

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

Interviewees: **Julius (Jess) Prentiss Stuart, III (son)**
Julius Prentiss Stuart, Jr. (father)

Interview Date: 11/04/2009

Interviewer: Jane Goodsill, Bruce Kelly

Transcriber: Marsha Smith

Location: Stuart homestead, Richmond, Texas

42 Pages



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Left - Julius Prentiss Stuart, Jr. (father)

Right - Julius (Jess) Prentiss Stuart, III (son)

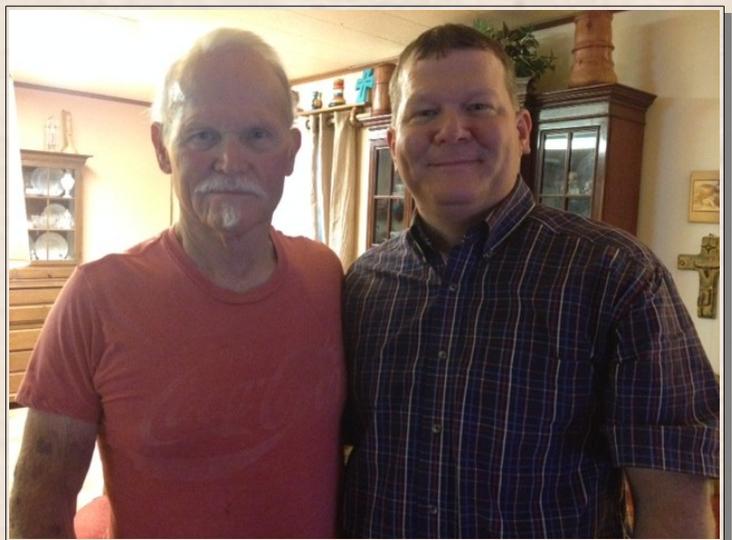
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Transcript

GOODSILL: This interview is being conducted by the Fort Bend County Historical Commission, Richmond, Texas and is part of the Fort Bend County Historical Commission Oral History Project.

So, Jess, your family has a long history in this part of the country and we'd like to hear about it. I wonder if it would feel right to you to start from your generation and work back and you can tell us your family history.

STUART: That sounds great. I'm actually, thirty-eight years old—got a wife Terri Stuart and daughter named Grace, actually Savannah Grace, a good southern name. I'm an eighth generation Texan and we've been on this land since 1824, so if you do the math, I'm an Aggie so I'm going to have to round up a little bit, right at 180 –185 years. And, come from three Old Three Hundred settler. One is John Foster, Senior; the second one is Randolph Foster, and the third is Isaac Foster who settled down in Matagorda County.

Currently we're living on the John Foster league. That was started out back in 1824, from the Mexican Nation that was granted from Stephen F. Austin's Old Three Hundred, [it] was 12,000 acres. Today the Stuart Ranch on (today's November 4th, 2009) is 128 acres. And that is the last 128 acres that's still in the same family of the original 12,000. So we've been here a long time—we actually, in 1976, received from the State of Texas —the Texas Agricultural Commissioner, John C. White, at the time—the Texas Land Heritage Award, which is given to families that are continuously operating an agricultural business in the same family for 100+ years. I have that hanging in the Texas room. I was only FIVE (born in 1971) so I couldn't go to Austin at that time, but we can re-up for that [award], in another two or three years. So I plan on actually going to Austin and trying to get that re-up'd in 2012.

So we've been here a long time, and, my goal is to continue carrying on the tradition that was set forth from MY ancestors to the next generation.

KELLY: Are your ancestors and your lineage the oldest? Or, or there other families that have been on been on their land as long or longer?

STUART: No, we are the oldest. There is one other gentleman, that's Andy Briscoe, and actually he comes from the Briscoe line. He lives across Winner Foster Road. Us two are the only still living from the original families. Yeah, those two are the only two families that are left [from the original three hundred], that are STILL living on their original land.

KELLY: That's quite an honor. That's wonderful. Tell us about your mother and father.

STUART: My mom is Jo Carol, maiden name Goins, and, Goins are related to the Seales, who are related to the Thomases, who founded Katy. So I've got a huge lineage to research on my mom's side from the city of Katy, 'cause Katy goes back along time TOO.

They're [his mother and father] no longer married – they were divorced in, I believe '76, '77. My dad currently lives across the--I call it the pasture—it's still on the land. He just turned 70. So [my] parents are both living—

GOODSILL: And your father's name?

STUART: Julius Prentiss Stuart, Jr.

GOODSILL: And how do you spell Prentiss?

STUART: P-r-e-n-t-i-s-s—and that's actually my name, too, but everybody calls me Jess, but mine is The Third; I'm Julius Prentiss Stuart, III. Humph! Kind of one of those old southern names (chuckle) that keep going and going and going.

I can actually tell you a little story. Grace, my daughter, was supposed to be a boy and he —she—he was going to be Julius Prentiss Stuart, IV (“The Fourth”). We had two sonograms, and came back “boy's coming”, and at the moment, it was a girl. So we had a name! We were prepared. (laughs)

KELLY: Tell us a little bit about your childhood. Did you grow up on this property?

STUART: Yes. Yes. From day one, uh, born June the 23rd, 1971. The first two years we actually moved to Wichita Falls, because Dad was in the fitting service, which is another fancy word for showing cattle. Because he's always been in agriculture—he grew up out here. We moved back in 1973-74 and we've been living on this land since then. I was actually born in the house across the street. So we've been here all along.

All the way from raising cattle, raising dogs, anything agricultural—hay, plowing, hunting; we still hunt on the land, we still raise cattle—still use the OK brand, which Grandfather always just said, ‘Hey, everything's OK’, and that's basically why he built his brand off of that.

GOODSILL: And it was simply an O and a K?

STUART: It's an O and a K. We've got that hanging in the Texas room, also. [NOTE: The Texas room he refers to is a room in his house.]

KELLY: What public school did you go to?

STUART: Ooooh, started at Travis Elementary, then, gosh, I moved around a little bit. Okay, --because they kept moving--building schools. Travis Elementary's kindergarten; first and second grade Robert E. Lee Elementary; third grade, the first half of the year at Bowie Elementary, then they built Huggins, finally, out in Fulshear, for us. So then went to Fulshear for Huggins, third/fourth; then, went to Taylor Ray because we built a house out here and we had to move to town for a year and a half--then went to Lamar Junior High; finally MOVED BACK out here, on the ranch, and then went to George Junior High, Terry High School, graduated B.F. Terry High School, in Rosenberg. Then, went to Wharton County Junior College for two years, and then transferred to Texas A&M, in the fall of 1992, and got my degree in August of 1994.

KELLY: And your degree is in?

STUART: It's in Kinesiology, which is a fancy word for physical education, with a specialization in sport management. Which fits perfect for what I'm doing, because I went directly to work for the YMCA as--now the Executive Director of the TW Davis YMCA. And I've been working for the Y for about 18 years. So I was working the Y while I was going to Wharton County Junior College in Richmond, and then, when it came time to go ahead and transfer to A&M, I quit working for the Y for two years to get my degree--but the last 12 hours of the degree (here comes Dad right here)--the last 12 hours for the degree is an internship, that I went to Texas A&M--and I did it through the internship through the YMCA. And that's how I got started, basically with the Y.

KELLY: Okay.

STUART, JULIUS: I made it.

STUART, JESS: You DID, Dad. This is Jane-- Pause [Greetings to Mr. Stuart off tape]

GOODSILL: This is Jane Goodsill, again. It is still November 9th, 2009, and Mr. Julius Prentiss Stuart, the Second, has joined us. He'll be here, along with his son, Jess.

KELLY: I think a good way to do this interview would be to go up your paternal line. We don't know a lot about your mother, but we do know your paternal all the way back to the Fosters. If you could take us up there—and the next one up the line would be your father, here, so he can help you. If you'd like, you can do the story and he can jump in. So, you know, start from the beginning, where he was born, where he was raised—

STUART, JESS: Where, where I, where I was raised?

KELLY: No—

GOODSILL: Introduce us to your dad.

STUART, JESS: Okay.

GOODSILL: Tell us about him a little bit.

STUART, JULIUS: (laughs)

GOODSILL: And go up the line, and when he has something to say, he'll jump in. And when you can't—

STUART, JESS: Well— (laughs)

GOODSILL: --go up any more, maybe HE can

STUART, JESS: There's a lot to talk about on Dad!

KELLY: We're going to find out how much—how accurate you are about your father's history. (laughs)

STUART, JESS: (laughing) Well, Dad was born—he's turned 70, so he's been around a long time, number one, and he was born and raised out here on the ranch.

KELLY: You were born on the ranch? In the house—

STUART, JESS: Well, actually—

STUART, JULIUS: Sugar Land.

STUART, JESS: Sugar Land, there you go.

STUART, JULIUS: In that old wooden structure. I'm sure it's long since gone, now. It was an old wood structure in Rosenberg. That's where I had my fingers—but there's two hospitals. But I was born in Sugar Land.

KELLY: Who was your doctor?

STUART, JULIUS: Are you kidding me? (all laugh)

KELLY: Was it Dr. Nichols, do you know?

STUART, JULIUS: I have no idea.

KELLY: Okay, because I know other people from this area that were born—

STUART, JULIUS: I wasn't even conversant at that time. I just really don't know.

KELLY: So you were born in the Laura Eldridge Memorial Hospital, in Sugar Land which was on Lakeview Dr.

STUART, JULIUS: As far as I know. That's what my parents told me.

KELLY: All right.

STUART, JULIUS: But then I was just born there. I wouldn't, I just wasn't aware of it.

KELLY: Uh huh. And you got back here to the farm as quickly as you could, huh, within a few days?

STUART, JULIUS: Well, I imagine in those days, you know, they didn't just kick you back out. I think they liked to keep you around a couple of days. Nowadays, though, this is, like today, you're on the way.

KELLY: Well, can you recall your earliest memory here on the farm, as a little boy?

STUART, JULIUS: (pause) The earliest? Well, I had a lot of early ones, uh—gosh—

KELLY: Pick one.

STUART, JULIUS: Work. That's all we did, was work. Climb trees and fall out of trees. Well, I didn't fall out of them but two or three times, but—you know, we climbed a lot of trees, and we worked on the place out here, and uh—

Dad worked in a—well ACTUALLY we had a dairy out here, when Dad worked in the oil field. Mother did the dairy and, I remember coming close to getting a whooping a time or two, because we'd be at the house, and the dairy was removed a little bit. And I'd holler out at the door, and boy, she'd get so [mad]—because she couldn't hear us. The cows were all in there. You know, we'd milk early in the morning, two o'clock in the morning, she did, and then, two o'clock in the afternoon. That's the way all dairy farmers, you know, every twelve hours. And I remember learning how to milk. Getting kicked. Old dirty tails switch you in the face, turn the bucket over, and boy that's another time--

Then the guy from the State would come by and, you know, in those days, what they did for dairy farmers—they had a guy that came around with the little cards for the for the mastitis, which is Brucellosis. And they would, you know, touch everything, and make sure everything's clean—they're coming in, look—make sure all the concrete was clean. And I remember those, those guys.

KELLY: Where did your family sell the milk?

STUART, JULIUS: Beyond me. I was just about that big—I have NO idea. No idea at all. Mother did, and Dad did the milking. We were—the kids were too small. We were little babies. But I remember the cows. And of course, I remember the the barns seemed to be huge, but every now and then, I'm in there and I'll think—it's TINY! How could all those cows get in that one—well, they came in, in groups. And Dad had, above the stanchions; he had the name of each cow, four deep. And they'd take turns, coming in, you know.

KELLY: When you were in grade school what were your chores?

STUART, JULIUS: Oh, well, we had to feed the cows hay every day. That was mine. And had to milk the cow. By that time we'd gotten rid of the dairy, and that was early on and I milked the cow all the way through high school. We had ONE cow. Come rain, shine, cold or night—it was my youngest brother was smart like a fox—dumb like a—whichever way you want to call it. He never could learn to milk, see—

KELLY: (laughing)

STUART, JULIUS: Lucky him, huh! So, I used to have some good forearms on me, but that's a long time ago. I milked EVERY day. And we made butter, and we made clabber, which turned INTO cheese. Hung it on the clothes line, you know, in a bag. Let it set for a few days. Mother grew strawberries—we grew EVERYTHING. We grew everything! Put it up.

KELLY: What did your father do for a living in that time?

STUART, JULIUS: He was in the oil field. Just started the oil field. Got out of the dairy and went into the oil field, and stayed there for thirty years. Retired out of the oil field.

KELLY: Was he gone a lot, because of that? Or did he get work around here?

STUART, JULIUS: Ah, gone during the week. Sometimes he'd go to Dayton or Liberty or something like that—or somewhere. Yokem, we'd go up there and visit him. Sometimes he stayed there the week, and then, the weekend, they'd come home, sometimes. Finally when I was in college, well, Dad got me a job working in the oil field right here. A time or two. And I always told him, and anybody, even when they asked or not, the reason he got me in that oil field was to teach me there was better way to make a living. Because there's a lot of guys that he worked with, had "this" [pointing to a limb] gone or "this" [pointing to another limb] gone, or killed. He come home one day and a guy just got killed. Smashed him. Killed him. Cable broke—whole thing come out the—the derrick, it just squashed him. Caught him right here, down. He was done.

KELLY: Did you find a better way to make a living?

STUART, JULIUS: I sure did!

KELLY: What—

STUART, JULIUS: No, I enjoyed the work. I'm still a guy that likes to work. I enjoy work. I like to be—that's why I ride bikes. I, I like to feel that blood rushing. You know, it's a, it's a good thing. It's good. For ME! Now some people don't like that. That's fine.

I worked for, I come out of college, and I went to work for Bob Smith, The ranch is over here. [pointing in the direction of Highway 90-A] I Worked there for about six years. Did real well. Run the feed mill, the office, and stuff like that. We had a lot of feed lots, and took care of that. And then, after a few years, —that kind of went away—they shut that ranch pretty well down. IRS got ahold of them, and I went to work for another guy.

GOODSILL: What does that mean, the IRS got ahold of them?

STUART, JULIUS: They owed a lot of taxes, and Bob Smith, the old man, died, and Vivian Smith, his wife, came in and she was... she's tough. She walked in there and CLEANED it out. She'd sold all the registered cattle, shut the feed mill down. There was sixty-seven people in that place at Roark Road near Alief, and three were left. She fired them all. Got rid of them. Shut it down. She paid the \$6 million and then it turned into a commercial operation. No more of this nonsense, you know.

KELLY: What was the old man like, Bob Smith?

STUART, JULIUS: Bob Smith was a big fellow, he was a maverick. You know what that is in oil field terms?

KELLY: Tell us what it is.

STUART, JULIUS: Well, he made, he made his money. He started out with nothing. Just like McCarthy, with the Shamrock. He went out there and drilled some holes and got lucky, and lost a lot, and finally he hit, and he just kept [on] —he got a little money and he just kept going. And when he was in his, in his heyday, there, he was making a million dollars a day. He made it completely from ground. He didn't inherit one—he worked for every—he got everything he worked for—he worked for it.

But he was a guy that, when I was in the office, and I had to call and talk to him about this, this, or that. Novosad, the guy that was running that ranch over that, that I worked under, told me, 'Now, look, Julius, you're going to have to tell him, first thing you pick up the phone and he says "Hello", you tell him you got one or two or three or four things. If you've got four things to tell him, you tell him "I've got four things" and he'll sit on the phone. If you tell him you got one, or you don't say anything, you just start talking, when you get through with one thing (LOUD hand clap), he's going to hang the phone up.' And that's what he'd do. But he was real fast, big fellow, lots of tall white hair. Had NO time whatsoever —he was just fraught with too much activity. Poor fellow—I felt sorry for him. I mean, he had a lot of money, but—he, he just couldn't enjoy life (hand "clap"). He couldn't.

KELLY: Did many celebrities come out to the ranch when you were there?

STUART, JULIUS: Oh sure. Well yeah.

KELLY: Name some.

STUART, JULIUS: Well, the only one I remember specifically, at that time, I was kind of, a boxing fan, and Hugh Benbow came out. Remember him?

KELLY: (low chuckling) Yeah.

STUART, JULIUS: Catfish—let me see—something Catfish Williams, was his main boxing guy—promoter. He was a promoter. And, yeah, he come out—come out several times.

KELLY: I don't know if you worked there during that time but, Fidel Castro came out to the ranch.

STUART, JULIUS: I saw, well, I didn't see him there, I saw him over at Wharton at a little café outside. We were—I was doing—I don't know WHY I was in Wharton, but we went by and I—I saw this crowd. There's these boys and all who were with me —we pulled over and he was giving a speech out there, in the open. Yeah, yeah—young fella.

This was back in the, probably early 60's, maybe late 50's, somewhere along in there.

GOODSILL: Explain to me why celebrities came out to the Smith Ranch.

STUART, JULIUS: To the Smith Ranch? Why? Bob Smith was an extraordinary wealthy man. And he supported his church—WOW! I mean, he—he gave so much money to worthwhile things that people just couldn't pass—I mean, he was a—he was a real good guy.

KELLY: He was partners with Roy Hofheinz, too, with the Astrodome—is that correct?

STUART, JULIUS: Oh, oh absolutely. Boy—he—I never did—I never did meet Roy Hofheinz, as far as I know. But there was a lot of people that came out there, because he's a rich—you know—they want to— [meet him]. It's like me, I'm a cyclist, and if Lance Armstrong [were nearby] —I'm probably gonna go see him! I'm not Lance Armstrong, but I mean, you know, I'd (hand clap)—that guy's a great inspiration, to me. And to millions of people (hand clap). So too Bob Smith, who had all this money, and MADE his money, and SUPPORTED so many people, helping people—HELP people. That's what he did. (hand clap) He didn't hoard his money. He helped people. And, so, people gravitated toward him. Of course.

KELLY: I'm going to switch gears a little bit. Tell us about your father. What was he like?

STUART, JULIUS: He was a little bitty fellow. Uh, never weighed over 150 pounds in his life. Didn't say much. Hard worker. Strong as a bull. Steady---he loved to hunt and fish. Took this boy [referring to Jess] when he was eleven, and I said, 'Dad, better take care of this boy, now. I mean, you know, kind of watch him—he's little'. Years went by and I went to tell him (pointing to Jess, now a grown man), 'Jess,' I said, 'Jess, you take care of that old man.'

STUART, JULIUS: You better watch him—

GOODSILL & KELLY: (laughing)

STUART, JULIUS: --because he's old now'—and I MEANT it. Because that's the way it worked. And that's how Jess came up, and he likes to hunt and fish and all that. I never did. I—well, I DID fish a little bit. But Jess went with Dad a whole lot. Dad LOVED to hunt and fish! To tell you the truth—I think he liked the CAMPING out in the woods more than any of the other stuff, you know. The camping was the main focus.

GOODSILL: What was his full name?

STUART, JULIUS: Just exactly like mine.

STUART, JESS: Except Senior.

STUART, JULIUS: Except Senior.

GOODSILL: Julius Prentiss Stuart, Senior.

STUART, JESS: And he went by J.P. And he went into town and it was always J.P. Stuart.

KELLY: You grew up during the Depression years, in your early part of your life. What was that like?

STUART, JULIUS: Well, now, I—actually, I was born in '39.

KELLY: No, oh, forget it then! You grew up during the War.

STUART, JULIUS: Yes.

KELLY: Yeah, I was decade off—

STUART, JULIUS: I remember the stories about the rivers running with blood. And of course in the Bible, they talk about—scared a kid that's that tall (hand gesture about 3 feet tall)—scared me. Because we were born and raised in a Christian home. We read the Bible. Mother worked with us, as far as saying our prayers at night, and, boy—I'm going to tell you what—when you hear that on the radio, - even though I was only three or four years old—I remember that. Scared me.

KELLY: So you listened to the radio, growing up—during the wartime.

STUART, JULIUS: Well, that's all we had! We had radio.

STUART, JESS: What year—we—we didn't get electricity out here 'til '40—

STUART, JULIUS: Uhhh, let's see—I was three years old when I had my fingers messed up, and we didn't have electricity at that time. I guess it was a year later, so I guess it must have been '43—something like that—we got electricity.

KELLY: Uh huh.

STUART, JULIUS: We used to listen to the radio, and that's all we had. Right, we didn't think any difference. We didn't—air conditioning—we didn't even have a fan! (pause) And NOW, if I didn't have that, I think I—it would be difficult. It would be difficult. But it's change—times change. Times change.

KELLY: Did you know your grandfather?

STUART, JULIUS: No. I knew one of them—my mother's father—for a little while.

KELLY: Did your dad tell you anything about your family, growing up? Did he pass along familial information?

STUART, JULIUS: Oh, he talked funny about them from time to time, but I don't rem—you know, we—he didn't really. He didn't talk a whole lot about his family. He just never—he was not a talker.

GOODSILL: What was your grandfather's name?

STUART, JESS: Tichenor.

STUART, JULIUS: Yeah, Tichenor.

GOODSILL: How do you spell that?

KELLY: This was your maternal grandfather, we're talking about, right?

STUART, JESS: No, my great-grandfather. Tichenor – T-I-C-H-N- E-N-O-R.

GOODSILL: That's his first name?

STUART, JESS: That's his first name.

GOODSILL: Did he have a middle name?

STUART, JESS: I can look it up. Don't know it right off hand.

GOODSILL: Stuart. Of course.

STUART, JESS: Stuart.

KELLY: How do we get back to the Fosters, from THAT generation?

STUART, JESS: Well, Tichenor's father was Bureen Fitzpatrick Stuart.

KELLY: Oh, okay.

STUART, JESS: And, HIS father was Benjamin Clarence Stuart. And then, HE married Martha Cordelia Mayes, who was married—then they had Francis, and then Francis married up Hettie Foster, and then Hettie's father was John Foster. And that's the reverse line, going up, instead of coming down.

GOODSILL: That was a test.

STUART, JESS: And it's taken me MANY years to get that down without having to pull out the books, and go through it.

STUART, JULIUS: I don't have it yet!

STUART, JESS: (laughter)

KELLY: Julius, were you aware of your heritage, growing up? Of, of having been a old family in—

STUART, JULIUS: Oh sure.

KELLY: --Okay, so you DID get that information from your father, you knew—

STUART, JULIUS: Oh sure. Well, I mean, we knew that, sure.

KELLY: That was just common family knowledge.

STUART, JULIUS: They were in the Civil War. I mean, our—our ancestors, some of them were in the Civil War. Nearly everybody's ancestors were in the Civil War.

KELLY: Are you old enough to remember sugar cane growing out here?

STUART, JULIUS: No.

KELLY: No. They stopped that—

STUART, JULIUS: Not around—not around here anywhere. Not that I know—

KELLY: Not on the Foster Farms.

STUART, JULIUS: No.

GOODSILL: Going back a little bit to your lineage, was it a point of pride, to be from such an old family?

STUART, JULIUS: Why, of course – always. Still is. That's why we have the sign out here on the front—1824. And they [pointing to a neighbor] moved down in '96, and he put a sign, established in 1996, and ours says 1824.

STUART, JESS: (laughter)

STUART, JULIUS: Hey, put it up there!

KELLY: (laughter)

STUART, JULIUS: Come on with it!

STUART, JESS: Quite a few years difference, there.

KELLY: Do you remember the Foster Community?

STUART, JULIUS: Oh, absolutely.

KELLY: Can you tell us a little bit about that?

STUART, JULIUS: Well, right up there where Heritage Ranch is, right now—that was where Mr. Rosenbush had his—right there where that old guy's house is—

GOODSILL: How do you spell that name?

STUART, JESS: R-O-S-E-N-B-U-S-H.

STUART, JULIUS: That's right. Right there where the house is now is where the old man lived, him and his family. He was a little, short heavy-set guy, you know, like a drum. And he was a real nice fellow, but when I was little, he was an old man then. And around the ring of that arena, that's right there, right now, he had a bunch of little sheds, tied in together, and came all the way around, and then there was the general store. And in the general store, it was just like any old time general store, it had everything in it. But it was a small building. Not NEAR as big as this house. But out in front, they had one of those gas pumps, you know, where they have the glass at the top? And the little deals, and you just (click/click—clack/clack) and that's how you got your gas.

And he bought pecans. I used to take pecans over there from—I'd go down—and—we'd all go down in the woods and pick—In those days pecans were a big part of what we did. But they're not now. We don't even fool with them. (phoot) Cows can have 'em. It's too much trouble. I picked lots of them up when I was in college because I had to pay for my uniforms.

KELLY: Where was that? A&M?

STUART, JULIUS: Yeah,—yes.

KELLY: So you were in the Corps, and you had to pay for uniforms?

STUART, JULIUS: Yes.

KELLY: Okay.

STUART, JULIUS: Yeah, we had uniforms (sotto voce).

And, so, the Rosenbush's over there, (hand clap), he was just—that's ALL he was. Actually, the mailboxes started off on THIS side of the road, through 59, and then there was just a gravel road. It was not fancy like it is now—the mailboxes were right here. And then across the road was all the complex for the general store, and the gas station. That's where we voted. That's where we did EVERYTHING.

STUART, JESS: Mail, mail too came—

STUART, JULIUS: Mail—everything came right there. THEN, they got real fancy and decided to take those mailboxes off on the other side of the road, and pull them inside, so you can come in off the road, go right by the whole LONG line—must've been twenty or thirty mailboxes—and you pick up your mail. Sure.

The one thing I remember about that, when I was a kid, I had a little black saddle that we got from him I think. And I had a little mare that we bought from him, named Daisy. And she was just as round as a barrel. And one day I was just going up to get the mail, you know, run up there on the horse (hand clap). And the god-derned saddle come loose, and I mean, I just went (foooooop)—

KELLY: (chuckling)

STUART, JULIUS: (hand clap) That old mare didn't run off! And I got up and put that saddle back on, first see if anyone —course in those days, nobody around. Pretty embarrassing. I fell off of a horse—I mean, I wouldn't fall off a horse! That's just not something you do. BUT I DID! Dang saddle come off, and so I went flying off of the horse. To get the mail! But I got up and got the mail, and then went on back home. But those are different days than now.

KELLY: Were you able to explore area other than your land? Would people let you cross their land?

STUART, JULIUS: Oh sure! Just close the gate. Nobody would ever—well, there wasn't anybody to say anything. Spring Green Road—well, actually that's 723 now—Well, I used to go up yonder and go through and just come way up. And every couple of three hundred yards was a gate. And not a gate, but a gap. You couldn't afford a gate. Just a gap! We'd open the gap, close the gap.

STUART, JULIUS: And all it was, was a lane. Trees over it, and grass. And was a little rise, right there. I don't know what came—I don't know how that happened. But when I was an early teen-ager—and even when I was in college—I'd come home and get on my horse, and I'd go way on back down in the river. All back anywhere. You just “close the gate”. “Boy, you better. Don't leave the gate open.”

KELLY: Were you able to go on the Sugarland Industries Foster Farms? Would they let you cross there?

STUART, JULIUS: Oh, sure I did.

KELLY: Well, I have a question about that. I've been able to track where the old railroad went, all the way from Imperial Sugar, from Sugar Land, over to the river. You can see it on a Google map.

STUART, JULIUS: Okay.

KELLY: Do you recall the—

STUART, JULIUS: No, I don't.

KELLY: --railroad. You never went down there?

STUART, JULIUS: I never rode toward Richmond. Now when my father was a young fella, he told me, he'd—THAT'S what they would do. That's the only transportation they had. They rode their horse—horses—into Richmond.

STUART, JESS: Morton Street.

STUART, JULIUS: Morton Street. Sure.

KELLY: Yeah. How would they get to Richmond from here? Where would they cross the river?

STUART, JULIUS: Well, they'd have to go up there, where the old Fort Bend was—about the only—where the—where the bridges are now.

KELLY: So they went all the way around.

STUART, JULIUS: I heard, but I don't KNOW this—that there was a bridge (pause) uh, let me see—if you go by the Swinging Door, on 359, go down there about another mile, and somehow or another you can take a right and down in there—but that was WAY—I just heard there was a bridge, and if there was a bridge, it couldn't have been much, because I never saw it.

KELLY: Um hum.

STUART, JULIUS: I don't—I don't know.

KELLY: What was your favorite place to go when you were young, on horseback?

STUART, JULIUS: Oh, we loved the creek, right down yonder. It was all open—we went down and then, picked up grapes, you know. Mother would send us down with a big aluminum bucket. And we'd stand on top of them horses and—and pick those grapes—climb up and get stung by yellow jackets, ALL the time. Because they'd be in there. And you can't see 'em. But you can feel 'em, soon as they get after you. But, yeah, we went down to the creek—creek was a real nice place. It was sandy. Didn't hurt—you know—it's not like some of the ground around here. If you fall down, you're gonna really get— [makes a motion of scuffing self] but you can fall off a horse—we'd slide down those—we'd just get off the horse and slide down to the creek.

KELLY: (chuckling) And which creek was this?

STUART, JULIUS: Jones Creek, right down here.

STUART, JESS: Jones Creek was named after Randall Jones, who was friends with Randolph Foster, back to the Foster family. And Randall, both of them served in the War of 1812 together. Randall had HIS league just across Jones Creek, so they were neighbors. And they named it Jones Creek.

KELLY: When you were growing up, what would you do for social activities—where would you go to be with other young people?

STUART, JULIUS: Didn't do that.

KELLY: Was there a church close by that your family went to?

STUART, JULIUS: No.

KELLY: So you were pretty isolated?

STUART, JULIUS: The church we went to was the First Baptist in Rosenberg, which is still there. It's rebuilt a little bit—changed a little bit—but that's where Mother would take us in there. Sure. But as far as out here, no. ONCE, I remember, or twice-- once I remember for sure—she took us over to the Methodist Church in Fulshear. It's still there. Still there.

That's where I discovered when you read the book—the hymns—you know—top line, top line, top line—then you go to the second verse or the second lines—course I was—I never—I could barely read, but it dawned on me finally that THAT'S what they were doing. You know. (laughs)

STUART, JESS: (laughing)

STUART, JULIUS: Right there in church. (still laughing) I remember that.

KELLY: Where did you go to high school?

STUART, JULIUS: Oh, Lamar High School.

KELLY: And what year did you graduate?

STUART, JULIUS: '57.

KELLY: What was it like, going to Lamar in those days?

STUART, JULIUS: Well, I had a lot of fun, —that was my social. You asked about social—that's all we did, because there was nothing out here. I mean I liked to ride horses and I liked to work. And I liked to run.

I'll tell you a story —a lady my--my Dad's brother's wife called the police on me one day, because she thought I was a convict!

Dad had these long-handles on, and you know—he worked in the oil field with, all day freezing, so I—it was cold—but it was a weekend, and it was WET. Water everywhere. And I ran all the way around the perimeter, up in the prairie, and I come back down by that fence line right there, and of course I had that white thing on with that—thing around my face—

KELLY: (laughing)

STUART, JULIUS: --and she thought I was a convict! Because it's prison farms right over here. I mean, HEY!

GOODSILL: (chuckling)

STUART, JULIUS: And she called the god-dern police, and it got ALL over the high school, the VERY (hand clap) day.

KELLY: (still laughing)

STUART, JULIUS: I don't know how just (hand clap) like that, it was everywhere I went, boy they were on me for the whole week.

STUART, JESS: That was--

STUART, JULIUS: But I didn't care.

STUART, JESS: Was that Reba?

STUART, JULIUS: No, no, no. Yeah—Aunt Reba. Yeah.

KELLY: Did you run track at Lamar?

STUART, JULIUS: Oh yes. I—I was a vaulter, that's what I did. Yeah.

STUART, JESS: When you—tell 'em what you would land in, those days, whenever you went over the bar.

STUART, JULIUS: Sawdust. And the—and inevitably, the pits, you know, that's the ground—the pits are like this (hand gesture indicating flat on the ground). They're not like this (another hand gesture indicating elevated pit). NOW, they're this high up with foam rubber.

GOODSILL: (groans)

STUART, JULIUS: And so when you hit, you just (BIG loud clap)

STUART, JULIUS: Up and up, bounce, and, you know, you—you grew a little bark. You had to grown a little bark. (chuckling)

KELLY: (chuckling)

STUART, JULIUS: But it was no big deal.

GOODSILL: You were talking about “wet”. Did it flood out here?

STUART, JULIUS: Not that it flooded. Just like the other day - last week we had almost seven inches of rain out here. I'm—I'm gonna tell you, there's STILL—if you run down here right now—if I ran down that perimeter—that fence line—there's gonna be water splashing. You know. You couldn't help—you'd see it.

KELLY: Do you recall the river overrunning its banks and coming up this high?

STUART, JULIUS: Oh, not here. Oh no. It stopped down there, let me see, what's the landmark? It used to be an old red barn there but it's long since gone. It—no, it comes out about a mile and a half. I've seen it twice in my lifetime. Mile and a half. It'll come this way about—

STUART, JESS: Gruenwald. Gruenwald. Old Grunie. Talk about where you used to—bail all that hay on 723 on the right.

STUART, JULIUS: Uh huh. Right there. It'll fill all that up. In fact, if you'll notice, there's some development on the right side, going in—on 723, and these people-- the houses AND the businesses have been built up three feet.

STUART, JESS: Yeah.

STUART, JULIUS: They build—keep throwing dirt in there and then they'll build their building. Because it's [water/rain] going to come out again! And it'll cover it. But it won't get up. It'll be about six to eight inches deep. But it'll cover it completely. (hand clap) Totally.

GOODSILL: Jess, what does Gruenwald refer to?

STUART, JESS: That's his last name. And Pappaw would always call him short, would call him Grunie. Just the last name—he was a little bit of a friend with him, and he was VERY well known for baling hay. Because THAT land up 723, as Dad said, would have that—that creek sediment, that Brazos River bottom. And so hay would just grow like you wouldn't—THAT'S where the sugar cane would come in.

ALL back in this Foster Farm area is a lot of good, sandy loam—good—crop growing. And I BELIEVE from looking back at some of the research, there's a lot of cotton fields too. Back in this area.

STUART, JULIUS: Oh, absolutely.

KELLY: My understanding is that they did a lot of vegetable growing on the Foster Farms. Do you remember potatoes and things like that?

STUART, JULIUS: No. I don't. But I know they did. They did. This pasture right across the way, by those high lines was—they still had rows when I was in college. It had been there SO long that it finally deteriorated, but it took 50-60 years—because I don't personally remember seeing the field. I mean, growing. But it was a cotton field right over there.

STUART, JESS: Didn't Pappaw try to—raise watermelon down in the bottom one time?

STUART, JULIUS: Uh huh. He did that sometimes. Yeah. But as far as a truck farm, I—we didn't—I don't know of any truck farms around that area.

KELLY: Jess, why don't you tell us what your perspective of your grandfather?

STUART, JESS: Oh, he was, he was VERY detailed. You're going to do it MY way, because I've done it WAY before you did. I'd always call him "old timer" and he would always call me "last second" because (Jess chuckles) a lot of times, he would tell me to do something and I would barely get it in.

But as far as outdoorsman, he was the outdoorsman. True deer hunter—he would NEVER miss an open weekend. And whenever he put a crosshair on a deer, it was going down. I mean, I remember days where we would be sitting in the house, eating supper, and it would be about thirty minutes before dark. In his house, you could look out this big bay window, and look down off this prairie area—and I remember one day, right here in this area, he saw a coyote crossing. And of course, ranchers really don't get along real well with coyotes, or wolves - because of the cattle. And he got his .30-06, and shot that—and that's a good 500-400 yard shot. And he could—I remember the times where, he could literally sit, hammer a nail in a piece of wood, back up about fifty yards and take the nail out. So he was a GREAT sureshot. But as far as teaching that—the outdoors—fishing—just as good. That's where I got all that from. But as far as just teaching about how to relax and do things outside of work, he was good at it.

KELLY: Was he born on this 168 acres?

STUART, JESS: He—actually this 128—at THAT time, it was, yes—No, no, it was two hundred and—let's see—128 times 2—it was about 256 acres total. Because at that time we had THIS section of land and then where the current Gordon Ranch, had THAT section of land, and he was born in an old homestead that was just to the right of the current lodge, they call it, on the Gordon Ranch. And it was a one room—it's got to be the same house as Tichenor—his daddy, lived in. And we believe that's where he was born. 1906?

STUART, JULIUS: No, I can't—I don't remem—

STUART, JESS: And it was—

STUART, JULIUS: Oh, when he was born?

STUART, JESS: When he was born.

STUART, JULIUS: Seven.

STUART, JESS: 1907.

STUART, JULIUS: In fact, I have a memento of Dad's shooting.

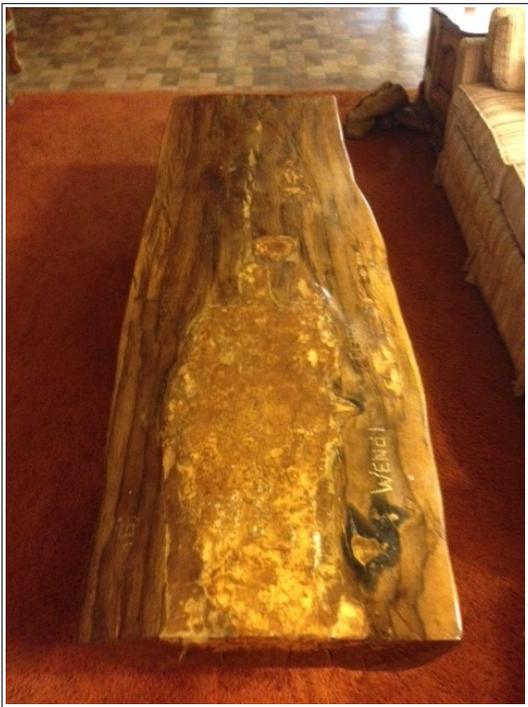
STUART, JESS: Yeah.

STUART, JULIUS: I have a table—a coffee table in the house. There was an oak tree down below that barn, huge and very old. And it died. And I went down there, and just cut it off, and it's—I cut a piece out seven feet long. At that time, we had just moved out here, and my youngest, Clark, was, not even—he was just a baby—one year old. And I had all five of my kids and my wife line up, every day for one week.

I went down to old man Rude—Rude and Sons—and he went WAY in the back and found me a crosscut saw. You know what that is? That's a work saw. That's a WORK saw. Took us one week and we sawed all the way down. And when we opened it up, you could still see a bullet. I cut right through a bullet. And it's still—I've got it in there (hand clap)—in the middle of that tree—where he shot. And he was—that was his target tree.

STUART, JULIUS: Oh yes.

STUART, JESS: Yeah, he would always sight his gun in, prior to going to opening day.



STUART, JULIUS: And he knew how to do things, because I worked for several days, trying to set that—the tree was this—that I cut off—was this big around [hand gesture] and I wanted to set it up UNDER a tree so we could—I never could get it.

And finally, one day I said, 'Dad, (dang/damn, I hated to do that, you know), you know I need some help on this'. And about fifteen minutes later, we had the god-derned trunk setting up. And he knew how to do that stuff, you know. I didn't know—have any problem with the work—it's just that, there's a technique, and not getting yourself killed, with a log that weighed a thousand pounds. I mean, let's face facts!

KELLY: (chuckling in background)

STUART, JULIUS: Your not going to get ahold of it and, COME ON, HELP ME PICK THIS UP. No way! But, that's how we got it up. You know— --I made every one of them, all the girls, everybody—we sawed—we took turns. One week. We sawed that mother right in two. Then I made a table out of it—carved it all out. In that—in that table is those—are those knot—those shells. I mean, the bullets. You know.

GOODSILL: You mentioned the name, Rude. How do you spell that?

STUART, JULIUS: R-U-D-E.

STUART, JULIUS: They are long since retired. Most all of them are dead, actually. The ones I went to school with have already died. Jimmy and uh, La—

STUART, JESS: Larry.

STUART, JULIUS: --Larry. They had the Rude and Sons. You being from this area, you know where that was? Ever and forever—

it's a hardware store. Forever.

GOODSILL: People in this—people in this community were pretty close?

STUART, JULIUS: Ahhh, we—everybody knew everybody—I wouldn't say that we were close. We had, uh, back to your social question, we DID have once a year—I guess it would happen—we'd go over to the Phillips, which is right down at the end of this road. No—they moved the road. Over a little bit.

STUART, JESS: Where the current Whispering Creek—

STUART, JULIUS: Yeah—

STUART, JESS: --Big estate homes are.

STUART, JULIUS: Well, it was—it was just down the road there, just a little bit. And we'd go over there and they'd have a hog killing. And so, six or seven families from this area—and that's all there were—come, and the—the ladies would set and sew clothes - Overalls, coveralls, and things—not coveralls—overalls. And the guys, the men, would go out and kill these hogs. Stand him up, you know--and drop him in this tub of water. And the boys, all the kids, would go out and play football. And, and that's the entire, whole day. Early in the morning 'til late in the evening. That's what we'd do. Have a great time. I still remember that. Of course I was one of the little guys at that time. The other kids were grown, almost. Seventeen, eighteen years old. My gosh—they were huge! But anyway, that's—that was one of the things that we did out here. But once a year is not a whole lot, you know. It's not a whole lot.

GOODSILL/KELLY: (chuckling)

KELLY: Did you ever visit the Schulz store?

STUART, JULIUS: All the time. I knew them all.

KELLY: Would you describe the store to us, and the people that ran it?

STUART, JULIUS: Well, the old man was a—such a paradox there. The odd couple. The old man a little bitty guy, about the—oh, smaller than my father—white hair, short—short hair, wore glasses. And how he ever got to be a storekeeper, I don't know, because he never said a word. You know, he was real quiet—very congenial—but that was where you—we went to buy, you know, little things around here. Even though the Rosenberg—well, Rosenberg was a good bit further down the road. Let's face it, you know. His wife was like Aunt Marguerite.

STUART, JESS: Very jovial.

STUART, JULIUS: Shorter than him—

GOODSILL: His wife was what?

STUART, JESS: My aunt, my father's aunt, Aunt Marguerite.

GOODSILL: Like Aunt Marguerite.

STUART, JULIUS: She was about that tall [short hand gesture] and about that big around [wide hand gesture]—and so was Mrs. Schulz. And always a perpetual smile—always a full head of white hair. And always SO friendly and she must've been the reason, I guess, that, as I look back, why they did well.

And stayed there for so long. And actually, I saw THE daughter, which is Gail, here about a month or two ago. My wife and I went to go out, tonight like we're going to go out, to Niners, and get a hamburger. I hadn't seen that woman in forty years. She's said—she come over there and she said, 'Bubby, is that you?' I said, 'Well, I'll be a son of a gun—there's Gail'. I don't know how we could remember each other's names. But then there's Russell, and oh, I can't remember the other two boys' names. One of the boys finally wound up in there, [the store] the last one that worked in there, that I know of, still running the store.

Got robbed one day, and the guys—some guys beat him up pretty bad. Put him in the hospital. And he come out, never the same, and he's still around the around the store, though, for a number of years more. And finally they just shut it down. Everybody—all the kids went their own way. But they were real nice—they had the staples—that's all they had. Staples. You don't go in there and find—glues and, you know, fancy stuff—or this or that—(hand clap). If you want some bacon, you know on the big slab of bacon? You remember that?

KELLY: Uh huh.

STUART, JULIUS: You used to go in and buy the slab of bacon and you slice it off. Cut the rind off. Well, they had that. It's called salt bacon. And flour. And, of course, we always had some candy.

STUART, JESS: Yeah.

STUART, JULIUS: Babies got to have some candy.

KELLY: And soda pop.

[talking on top of each other]

STUART, JESS: Oh yeah! Soda water—and that was my first Pepsi and moon pie.

STUART, JULIUS: Yeah.

STUART, JESS: At—at that store.

STUART, JULIUS: But it was just everybody—everybody that came in there, you talking about knowing everyone—now they knew everybody. Because they all went in there, from time to time, you know. And it was not like in the store you go in now, you know. They knew—THEY were there—if you went to that store, mom and dad were there.

Kids were out wherever, but mom and dad was in the store. Period. You KNEW. And so they knew who you were. Always. Didn't matter.

KELLY: Well, Jess, would you take us further up your, geneology, your ancestors? You've told us what you know about your grandfather. Take us up to the next generation.

STUART, JESS: Well, the next generation would be Tichenor, which would be Pappaw's daddy. He died young. From the research and the talk that we've had. I don't know exactly—I know he was a rancher—because that's pretty much back in—this is gonna be—gosh, this is gonna be in the early 1900's. Late 1890's to 1900 to 1920's. The research I've done – big time rancher at the time. It has been passed down that he was a heavy, heavy drinker. And that was one of the reasons why he died so young. Now, HIS father, Bureen, is the gentleman that's in this picture that we showed earlier. That had his arm shot off. Probably one of the most decorated in our family, as far as keeping the land in the name, because of what he's done in the past. He was a past County Commissioner, for Fort Bend County, and that was in the 1880's. He was a Justice of the Peace, also Postmaster. And he was in at least eight different Confederate battles of the Civil War, which is one of the reasons why his arm was shot off

KELLY: Going back to Tichenor—do you know how many acres he had at that time?

STUART, JESS: At that time, he was—that was the two hundred—yes, that was 256. And then when he died, see he died SO young--then, Bureen, his father, had to separate the land amongst those left kids. And that's where Pappaw, Julius Prentiss Stuart, Senior, got his sixty-four, down there. And we were on, Pappaw's sister, named Clara Stuart, who married a Glick— this is this sixty-four [referring to a map/chart] and then, they had another brother, named Buddy, who was married to Reba, that called in on Dad for the police.

STUART, JESS: They were on THIS sixty-four and then Aunt Marguerite, who Dad was talking about on where Gordon Ranch is currently, which is the old homestead. Those were the four kids that got the land split up. Pappaw hung on to his sixty-four and he died in the early '80s, and then deeded the land to Dad and his sister, JoAnne.

And then Buddy sold out to Dr. Spence and Kevin Harris, and then Aunt Marguerite sold out to the Jewish Community Center. Which is owned with Gorden Ranch. That kind of brings back to how would the land was passed down.

KELLY: So, there was Tichenor and then his father was —

STUART, JESS: Was Bureen Fitzpatrick.

KELLY: Any more you want to tell us about him?

STUART, JESS: The research that I've done, that's basically what I've come up with so far.

KELLY: Do you know if he joined the Texas Terry's Texas Rangers?

STUART, JESS: No, I DID research that. He did not. He was-- I'll have to look it up in the book—but he was from Wilkinson County, Mississippi. All of our ancestors came from Wilkinson, which is southeast Mississippi, in two counties: Amite County and then Wilkinson County. Those were all—that's where all John Foster, that's where Randolph Foster, that's where the Stuarts, and what I haven't brought together yet is if the Stuarts knew the Fosters IN Mississippi. And then when they came here, then they started marrying, and here we go. Which is why the Fosters went to the

Mayes, Mayes went to the Stuarts.

KELLY: Very possible.

STUART, JESS: Very possible. Especially with the amount of population back in those days, here.

KELLY: Uh huh, uh huh. Go up another generation and tell us what you know.

STUART, JESS: That I don't know anything yet about Benjamin Clarence, who was Bureen Fitzpatrick's father. I DO know Francis—the next generation back—is Francis Mayes, who married Martha Foster, who was Hettie and John's great-granddaughter. Francis was in a war—I can't remember the exact name of the war—but really it jumps from that point to Randolph Foster. Which is—

GOODSILL: Tell us, tell just for the record, Mayes is spelled—

STUART, JESS: M-A-Y-E-S. They were —again, from Mississippi—I do know that much. They were from southwest Mississippi, Wilkinson County, all of them from that area. Randolph is probably, as far as big in the Runaway Scrape, which is when Santa Ana had left the Alamo and was coming this way. Randolph was a big member of Sam Houston's army. He provided - they called him "the hunter" back in the day. And he provided huge amounts of meat, and wild game, to Sam Houston's army, as they were getting ready to head in toward Harrisburg.

Which it kinda is interesting because if you look at me, look at my grandfather, we're going right along the lines of where we came from. Big outdoorsmen. If you go to the state capitol today, right behind the state—where the House of Representatives, Speaker of the House, slams down the gavel - to the left of him, there's a huge portrait. And it's got Stephen F. Austin holding a hatchet. And it's in the middle of a dogtrot house and it's actually a painting by McArdle, the famous Texas artist. Well, kneeling next to Stephen F. Austin IS Randolph Foster. And he's sitting there in a coonskin hat, with all the leathers, and holding his Kentucky rifle black powder. And it says on the bottom, he was the hunter. He also helped blow up the bridge, that when the Mexican army went across the levee, to get into Harrisburg and to set up camp—

KELLY: Vince's Bridge

STUART, JESS: Vince's Bridge, with Deaf Smith and also, Randolph. Because Randolph was HUGE on being a scout, for Austin's army. So he knew all this area. And he helped blow that bridge up to keep the Mexican army from actually retreating, when Sam Houston made his offensive into the camp.

Some other things that Randolph was big on—he was a huge communicator between the Indians in this area and Austin's colony. He could speak that kind of language—he would actually go and meet with the Karankawa. Never met with the Comanche because at that time, Comanche were pretty much Central Texas and North Plains and the Panhandle area. But huge in the Karankawa Indians, because the Karankawas were ALL down in this river bottom, all the way to the coastline. There was also reports that in 18— Randolph was here as early as 1817, camping and hunting. He didn't get his league until 1824. And he accompanied Austin a few times, from Mississippi to San Antonio, to meet —because San Antonio was really the only thing going, at those times, with the missions. With the Spanish and the French with the Spanish and the French as far as their setting up their missions there.

He did—this was AMAZING when I read this in the history in the book—Randolph actually met the pirate, Jean Lafitte, on Galveston Island. And—because they would go because the wa—just like the Lively, when it came from New Orleans, it would come up the Brazos and went down the Colorado. Randolph was actually the gentleman that went down and caught the ship—they delivered the goods, and at those times, they would have to leave the goods close to the shoreline. Because they're afraid of—they couldn't be packing the goods to get through the Indians.

So Randolph was the negotiator, and actually the scout—'okay, it's clear, let's go, here's the time we got to get out' --and also he would look at the different floodings, because you couldn't pass at certain times. As Santa Ana found that out, coming through Fort Bend County. On his way to, Harrisburg. So Randolph was HUGE on Texas Revolution. John didn't do as much hunting because, at that time, you've got to remember, he was—

GOODSILL: Is John his father? He also had a brother—

STUART, JESS: John--John Foster —that's his father.

GOODSILL: Randolph's father.

STUART, JESS: Randolph's father. John was much older, so he didn't concentrate, or do as much with the fighting. Now it IS said, in the history, that both John Foster and his two brothers, James and—I think—Sam participated in the Battle of Charleston, June 1776. So these gentlemen came, fought for not only the Texas Revolution, but also the American Revolution.

KELLY: They—they weren't alone—I don't know if you know about Alexander Hodge—he did too, and they might know each other.

STUART, JESS: They might!

KELLY: You might check that out.

STUART, JESS: And, see there's so much history that - where did the Fosters come through? We want to say North Carolina. Either North or South Carolina. But there's so much to go—okay, where were they before that? And so that's—there's a little bit of talk in our book, the Foster book that we've put together here. But that's a lot more research to do in the future.

GOODSILL: And just for the record, the name of this book is—

STUART, JESS: It's The Descendents of John Foster, Senior, by Ralph Cowgill and the descendents of John Foster, Senior.

GOODSILL: And Cowgill is spelled—

STUART, JESS: C-O-W-G-I-L-L. And he lives in Missouri, and he's an older gentleman, and he's a Foster descendent. And him along with the lady that—that granted this sixty-four acres—which is our aunt, Clara Stuart, married a Glick, so Clara Glick. She's not going to be on this page, but she along with Ralph did ALL kind of research and helped put this book together.

And they traveled from Brazoria, Texas, at the museum and also the courthouse, to Austin County--the George Library in Richmond/Rosenberg—all the way to Mississippi, to San Augustine in East Texas, which is a huge focal point, when folks were coming from the East going West.

STUART, JULIUS: Now let's be clear, Jess, the fact that some people will think, 'Boy, she really worked and that was a HARD job'. Not for Annie—That was the LOVE of her life.

STUART, JESS: Uh huh.

GOODSILL: Doing the research on her family?

STUART, JULIUS: She LOVED to do that.

STUART, JESS: Oh yeah.

STUART, JULIUS: That was—she knew it ALL. She did it because she absolutely loved it. (hand clap)

GOODSILL: Sounds like Jess does too.

STUART, JULIUS: Oh yeah. Jess's following us. See, he didn't get it from me because I never paid much attention to that. (hand clap)

KELLY: Are you familiar with the book, Dilue Rose Harris's Reminiscence of Early Texas? I think the Fosters are mentioned in her book. She lived about where Quail Valley is now.

STUART, JESS: Yeah.

KELLY: She lived there from 1834 through the Rev—through the Runaway Scrape, and she has a diary—and talks about all the people that lived in the area. And I'll look it up.

STUART, JESS: Yes. (repeats Yes several times thru Bruce's next sentence)

KELLY: I think he's in it, and I'll send you the book—a copy of the book. Okay?

STUART, JESS: That would be perfect.

GOODSILL: I want to go back to how the Foster family got awarded their league of land. What's the story there?

STUART, JESS: Okay. The story that's been passed down to me from Annie—and I want to tell one more story after this, about Annie, —was that Foster had ten kids. And because he had so many kids—

GOODSILL: Wait, which Foster? John Foster?

STUART, JESS: John Foster.

GOODSILL: Senior?

STUART, JESS: Senior.

STUART, JESS: And, what it was said, he was VERY wealthy and very well known in Mississippi, southwest Mississippi. That's where he fell in with Stephen F. Austin. Austin, as you know, was looking for three hundred families that were well-off, that could come and settle within that two year limit in Texas. And so Austin would look for folks that, not only had some money, but at the same time, had the ability to come to Texas and settle it. So he looked for large families—he looked for very influential men. John Foster was one of them. The big thing about John Foster was education. He had schools named after him in southwest Mississippi.

There is a college that is historical marker NOW, in Wilkinson County. I can't remember the exact name of that town, but it's there, and he founded that college BEFORE he came here to Texas. When he came to Texas, he founded two more schools. One that Dad went to —we had the white school and then we had the African-American school. The current Foster school that you see over here—that we're working on right now, building up—that's the African-American school that's been restored. The white school was torn down when they put the estate homes in over here, unfortunately.

But Dad can speak more on when he went to school there—how many kids were there and the years—but Foster was VERY influential in education which is also why, today, you have John and Randolph Foster High School. Because we went to Dr. Randle and presented ALL this history, and said ‘Look, he brought education’. And so I think Stephen F. Austin had [made a decision] that he had a lot of kids, he was pretty wealthy, and Stephen F. Austin knew he had to teach education.

STUART, JULIUS: Well, let’s drop in the fact that he was also an adventurer.

STUART, JESS: Uh huh. [several uh huhs while Julius continues]

STUART, JULIUS: He had NO problem getting on his horse and coming over here. And he scouted—he run around and SAW this place. This area. And he liked it a lot. He was a hunter as I recall. Right?

STUART, JESS: That’s right—mostly John, yes, but Randolph especially.

STUART, JULIUS: No, I mean, he didn’t do it for a living—he LIKED to hunt.

STUART, JESS: Oh yeah.

STUART, JULIUS: And so he saw this place and that’s when it came up that he wanted that. He come back three years later and got the grant. Because he was here in 1821 as I understand it.

STUART, JESS: Uh huh.

STUART, JULIUS: But 1824 is when he actually got the grant, yeah. But he was the guy that was willing, not only capable, but he was WILLING to move and come out here, and —and participate. A lot of guys are homebodies, kind of like me, and I’m not too willing to go over yonder and resettle in another place. But this guy was.

GOODSILL: And brought his whole family.

STUART, JESS: Uh huh.

STUART, JULIUS: That’s right.

GOODSILL: Ten. Children. Did they all survive?

STUART, JESS: Yes, as far as we know, and not all of them settled right in this area. You know, like Randolph—like you had Isaac who was down in Matagorda County, and then there was Isia—let's see—Randolph of course his league of land was in present day Pattison. Which is the other side of Waller, Fort Bend County.

GOODSILL: So at the time that John Foster, Senior, got his grant—were these other people also given theirs?

STUART, JESS: Isaac was.

GOODSILL: Because he was a grown man by that time?

STUART, JESS: He was—he was grow—he was the oldest.

GOODSILL: The oldest son.

STUART, JESS: See the other thing that Stephen F. Austin seemed to look for was folks that have participated in wars. He was—participated in the 1776 war—

GOODSILL: Say names—John Foster, Senior--?

STUART, JESS: Uh huh, uh huh. And then Isaiah was—and Randolph both—

GOODSILL: Wait—that says Isaac— [looking at family tree]

STUART, JESS: Isaac. And, and Randolph were both in the War of 1812. And then I know there was one more—John Claiborn—that's East Texas.

GOODSILL: John Claiborn Foster.

STUART, JESS: John Claiborn Foster.

GOODSILL: Are those all—these men you've noticed—Isaac, Randolph, John—they're all sons of John Foster?

STUART, JESS: Uh huh.

GOODSILL: This is more than ten.

STUART, JESS: He had a large family. Actually that is twelve—that's right—twelve. Is that twelve?

GOODSILL: Thirteen. Are those all his children?

STUART, JESS: I don't think—

STUART, JULIUS: I was always told he had ten.

STUART, JESS: That's what I thought, too. I always was taught it was ten. Unless there was two that died early.

GOODSILL: That's probably it.

STUART, JESS: Because we've always—and you can SEE also, some of them don't have any children.

STUART, JESS: And—she—these are the biggest. And of course, Hettie is the one we come from.

GOODSILL: Yeah.

STUART, JESS: The Briscoes come from Randolphs—

GOODSILL: Randolph Foster

STUART, JESS: And of course Briscoes are right next door to us.

GOODSILL: So, uh, you're back talking about John Foster, Senior. He got his league; Isaac got his—

STUART, JESS: And then Randolph.

GOODSILL: They all got theirs at the same time.

STUART, JESS: They did. Even though they're different ages.

GOODSILL: And different locations.

STUART, JESS: And different locations.

GOODSILL: Are they all on this map, here?

STUART, JESS: They— Randolph's is right—here's John Foster's [looking at the map]—okay—Randolph is right there.

GOODSILL: And can you tell us, geographically, where that is, for the tape?

STUART, JESS: This, Randolph's, is actually right at the city of Pattison, Texas, which is kind of north of Brookshire, current date.

GOODSILL: That looks like a good location, right on the river.

STUART, JESS: Oh yes, right on the river. And that was the key thing, back in the days, is —transportation. Go down the river.

GOODSILL: Uh huh.

STUART, JESS: And if you notice, on John Foster's league, which is modern day, just east of Fulshear, basically FM1093 to the north, and then as far south as the modern day Fort Bend County Fair Grounds. You can see Foster had both sides of the Brazos River, which is VERY uncommon, because you could control the river. And a lot of folks didn't want a —lot of—Austin really thought very highly, OBVIOUSLY, of John Foster, because he had the largest land grant given. Of ANY Old 300 settler.

GOODSILL: And Isaac's location?

STUART, JESS: Isaac is—this is JUST Fort Bend County, but his was in Matagorda County, so it's going to be not on this current map.

GOODSILL: Interesting, that was interesting. Your conclusion about how he got the largest place. What other conclusions can you draw, looking at this map?

STUART, JESS: Well—from looking at the difference in—I guess in the land—the Foster lands were deep in soil and also had TWO [rivers]— Jones Creek AND the Brazos, and we know that Randolph actually never lived on his actual land over here. He actually lived with his father, here on the Foster grant. So I think Foster was—Randolph had kind of the pick of the litter, and this, as everybody knows, this is just great land, as far as river bottom—also kind of a post oak—lot of—wooded areas. There's low end areas and then there's prairie, to the north.

STUART, JULIUS: Don't forget —the pecan trees. Big pull.

STUART, JESS: Yep. Huge pecans, too.

GOODSILL: What—what part of the property are they on?

STUART, JESS: The pecan trees are going to be right along these—the river bottoms and the creeks—

GOODSILL: Right along the creek.

STUART, JESS: And this map is Fort Bend County in 1839. And it says - oh yeah—and it was drawn by Henry Upshur, which I've seen that name a lot.

GOODSILL: U-P-S-H-U-R

STUART, JESS: Yes.

KELLY: How did you acquire this map?

STUART, JESS: This map—I spent a week of vacation about four years ago, in Austin. In a hotel at night and that the Government Land Office in the state capitol during the day. So you could—in those days you had to go in person, to get a color copy of, not only the deed—the Spanish deed—but any map. Nowadays you can order it on-line. But just researching—got it in Austin.

KELLY: Wonderful.

GOODSILL: Before we finish, I'd like to have you read that part in the Spanish land grant about the ceremony they went through. Any other questions?

KELLY: I can't think of any. We may call him back for some more.

GOODSILL: Gosh, it's a rich, deep history.

STUART, JESS: Well, speak—one more thing on Annie—

GOODSILL: We have plenty of time.

STUART, JESS: Okay. Well, Clara--we called her Annie—who did all the research on this. She was married to we have—we've got to put this in—

STUART, JULIUS: Yeah, don't leave this out!

STUART, JESS: (laughter)

STUART, JULIUS: Because you brought it up a minute ago.

STUART, JESS: I did. She—she was married to a gentleman by the name of George Glick.

GOODSILL: Is this Ann Foster Mayes? Aunt Annie?

STUART, JESS: Actually, actually, no, what it is, is Hettie is— Martha, and then Martha married Benjamin Clarence, and they had Bureen. And then Bureen had Tichenor, and then Tichenor had Pappaw and then his sister is Clara. That Clara. This is a different Clara, here.

GOODSILL: This would be your grandfather's sister—

STUART, JESS: That's it.

KELLY: Your great-aunt.

STUART, JESS: My grandfather's sister.

GOODSILL: Got it.

STUART, JESS: She handled this sixty-four acres. But, anyway, she was big in the history and she married George Glick. Now, George Glick was a Texas Ranger. So we got the "ranger" side. We still have his pistol. We still have his handcuffs. Uh, what else we got, Dad? We got his—

STUART, JULIUS: We got those brass knuckles still?

STUART, JESS: Yeah, we got the brass knuckles. And he was a Texas Ranger in the '20s and '30s. And he was enlisted by Frank Hamer, who was a FAMOUS, famous Texas Ranger, who was the guy that caught Bonnie and Clyde.

And so George Glick— I remember him—when I was—I was born in 1971, and I remember he would come out to the house, sit down, and he would always drink coffee. But he would never say a word.

STUART, JULIUS: Never say a word. Nicest guy you ever saw. You wouldn't believe that guy killed people.

STUART, JESS: He did.

STUART, JULIUS: Rode a horse down in South Texas. He was a tough son-of-a-gun— Well, they ALL were, or they wouldn't be alive. But he was a tough old guy. But he wouldn't say a word. Clean-cut, tall, thin—but he [motions pulling the trigger]

STUART, JESS: He's—he killed people—he had to kill some guys, and he really—he guarded the railroad between San Antonio and Laredo. Which is DEEP South Texas.

STUART, JULIUS: Now we're talking—you've got to understand—This was horseback.

STUART, JESS: Yeah.

STUART, JULIUS: Out on your own, in the wood—in the woods, wherever. These people see you, they're going to shoot you. I'm talking about the—not him—I'm talking about the—the BAD guys.

STUART, JESS: Uh huh.

STUART, JULIUS: They see you, because they know who you are, (click click), you're gone. You know—they were tough people. It's not like today. Today, uh, you know, you call the police—see something and you get on the phone and call 911. There ain't no such thing (chuckle).

GOODSILL: (chuckling)

STUART, JULIUS: 911 was that pistol on his hip! And that was it. That was a tough bunch of people. They're glorified. They were some tough people.

STUART, JESS: Matter of fact, I was on that same trip—I left Austin. Then I got all the maps and I actually went to Waco just to go by the Texas Museum—the Ranger Museum. And I was just going through—and they had all the display cases and things—and I walk up to this one, and there's a braided horse hatband, that was made by—there he is-- George Glick.

And it was donated by Annie, in 19—I want to say—62. She never told us that it was there. But I happened to walk through there, and said, "There it is, because that's him."

STUART, JESS: That's a GREAT museum, as far as history.

KELLY: Any other family members that we've, uh, failed to talk about?

GOODSILL: Well, hold on a sec. The Fosters come, they get their league, they settle. They stay. They all stay in the same homestead area, all the way down to your generation.

STUART, JESS: Uh huh. Oh, and, but we're of—this family, Stuarts, right now, this is the only 128 acres left, of the same family that's still in the agriculture business with it.

KELLY: In regards to your original John Foster league, are you—where are you located? You're on the north boundary?

STUART, JESS: We're on the very, very northeast corner.

KELLY: Above Jones Creek—

STUART, JESS: Yeah, Jones Creek is about a mile that way [hand gesture]

KELLY: Uh huh.

STUART, JESS: And this is Jones Creek. So we're actually, if you drew a little rectangle right there. [Showing it on map]

KELLY: You're on the eastern boundary, the northeastern corner of the John Foster league.

STUART, JESS: Because there's highlined—723's running JUST inside this line—

KELLY: Uh huh. That league line.

STUART, JESS: Because the actual lines, which is interesting, are those highlines that are running across that property over there, because they used—just like a normal easement—they want to use the adjoining property. So they could take twenty feet from this owner versus twenty to give you forty.

KELLY: Uh huh. Does your property go to the—to that line?

STUART, JESS: Yes.

STUART, JULIUS: Just to the other side of it.

STUART, JESS: That's the property line to the east and then this property line right here is to the west. It's a perfect rectangle. Basically. And then it goes to Jones Creek, which you can't see is—past that treeline.

KELLY: Was there a labor of land? Often the original land grants were—they issued a labor of land with it, which would have been 177 acres.

STUART, JESS: There was.

KELLY: Do you know where that was? Where John Foster—

STUART, JESS: I really don't. It's just all together.

KELLY: Yeah.

STUART, JESS: Now THIS might be, on this side of the lake, the Brazos River on the south side.

KELLY: Uh huh. Might be the labor.

STUART, JESS: That might be the labor, because I DO know he got a labor too.

GOODSILL: Let's go read about the ceremony.

STUART, JULIUS: Jess, I'm going to let you go (more chairs moving).

[Farewells and thanks are said all the way around. And he leaves.

Kelly, Goodsill and Jess Stuart move to Texas Room nearby.]

KELLY: Tell us what we are looking at.

STUART, JESS: We're currently looking on the wall, in what I call "the Texas room", which is a little museum that I've put together on the Fosters, and I've got two different picture frames here. One on the left is actually a—a colored copy of the Spanish deed that was given to John Foster from Mexico, that's signed by Baron de Bastrop, John Austin, Stephen F. Austin and John Foster. And Samuel Williams. To the right is actually an English translation, because back in the early days, the deeds were all in Spanish. And I can't read Spanish so I wanted to kind of transcribe and read a little bit of the English, of what the deed actually said.

And right here, on the very end, it says, 'We put the aforesaid John Foster in possession of the said leagues, and one-half of a labors of land, taken in by the hand at both places, leading him over them, telling him in a loud and understandable voice, that by virtue of the commission and the authority vested in us, and in the name of the government of the Mexican nation, we put him in possession of said tracts, with ALL their uses, customs, rights and appurtenances, for him, his heirs and successors and the aforementioned John Foster as a token of finding himself in real and personal possession of said tracts, without any opposition, shouted, pulled grass, threw stones, set stakes and performed the other necessary ceremonies, being notified of his obligation to settle and cultivate them within the two year term prescribed by the law. And in evidence thereof, we, the aforesaid commissioner, Baron de Bastrop, and Impresarios Stephen F. Austin, hereunto subscribe with attendant witnesses, lacking a notary in the terms of the law, which we certify, in the town of San Felipe de Austin, on the 15th of July, 1824.' Signed Baron de Bastrop; a witness, John Austin; Stephen F. Austin and another attendant witness, Samuel Williams.

KELLY: John Austin was Stephen Austin's brother.

STUART, JESS: Yeah. Uh huh.

KELLY: And Samuel May Williams, yes.

GOODSILL: So let me ask this question. Did the people who were granted leagues of land pay for them? Or were they gifts?

STUART, JESS: I want to say they paid a certain percentage, but it was a very small amount, because you were taking such a big chance, to leave your homestead, from many states over to the east, to come to Texas, to settle. I do not remember the exact amount, but I DO know it was—the amount of land you were given was based upon whether you were married, single, and how many kids you had.

GOODSILL: Very good.

KELLY: All right. Thank you. We appreciate it.

STUART, JESS: We appreciate it too.