**Delia Haak** (00:04): Bill and I moved here in 1979, 40 years ago to start our dairy farm. And someone said, "You should look at the land prices in Arkansas, and land is really cheap." And so that's honestly how we came here with 54 heifers, that's before they're ready to be milk cows. And we were looking for a place to start our own dairy farm. So we mortgaged those 54 heifers, as a down payment on 47 acres and an old barn and an old farmhouse. And we're still in that farmhouse and still milking, approximately 160 cows every day, twice a day. We do rotational grazing for our cattle on 12 different pastures. So they're pasture based, and I guess they're happy cows because they're pasture based.

**Delia Haak** (00:56): But when we moved here, there were 400 small dairies in Benton County, now there's 10 dairy farms left. Benton County is the largest agricultural operations in the whole state of Arkansas, for beef cattle and hay sales and poultry operations. We started out the county before it was actually even part of the state.

**Delia Haak** (01:24): We've been dairy farming for 40 years, and I would love to see future generations get into that opportunity because it's just the best for both worlds our children grew up doing chores, feeding calves, now our grandchildren can help feed baby calves and help raise them. And to help you learn a work ethic, that no matter what, you have to get out every morning and feed your animals and take care of them and take care of the land.

**Delia Haak** (01:56): I feel very blessed to live here near these wonderful communities in Northwest Arkansas and still have the best of both worlds in living in the county and in the country, and being surrounded by the beauty of our pastures and our animals.

**Jamie Montgomery** (02:15): My husband Matt, and I live on Graves Road in Gentry and we farm. We actually just recently saw a plat map, and the land was originally purchased in 1859. During that process, our understanding is it was a strawberry farm. Lots of that area is very flat. We now raise feeder cattle on the property. We've kind of combined two farms together there. Feeder cattle cycles through, I mean it's going to be meat, it goes to feedlots. So it's usually several hundred circling through at a time [inaudible 00:02:49] feeds them and then contracts them and sells them then to... Like I said, to a feedlot. But they're going to be meat. We don't have any mama cows or anything like that. We've lived there 22 years. And it's always been to my knowledge, a single family's farm. We have corporate farms around us, poultry farms, but all beef in our area is still privately owned.

**Judy Ivey** (03:14): Allen's Canning Company in the summertime, they had a plant that ran here in Gentry and it's backed by the railroad tracks.

**Judy Ivey** (03:24): Well, you can see when you go over the overpass, those buildings back there, and it's where they used to have the... You could go by the dent cans or whatever, what used to be... And my mom would work in the summertime. She would can tomatoes. I don't know how long they ran, but I think just the season, I think that's all they did, was the tomatoes up there.

**Jim Ivey** (03:50): It was there quite a while, longer than I thought it was.

**Judy Ivey** (03:54): I just remember my mom going to work up there, and she just worked a few months in the summer-

**Jim Ivey** (04:02): And most of the people who worked at Allen's, cause they worked a lot more hours than days. Maybe they just run when they had a whole lot of tomatoes.

**Judy Ivey** (04:10): I think that's what they did.

**Larry Curran, Sr.** (04:13): There's still a lot of agriculture around here, but it's not near as based as where people are making their soul living off agriculture, they're basically working a job somewhere and then they'll have some cattle or some horses or some hogs or chicken. The people talk about agriculture in general that study it real hard, claim that the agriculture dollars turned over in a county where you do business seven times before it leaves. I think there's no question about it. I mean, the agriculture business seems to help everybody, especially in this area, because so much agriculture is from here. Even though people work out and things, they still have... Like I was talking about, they still have agriculture stuff that they care for when they get home and things like that. And there's still a lot of poultry, bigger poultry high in this area, so Simmons and those folks are big big.

**Larry Curran, Sr.** (05:19): My dad started 1946. He got out of the military and after the war and he. Him and his brother was looking for something basically to do. And a fellow that owned this, or owned the feed store at the time, was down on Main Street and his name was Hardcastle. And he had the feed business and my dad had the chance to buy it. And so him and his brother bought it. And then after about five years, my dad bought his brother out of it. In that time, people raised a lot of their own grain, corn, wheat. He would bring it in and my dad had grinders and mixers and stuff. And he would process the grain and put protein and different things with it and then turn around, and they would take it back home, we'd feed it. Well, we sell everything from pet food, to cattle feed.

**Larry Curran, Sr.** (06:11): Of course, the cattle is probably the biggest thing. They do a lot of show feed thing. They have their own, we have our own mixer. We can take a raw product and put whatever you want to put with it and take it to a finish product. As time went on, the truck industry come into play. Used to be when my dad first started, he was down Main Street. For of the flower shop used to be right next to the barber shop. And he'd come up here in the 60's because trucks didn't move things in the 60's like they do today. There wasn't enough trucks and so railroad done it. And that's why he wanted to be next to the railroad. So we used to get, whenever I was a boy about your age, most everything come in on the railroad. And we unloaded railroad cars from on night and stuff like that.

**Larry Curran, Sr.** (07:04): I had gotten out of it 2011, because I mean, I went broke. People couldn't pay me. The dairy deal went downhill and it just it broke me, but got to start over, and didn't much want to do that, but my son did. Whenever I grew up, see, we had so much credit business. People used to come in, and everybody would come settle their debts once a month, it don't work that away anymore. They used to service 75 dairies, and 2007 and eight, I lost about $700,000 to bankruptcies. And boy, you just can't... That just kills you. We've always been involved in the community, school kids. We do that. We try to tell these kids, "Look, we want you to be around, but we don't want you to try to make a living out of this. Because this ain't a fun job. We enjoy it, but it's not a fun job."

**Clara Garret** (08:07): It was behind where twice as nice is now. And in that big open area there. And when I came into this world in 1949, it was there. And it was there until, I graduated from high school here in Gentry in 60's 1967. He would've been 67 when I graduated from high school. So he was starting to... Starting to slow down and he died in 74. So, somewhere between there is when the sale barn ceased to exist, selling or doing anything. Now it still stood for a long time after that. But I can tell you on Monday when the sale was occurring, this was a hopping town. There was no place you could find to park. There were trucks parked everywhere over town, in almost in my grandparents front yard. They would pull up, there was a washateria across the road and they'd be there. Any place they could park.

**Clara Garret** (09:18): They would park up and down streets, in front and all up and down Main Street. And a lot of people did double duty. The wife came and she did the shopping at the grocery store while she was here, got her hair done. And there was a little place to eat there where they had hamburgers and hot dogs and fresh made pies, and so you could get a good lunch. And the women that made those pies, made good pies. They had coconut and cherry and apple and chocolate, and they just would... Like I said, they sold all kinds of things, at the front of the sale, in the front of the sale barn, where they opened up the double doors, you could go in there and just buy a lot of things. And then there were...

**Clara Garret** (10:07): At the back of it, there were seats that went up and people sat there, and there was a ring there. And he was in a little box at the very back, where the animals came in on either side of him. Would come into the ring and he would start his option near lingo, and I mean, it would start popping, and people's hands would go up and they usually had a number in their hands so that they knew who that number was. And it was just... It was exciting to sit there and watch that as a young child. If it had been located in a different place, it may have survived, it may have still, could have been going on. The one thing that happened by it being here in the town is that people just had to walk from their vehicles or wherever to get to where they wanted, whether it was the beauty shop, the barber shop, the grocery store, the gas station, Tuffy Hills gas station, before you cross the... Or to get feed the current store or to get something at parks.

**Clara Garret** (11:22): Everything was almost in walking distance of where their vehicle was parked. Gentry business people, made extra money that day also. So it was a good thing all the way around to have the sale barn in town. Because not only did my grandfather sell things for people and they made money, but he made money selling it. And then everybody else in town made money too. So it was a big deal, from where the sale barn was all the way down, all those streets down Main Street, all the way around parks, lumber company, in front of... I just can't tell you, there just was no place in this town to park up and down Main Street in south of town, there was just vehicles everywhere. I wouldn't even venture to guess how many hundreds of people were in town that wouldn't have been in town otherwise.

**Kevin Johnston** (12:17): The Northwest Arkansas region was known for agriculture in Gentry, specifically was accustomed to having a heavy load of agricultural to keep families fed, and the families here would feed families across the nation. For there to be continued growth, of that with all those houses to be able to fill that we need to be able to support that in just more than building houses. People need a place to eat, they have to buy groceries, got to buy gas. So we can't just build homes and grow just by having homes. We have to have all those other pieces too. So in that when you have a grocery store, you have to have groceries, and what are in grocery stores? Produce, meats, that kind of stuff. And so it falls back to the agricultural side. One of the greatest strengths that we have in Gentry is our two largest employers is Simmons Foods, which is poultry, chicken.

**Kevin Johnston** (13:09): And then we have McKee, which is our largest employer. That we have actually in the city limits. And they also produce food. Everybody has to eat, right. But one thing that helps us continue to grow is our strongest employers. Our greatest employers are based around food and agriculture. So we'll continue to grow. We'll continue to show that strength. When we have a strong, long population that we'll practice with greenhouses, and it's not just the among the community, but they're big into produce. I see technology helping with that. And I, and I think where we as a society are really going to learn from that is from this generation, as they learn how to apply that outside the classroom, instead of just we haven't offered here at Gentry, but it's in school. And as, as these students grow, they'll be able to apply that at home, and in their living. And I think we'll find a better way to bring all that together. Growth with houses, but also be able to self-sustain as well though. Learning new ways to do more agricultural produce in smaller spaces, that helps with that too. Year round, having a greenhouse, but in that though, I mean, that's a way to offset, some of that shrinking agriculture that we have. Is learning new ways to do things, and keep it here and keep it more sustainable here.

**Speaker 9** (14:31): Do you see that . . .