres before they got it under control. But we never did have anything around us.

Diana: You were saying the neighbors were closer together, you had more neighbors. Who was your closest neighbor when you lived on the ranch?

Oliver: Well, Randalls would be about a mile and a quarter south, and Harpers were a mile and a half west and then, of course, and they had two hired men that were there, the Williams. So, there was two homes over there, there were four homes there that Harper's had, that had people in them. And then you had the Domes.

East, we went clear over to Comanche County, so we didn't have... because Harpers owned everything east of us, clear over to the county line. There wasn't any neighbors east of us until you got over into Comanche County.

Diana: Were there are a lot of community gatherings?

Oliver: Well, the biggest gathering was church. It started, oh, I've got it written down here.

Diana: I can remember coming out to the Shupe Ranch for some type of a picnic.

Oliver: Yeah, well, we always had a big... when I was in high school, it was for 4-H. We always had a yearly, an annual picnic out there and we invited the Sitka 4-H Club. So that's where it would be.

Diana: Who were the leaders in 4-H when you were in it?

Oliver: Oh, in 1898, Mr. and Mrs. Shupe bought an abandoned schoolhouse where their two older daughters had attended, located just across the main road north-east of the Harper Ranch building. The building was moved to a location in the Oklahoma community. Sam Brown, Gus Penenberg, Arthur Shaw, Hank and others with teams and skids worked diligently to get the building moved into place. Mr. Brown and Mr. Shaw did a considerable amount of remodeling with an addition and made a comfortable home for the family after living in a soddy for 10 years, where six of their children were born. So this just shows you, in 1988 how people worked together and helped other people live better.

Diana: So would Mr. Brown have been the Mr. Brown from Sitka?

Oliver: No, it was a Brown family from Oklahoma. All those names, Gus Koningburg, Arthur

Shaw, Hank and others. And in that house that they built there in 1898, it burnt down in 1920, it was destroyed by fire. At that point the Jess Harper, who owned a cook shack as living quarters, let them move it and they lived in that. Until the house was constructed.

Diana: The one made out of cement blocks?

Oliver: It was constructed, I think, in like about '30, so they lived about 32, so they lived in that house for like 10 years, 10 or 12 years.

Diana: And so how many kids would have been home then?

Oliver: Nine, two died at a young age and the other nine were alive and they would have all been there. They built some lean-tos, tarps and everything. Like I say, they were through some pretty rough times.

The groceries consisted of potatoes, flour and sugar and 100-pound bags, dried fruits, beans and cereals, along with boxes of canned goods to supplement the food supply. Hogs were butchered and cured, usually seven or eight a year.

This gave a good supply of meat and lard for cooking, very little beef was used in the summer due to the lack of refrigeration, but in the winter, beef could be hung outside. If they didn't the money, quite often merchants like dear old Ben Stevens would extend credit sometimes and overuse credit for months or even a year. You know, people just took care of people. At one point they lost a full carload of steers, they'd been stolen. The county was open range at that time and cattle stealing could be easily done.

Diana: Yeah, so did your grandmother sew? Did she make the clothes?

Oliver: Yeah, they would go down... My mother, they would go down when we would buy the flour, they would pick out the bags of flour in the pattern that they wanted the dress of. Because the flour bags were all made of patterns and so on.

Diana: So how old were you when you joined 4-H?

Oliver: Oh, I would have been probably fifth or sixth grade.

Diana: What were your projects?

Oliver: I always had hogs. And then later I had beef animals. My first few years, I know was hogs.

Diana: Were your parents leaders?

Oliver: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Dad and Mom both helped out and things.

Diana: Who were some of the other people you remember being involved in it?

Oliver: Well, I remember your dad and George Pike. One year your dad or there were a couple of years of your dad, we went there one afternoon in your yard and your dad showed us, there was about six of us there, Jack and Kenny York, you know, Charlie Chester and I and the Pike boys, they were a little bit younger, but they were there. And your dad showed us how to change the oil in a tractor and different services on equipment. And then I remember him doing that a couple times. And then I remember George Pike doing the same thing. So they had programs that parents would help out. Those are the two I remember distinctly.

Diana: When you had the picnic down at the ranch, was that after everybody went around and showed off their projects before the fair?

Oliver: That's right. I think that's what we did. We'd take a field trip and we'd all go. We'd all make the rounds and see everybody's project. I forgot about that, but you're right. And then we'd end up there with a big picnic and of course, I remember many, many picnics at the grade school. I went to Sitka until the fifth grade. And of course, they always had a big Thanksgiving program. They always had a big Christmas program. The big thing was, the women would make a box of dinner. And then they'd sell the box. I remember that.

Diana: When you had to go to school at Ashland, how did you get there?

Oliver: A bus. And I was on the bus one hour and 15 minutes.

Diana: Do you remember who the bus driver was?

Oliver: I happened to be the first one on and the last one off, both directions. And then later, the Stegmans, which lived right on south, by that time I'd got into high school and my brother was in high school. So I only had to ride the school bus, my fifth and sixth grade, because my freshman year, Chester got a car. Then Chester would drive me to school.

Diana: What kind of car was it? What kind of car did he have?

Oliver: Oh, a black '46 Ford.

Diana: Do you remember who was on your school bus route?

Oliver: Yeah, we went by and we picked up the Swayze boys and then we went down and picked up the Pikes and Keith Randall. That would be Donny and Keith Randall. Yeah, and we went across and picked up Mary Theander and we come in from south of town, and oh, gosh, there are a couple other names in there I can't think of, Kellum.

Diana: Was there a Hermann?

Oliver: Could have been, but I don't remember a Hermann. Kenny York, Ivan Williams. Well later on, they would have picked up Jim Harmon.

Diana: Because he would have been younger.

Oliver: But you can see the route that it took. It went up, and went back south down to the Randall's and came back across where the LeClear land's at.

Diana: Were there any Howells on the route?

Oliver: Dealman, I think that was one of the last ones.

Diana: Did you go to college?

Oliver: Yeah, I went to TCU, Texas Christian University, and then I met a girl there and she was from Gainesville, Texas, Dorothy and that's when I got married. And then I moved back to the ranch.

Diana: Your folks had already moved back to Ashland?

Oliver: When I got married, my folks moved back to Ashland

Diana: And you guys lived on the ranch?

Oliver: Yes, and then Dorothy and I lived on the ranch. Then we lived there for nine years. And then we bought a house there on the north end of Main Street and moved there. And then 11 years after we married, we divorced. Then Diane Clair, we lived in that house for 19 years and then we divorced. Then I came to Kansas City to see my kids, Carolyn and Glenn had moved up here and then I met a woman in Kansas City. And we're still married. We've been married 25 years. I'm married to Patty.

Diana: Were you involved in the Ashland community when you lived here? Were you on boards?

Oliver: I was involved in 4-H, and then I was on the hospital board for, I don't know, six or seven years. And I was chairman of the soil conservation, whatever that position was. I did that for about five or six years.

My biggest accomplishment in Ashland was-- we played golf out five miles west of Ashland. We had a nice golf course, but there wasn't any water under it and we knew we needed to go to grass greens. So, there were several others, Gene Sanders, Losson Pike, Kirb Pike, Don Howell. Gene Sanders and the president of the club, he was a city manager. He'd come from Northern Natural. What was his name? He was the oldest one of all of us and he was a city

manager for about eight years. Yeah. I can't remember his name right now. But anyway, he had come in there managing Northern Natural, and then he retired and then they hired him as the city manager.

He was a big help to me because he was like a father and he knew how to get things done. But anyway, we all decided that we wanted to build a grass green golf course. And so we made a lot of effort and finally found out that Ray Simmons was wanting to sell his place there south of town. And there was water there that we knew we could put grass greens and it was one hundred and sixty acres.

Anyway, I called Ray up one day and I said, "We want to buy your place to put a golf course there." And it was for sale. And I said, "But Ray, we have to put together the money before we can buy it from you. And we've got to go through the golf course club and everything." And he said, "Oh, I'll hold it for you." He said, "If you want to put a golf course here, I'd be glad to sell it to you." And we'd use the house as a clubhouse. And so anyway, so I kind of had a deal with him, but it was just words, right?

Well, anyway, a few people around town wanted to buy that place, and it wasn't the people that... Well, the Broadies ended up with it. And I want to make sure that they know Broadies was not the one that pushed Ray out. What happened was, there was a couple of other parties that Ray had promised that he would put it up for auction. And Ray was a good person. He didn't think about, you know, that somebody was going to come along and ask to build a golf course and turn his place into a beautiful golf course.

He liked that idea and he liked to play golf and, you know, he thought, "What a good deal!" But these other two families really got on to him hard and talked him into putting it up for auction, which he did.

*S*o then, when it went to auction, we didn't get a chance to buy it because we weren't set up yet to do anything. And I will want to make everybody know this for sure, that it wasn't the Broadies that forced the sale. Broadies ended up buying it, but they didn't have anything to do with causing Ray to put it on the market. It was two other families. And I'm not going to mention their names because they had the right to do that because Ray had kind of promised them. So, it was all an OK deal.

*T*hen I started looking around for another piece of land and I realized that piece of land where the golf course is would be a perfect place. Clint Rankin owned it. So, Gene Sanders and Losson Pike and Don Howell and I went down and talked to Clint Rankin and said, "Would you sell that as a golf course to us?"

He liked the idea. And he said, "Well, one of my relatives is selling 160 acres, no, 320 acres, south of Ashland." It was down there by the Blackhall place, right across from where I bought my land. He said a guy from Enid, Oklahoma, a relative of his, owned it. And he said, "If you can get that bought, I'll trade with you. I'll trade my 160 acres for 320 acres." And so

Losson Pike and I drove to Enid and talked to the fellow and he said, "I sure will. If you want to do that." He said, "I'm a golfer and Ashland needs a golf course right next to town." And he said, "I'll sell you this place and then you can trade with Clint Rankin." And we did. And that's how we got that piece of land. And then I had to go out and raise $120,000 in one month to get it. No, no, no. $60,000 in one month to get the deal to go through.

For 30 days, I went from door to door and I asked everybody in the golf club to pledge a thousand dollars. We had about 60 members, and I got about 40 or 45 of them to pledge $1,000. Then in the end, about 15 of us put the other thousand, but we didn't have to have all the money that day, we just had to pledge it. So, people could pay it over a two- or three-year period.

But they would give it, they would pledge it. So that's how we raised the first $60,000 dollars and got the land bought. And then, "Now we've got to build a golf course, and that's another $60,000." So, we started another round of asking everybody for a $1,000, and we ended up getting, I don't know, $40,000. Then we ended up borrowing about $25, 000. So, we ended up, when we finally got the course built, it cost about $125,000 and we owed about $20,000 on it. That's how get the golf course got there in Ashland. And we fought tooth and nail with a lot of people, because the older people didn't think we could keep up with a grass green golf course, and you know, it hasn't been a bed of roses, but nothing is. We built a nice golf course.

Diana: Who designed the golf course?

Oliver: A guy from Phoenix, Arizona. He had built the golf course over in, oh, Harper. What's the little town south of Harper?

Diana: Anthony?

Oliver: Anthony, he had built the golf course there at Anthony. And what he was, he was a builder. He was from Phoenix and he built golf, started out building golf courses out in Phoenix. He was building on a course up in Nebraska. He'd built the one there at Harper, so we went over and played it. Russ Couch and Don Howell. And we liked the golf course that he designed, so we called him up. And so he flew into Ashland one day, and Gene Sanders and Don Howell and I went out with him to the golf course and he stood up on the Number One green and he stood there for, I would say, 40 minutes and just looked around. He asked, "How far is it from this point to this point?" And Gene would step it off, and then he'd come back and he'd tell him. And pretty soon after he'd stood there about 45 minutes (he was making notes all the time on sheets of paper), he started out walking and he walked down Number One. We got down to the road and he said, "This will be Number One." And he drew a circle on his map. He said, "Now we're going to have a short Number Two," so then he went across the creek to the north, and that was Number Two.

And he walked up the fence all the way back, and then come back. He walked the whole

thing right on around back to the clubhouse at the end of Five. Come down Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, and it took about, I'd say, two hours and the golf course was designed. That's how it got designed.

Then we took it to one of our good golfers and showed him the design, and he said, "Well, that would be the most terrible golf course I've ever seen designed." Well, he was one of the older fellows that was against building a golf course.

Oh, well, anyway, he didn't mean that. He just didn't want to spend the $2,000. I couldn't get him to give $2,000 dollars to build a golf course. So, he wasn't helping us. But later on, he gave his money and more.

Diana: That's good. So, tell me how you came up with the idea for The Great Race.

Oliver: Well, Frank York and Robert McNickel, we have talked about... No, wait a minute. Robert McNickel. Frank wasn't in on it, but he had a lot to do with it in the end. Robert McNickel, it was just Robert and I. Yeah, I guess it was. Robert and I, we kept thinking about how we liked to jog and bike and run. We decided that we'd go north because of those hills north of Ashland, beautiful hills.

So then, we didn't have a name for it or anything, and then Frank somehow... We was sitting somewhere, and Frank got in the conversation and he said, "Oh," he says, "You guys have got a great idea and I know what to call it!" He had come from out in Colorado where his sister was at Vail, and they had a race out there that they called, "The Great Race." So, he said, "That's what you want to call it." Well, I thought, "Oh, that's good." And he said, "But what you really need to do is, we've got a lake up there that ought to be used. It ought to be seen by people, it's a beautiful lake." And he said, "You know, we need to have some water on this thing. We need to have a canoe." And so, Frank came up with those two ideas.

We already knew the horses. We already knew the bicycles. We already had the tricycle at the end. Robert and I had figured all that out. But Frank ended up really putting the finishing touch on it when he said, "Let's go right on up to the lake and start there with a canoe and run up that hill." So that's how The Great Race all got started.

Diana: How many years was it held?

Oliver: Gosh, about 16 years, 17.

Diana: It was still around when we had the first all-school reunion.

Oliver: Yes, I don't remember exactly how many years it went on. The biggest one they had was the third year, because I won it! There was 27 teams. That was the largest it ever got. And the first year, I think the first year there was 19 and then next year there was only 14.

And then the next year there was 19, and then the next year it was 27. And then it went back down to about 21.

Diana: Was there only one year that it was run in the rain?

Oliver: Yeah, only that one year. Yeah, the rest of the time we had good weather.

Diana: Doing some research in the newspapers, the Clark County Clippers, I found an article about the Sheep Circus. Can you tell me what the sheep circus was?

Oliver: Well, my dad had a brother that was a trainer and he was just a natural with training animals. He actually even went and met Barnum and Bailey at one time in his life and they knew him pretty well, got to know him pretty well. But anyway, he had Midnight and Starlight, which were two German Shepherd dogs. Then he had a horse named Black Beauty. He could just tell Black Beauty to lay down and Black Beauty would lay down. You know, you didn't have to go and pick up the leg and do all that stuff that I learned to do. And of course, Black Beauty could count. She could add. She could subtract.

And of course, that's just like putting a little pressure... You're standing by the horse (and I did the same thing with a horse myself), you just put a little pressure on the horse's neck and the horse will paw. And then when you release that pressure, the horse quits pawing. So you tell your people that... you know, he just had a little vaudeville act, that he'd go around... And his dogs, he'd come up with this thing of dressing a guy up in a rubber suit, you know, a padded suit, and then and then this dog would tear all the clothes off of it.

And, you know, it was entertaining. He'd go up to Dodge City and go out in the park and just for something to do on a Sunday afternoon. He'd take his two dogs and he'd just entertain people.

Well, then somebody came along, and Buffalo, Oklahoma's all I know. I don't remember the name now, but they said, "You know, we need to put on a Wild West show. And we need to do it out on your ranch. We'll bring in the stagecoaches and rob the bank and then kidnap somebody off the stagecoach and then we'll hang somebody in a tree." They just come up with all kinds of ideas.

And these dogs would do their part, which was always unique, and the horse would do his part, that was part of the entertainment. So, they started adding people and their people just come in and volunteered because they just loved the idea of show business. Of course, they enjoyed my Uncle Chester because he had all this ability with the horses and the dogs and there was other people who would love to be around him because they learned off of him.

Anyway, they finally decided they were going to put on basically, more like a pageant. So, then they figured out, well, they needed about 40 Indians. So, they go down somewhere in

Oklahoma and go to some tribe. And they move 40 people up on the ranch and they take a beef up there and the Indians butcher a beef, they take chickens and pigs and they live up there with their kids. They're part of the show, because you've got to have the Indians come in and attack settlers, you know?

They put on a show two years there on the ranch. And it was very much a success. People would come in and just sit around on the hills and watch it, you know, and I don't know how they... there wasn't hardly any talking in it, you'd just see it. You could just see what was going on. You could see the raids going on.

You could see the kid getting thrown off the stagecoach, you know, and they roped a guy and jerked him off a horse and then they'd go around this hill and of course they changed the... They dropped that rope, grabbed another rope, and now they're dragging a dummy and they bring him around and they throw the rope over the tree and they just hang this guy right there, you know, because he's a bad dude?

And people were just believing it was almost true, some of these things. That's what I was told. Well, anyway, some people from Dodge City come in and they said, "We want you to bring that up and put that show on in the stadium." They were having rodeos back then. So, then they got connected with a bunch of people in Dodge City. And Dad and Mom was friends with some of those people for the rest of their lives.

But they took the show to Dodge City and they put it on and it was a success. They had a good crowd and it went over big. And then some people out of Wichita came in and wanted to take it to Wichita. So, they were making plans to take it to Wichita, and that's when my uncle was shot. He'd been out building fence, he always took his shotgun with him, he always took his two dogs with him. They think he saw a rabbit or something, a jack rabbit, and he was going to grab his gun and he reached in and the gun went off and killed him. So that was the end of the show, because it was all based around the two dogs and the horse and his ability.

That tragic death just threw everything... They never did go to Wichita. There's no telling what my family's life would have been, had he not been killed, because they would have probably all gone into show business.

Diana: It was a possibility!

Oliver: Yes, it changed a lot of things, you know, and it was going to make some money! And back then, there was no way to make good money. And a little bit of money would go a long ways.

Diana: Did they charge people to watch the show?

Oliver: Oh, yeah. Well, when they went to the stadiums, yeah. When they went to Dodge

City, they got money, but it cost them because they had to rent the stadium, they had transportation... It was starting to become a business. Well, it could have succeeded and it could have failed. We'll never know.

The only thing they do know is that it was successful enough in Dodge that they wanted to do it in Wichita. And it was something like the Medicine Lodge pageant. They do that every five years, so they could have got into something that, you know...

Diana: Looking back, what is the smartest thing you ever did and what would you change if you could?

Oliver: Well, the most accomplished thing that I feel like I ever did was, I don't think the Ashland golf course would have gotten built without me. I think there was a lot of other people helped me, but there is one entity that has to go above and beyond, and I happened to have the time. I was fortunate that my dad was still living and I was working with him on a ranch, but he gave me the time to go out and raise that money. And I was very active in the Jaycees at that time. I had run for state president and I got beat. But anyway, that was a lot of education for me. I mean, that's when I really got out and realized there was a big world out there. Before I got into the Jaycees. I was just "Ashland". And once I left there and started traveling to Kansas City, Dodge City, Wichita and meeting other people... I always say that Dwight Klinger was a very successful person. People don't realize what made him so successful. It was when he got on the board of regents. He was already successful, but when he got on the board of regents, he came up to this area of the state and he learned how people made money and he did it.

Diana: Yes.

Oliver: Small towns, and it's no fault of anybody. But small towns don't teach that. My dad was the same way. The banks and everybody say, "It's all cash. We don't do it unless we have the cash." That was good back in the 30s and 40s and 50s, but now it's what you do with your borrowed money. You take that money and you build and you get in the stock market and you gamble. Dwight Klinger become a gambler and became very successful.

And we have other successful entities in Ashland, but they've done everything with cash. And that's fine.

Diana: You got involved in building some entities in town, like the Wash-it-All, didn't you?

Oliver: Yeah. I went to Steven Priesner on that one. He and Ivan were running the Phillips 66. And I said, "We need a car wash." They had a building there that they could tear down and have a place where they could build it. They didn't want to. I went to them and they said, "No."

So anyway, one night I get a phone call from Maris and he says, "I hear you want to build a

car wash." I said, "Yeah, I sure do." And he said, "I've got an idea. My mother-in-law has got a washer and dryer business and it's got old and she wants to get out of that. It needs a new building and everything." And he said, "I'd be interested in building a car wash with you and putting in a laundromat."

And I said, "Sounds good!" And so anyway, Don and I got our heads together and he was doing cement work for that guy at Hutchison that owned the cement mill. And he said, "Look, we can build that building out of cement." And I said, "Fine."

I had Don Watts working for me, so I had Don come in. And because when you stand that cement up, you have to weld it all together because they've got rocks inside. So, it just worked out, we bought all the old laundry and all the washing machines and the dryers and everything. And Don, he goes in there and he reworked every one of them. He gets new parts. We found out that you could still get Maytag. And so, then what we started doing was every year, we'd buy two new Maytags and throw away or keep the old ones for parts. And eventually we got all new washing machines. He paid me off in quarters and I set it up to where he was going to end up being the owner.

Diana: Did you have to purchase land to build that?

Oliver: Yeah, we bought the land from Mary Cecilia Butch, because when they bought the... we tried to buy Pop Macintyre's. You know, Pop had had a car wash there where the new one's at now. But Pop wouldn't sell it. And we told him! We said, "Pop, we're going to put in..." And I don't know, he kept it open for a little while after we even got ours built. But the laundromat was a real success, especially back at harvest time.

You couldn't believe when those kids would go in. And of course, today it wouldn't be as good as it was back then, because back then, crews would come to town and stay for ten days. They'd have rainy days and those kids would go over there and wash all their clothes. Of course, Don kept everything running and it took somebody like him. I could have never done it because he just had that ability. He liked to do it and he was good at it. And it was making him money. All I wanted out of it was just my interest and the car wash.

That's all I took out of it. He paid me interest and he even ended up paying me off earlier than we thought it would pay off. So, it turned out well.

Diana: It did well. So, I have one last question for you. Do you expect the Shupe Ranch to go on for a few more generations?

Oliver: Oh, definitely. You know, fortunately, we've got Kelly and Nathan.

Diana: Yes.

Oliver: Nathan. I mean, I'm just so fortunate that one child wanted to be back there, you

know, and what a great combination now. Someday David and Matthew, who has done very well, he'll probably help Nathan's family keep it going. And, who knows? Because they're basically going to end up with it, because Diane's got quite a bit of land, that David and Nathan will get. And then I'm splitting Nathan with Glenn and then Caroline's getting everything I've accumulated here in Kansas City.

I've always said, "Don't ever put three kids in a situation together. You've got two or one." Because you know what'll happen and you've seen it happen here in Ashland. And I've seen it up here, even, because two'll go against one, and then pretty soon you've got the lawyers in it. If you've got two, they'll work it out.

So, I'm fortunate, to be honest, that Dad got oil and my brother become an engineer because then Dad was helping me more and got me established to where now I can get Nathan established. And then hopefully they can move on, but we never know.

Diana: Well, I've taken up a lot of your time.

Oliver: Oh, that's fine. Hey, do you know what I do every day, 24 hours a day? Read the paper and watch TV, read the paper, watch TV. I got blood clots in my lungs eight years ago. And when you get those blood clots really bad like that, it can damage your lungs just like pneumonia. So I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have a very good chance if I got it (Covid). I've got to really be careful. I walk my dogs and go outside, but I don’t' go into any stores or let anybody come over.

Oliver: We set out on the porch and run the fans.

Diana: So, this was a great way to do this then.

Oliver: I had plenty of time.

Diana: Thank you for your time.

Diana: You bet. Thanks. We'll talk to you again.