



**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT**

CONSULTANT: Ruth Harrington Bounds

DATE OF BIRTH: July 4, 1903 Gender: Female

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: January 22, February 5, March 12, 1997

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Bounds ranch, San Lorenzo, NM.

INTERVIEWER: Jane O'Cain

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM__x__OTHER_____

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: March 21, 1997

NUMBER OF TAPES: Seven

ABTRACTOR: Barbara Wheat

DATE ABSTRATED: July/August 2001

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Farming and ranching in western New Mexico. Consultant's family immigrated to the United States from Europe. Also details the consultant's roll as a school teacher.

DATE RANGE: 1880s-1997, bulks 1920s-1960s

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

TAPE ONE, SIDE A:

Mrs. Bounds gives her name, birthplace, and describes her mother's family background (Swiss) and how they came to New Mexico. They homesteaded eventually east of Silver City. She describes her childhood memories of her family. The older family members spoke German but her mother spoke English to her. She recounts the details of her grandfathers and grandmothers.

Mrs. Bounds discusses the background of the Harrington family and says her father was a great talker. She describes how her parents met and where her mother was educated. She outlines her parent's family. She was one of three girls. Her father had thirteen siblings, nine boys and four girls.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B:

Mrs. Bounds speaks of her grandmothers. They received mail at Santa Rita by horseback or buggy, eight or ten miles. She tells of starting school at age nine and going to town to high school. Earlier the teachers taught in the homes, moved from house to house once a month or so. Her aunt moved from West Virginia and tried to teach the children music (piano).

She describes her birth in a log cabin. They did not have a newspaper in her early years. One of their neighbors was John W. Turner. Her father eventually bought that ranch. Turner and her father got a one-room school built. The teacher lived on the ranches, changing every month or so. Mrs. Bounds went through eighth grade there. Then she drove into Santa Rita to high school. She discusses the chores she did. She said her mother made her own clothes. She made Ruth's wedding dress. The family got supplies in Santa Rita where there was a company store for the miners.

TAPE TWO, SIDE A:

Mrs. Bounds tells about the fruit orchards on their ranch. The Turners also had orchards. She told about her father employing intermittent hired help. She didn't remember how he found them. There is a discussion of the small frame house that was built and the extra small house that was built for the teacher.

She tells about her mother teaching her before they had a regular school arrangement. Ruth didn't remember helping much with household chores. Her father helped inside and her mother helped outside. Ruth's father bought a little saddle for her when she was a baby. She describes the improvements made on the Turner ranch after they moved there.

Mrs. Bounds is specific in stating that they never dug in any American Indian ruins. They did pick up some surface materials. She told about finding a classic Mimbres bowl with

geometric designs. They also found a polychrome flower bowl. They had a good *metate* and some *manos*.

Mrs. Bounds tells the story about the Bounds diamond ring. Here is a description of Horace's siblings. She said that they always had turkey that they raised on Thanksgiving and Christmas when she was young. They had geese at one time. They had apples and oranges at Christmas. She comments on how times have changed, how people have gotten lazier. Her mother did not have to carry water for the household; they had windmills and water was piped in.

Ruth didn't learn to cook much until after she married. She went to Normal School in Silver City, got a teaching certificate and taught four years at the rural school in Lampbright Canyon. After she married she drove five or six miles to school.

TAPE TWO, SIDE B:

She told of getting stuck in the little Model-T in the wintertime. She lived at home the first three years she taught. She describes her teaching experiences. Many of her students were Hispanic. She attended University of California one summer. The whole family went. Mrs. Bounds and Jane talk about having a one-room school at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum. She describes her school and the students. Her younger sister, Genevieve, went on to college.

TAPE THREE, SIDE A:

Jane O'Cain asks about the best times she remembered growing up. Mrs. Bounds says that that would be her relationship with horses. She remembered particularly a little palomino dogie colt. She always had a good horse and saddle. When asked about hardships in the early years she said, "The dry years".

She first saw her husband-to-be, Horace, at a rodeo in Tyrone when she was about fifteen. She invited him to a school dance at the college where she was attending. He came by train once about 1920 from Deming to Santa Rita and stayed over Christmas. They corresponded a lot. Her parents had taken her to the dance in Whitewater sometimes and she remembered a box supper she shared with Horace. She gives a description of a box supper. She and Jane discuss the little bands that played for dances. Horace had moved from Separ and worked at Hurley and at Santa Rita at the copper mine.

Mrs. Bounds describes their wedding at her parents' home. After the honeymoon they went to Separ and drove Horace's cattle herd to Santa Rita. They had bought a little homestead that they called Ivanhoe.

TAPE THREE, SIDE B:

Here Mrs. Bounds tells of their purchase of a ranch from Sam Clark that included some state land and a two-room house. They later built an adobe house. She describes their moves from house to house.

Wandra was born in the adobe house after they had been married five years. Mrs. Bounds contracted an infection and they finally took her to the hospital in Silver City. She describes being ill as a small child and later as an adult being diagnosed with thyroid deficiency. Later she discovered it was a mis-diagnosis.

Mrs. Bounds outlines the sequence of land purchases they made after they were married and how they leased state land. There is a discussion of water and the purchase of Tom O'Brien's land near San Lorenzo. They rebuilt the house where the consultant lived at the time of these interviews.

TAPE FOUR, SIDE A:

Mrs. Bounds is discussing their learning to farm on this new place. She tells that the irrigation ditch is the oldest in the Mimbres Valley. Jane asks her about weather conditions while they were still primarily ranching. Mrs. Bounds tells that Horace would butcher and deliver beef to Santa Rosa and other places. She discusses the types of cattle they had and Horace's meat business, how they refrigerated and related ideas.

Mrs. Bounds tells about the necessity for additional income from Mr. Bounds working at the mine and Mrs. Bounds teaching the first year of their marriage. Later they were in the meat business and still later in farming. They kept buying adjacent land.

She tells how they started in the registered cattle business. They bought two sections in northern New Mexico on Johnson Mesa. Mrs. Bounds discusses the difficulties with hired help. She also pointed out Horace's work with the Soil Conservation Service.

TAPE FOUR, SIDE B:

Mrs. Bounds describes the crops they raised for livestock feed and the fact that they removed old orchards for pastureland. They talked about poisonous weeds and predators. The greatest problems were weather and drought. Snow was not a problem.

The Johnson Mesa property was used only in the summer and moving the cattle needed to be timed carefully. This yearling operation started in the 1940s and later they gave it to their son. Mrs. Bounds spoke of using the yearling profits to buy land adjoining the San Lorenzo ranch. Mrs. Bounds inherited nearly 400 acres of valley land. At this point she and Jane discussed homesteading requirement and why homesteaders sold out. At the end of this tape, she speaks about using a Delco system and carbide lights before they got electricity.

TAPE FIVE, SIDE A:

Mrs. Bounds describes shipping cattle to Folsom by way of Trinidad. They would then truck them to Colfax County. She said she was involved in all types of farm work and irrigating. They always had a garden for home use. Most of the land in that area was used for feed crops and apples. She tells about the changes in technology. She describes hay baling for example. They looked forward to the rainy season. She spoke about calving. She speaks about the ups and downs of the cattle markets. She said some, but not a lot of cattle were bought by the government and slaughtered during the drought and Depression of the thirties. She speaks about using green chop alfalfa as cattle feed in dry times.

Here she and Jane talk of the local bank and the families who founded it. They discuss the use of the company store as a banking facility. The local stores extended credit.

Mrs. Bounds said farm labor was always a problem. They did not have paid labor for riding or ranch work. They grew vegetables for home use and canned fruit from the orchard. After freezers were available they froze rather than canned. She often had household help at those busy times. Ruth speaks of a young woman, Sovestia Arosco, and her brother who worked for them a long time. Here she tells how often they went to Santa Rita for supplies when she was young and after she was married.

TAPE FIVE, SIDE B:

Mrs. Bounds explained the meat regulations that changed in the late '40s that made it more complicated for their meat business.

Jane asked about clothing and Mrs. Bounds says her mother made most of her clothes and that Mrs. Bounds made most of her own clothes and Wandra's. As a teenager she shopped in

Silver City. Jane asks about a sailor tunic in one picture and Mrs. Bounds explained how a girl would acquire one in the early twenties.

Jane asks about the drought in the early fifties and Mrs. Bounds tells how ranchers cut oak trees so the cattle could feed on the leaves and about the process of cutting and grinding yucca for feed. She compares the drought of the '30s with the '50s and the present ('90s). She explains why their area was a little better than some, vegetation wise.

Mrs. Bounds now describes the family's brands.

Jane asks her to describe the work that needs to be done to get a calf ready for market. She does this, saying calving was going on most of the year. They branded twice or three times a year. She explains the process of branding and the difference between a running iron and a stamp iron. Mrs. Bounds describes their process for round-up and branding for market, including shipping from Colfax County property.

TAPE SIX, SIDE A:

Here Jane and Mrs. Bounds talk about medical services, a Dr. Watts in Santa Rita and later in Silver City; Dr. Stovall at Mimbres Hot Springs. Horace had blood poisoning and went to a doctor at Fort Bayard. They had no serious accidents from riding, but Horace had a severe cut on his knee and Mrs. Bounds rushed him to Silver City.

Here is a recounting of how she and Horace were struck by lightening at the same time. Horace was bleeding down his temple. When they got home and called the doctor he said just to stay quiet and drink fluids. The lightening had followed around Horace's glasses.

Jane asks Mrs. Bounds about local celebrations and she tells about their extension club having a rodeo to raise money for war bonds. Then they worked to get a club house. Now a booster club owns it. They have a New Year's dance there each year. When Ruth was asked if the children rode in rodeos she said that they didn't but that Wandra had a horse at college (NMSU).

Jane asked about their involvement in organizations. Mrs. Bounds said they were members of Cattle Growers and Mr. Bounds was active in Soil Conservation work. They were not political. Mrs. Bounds was state president for the New Mexico Garden Club for a term and attended a national convention in Seattle. Mrs. Bounds indicates that her honors are on one wall and Horace's on another wall including Masonic Resolution of Respect.

Mrs. Bounds says that improved cattle breeding has had the greatest impact on ranching. Their grandson had bought good horses in Mexico but cannot bring them in any longer.

Jane asks how the quality of life on farms and ranches has changed and Mrs. Bounds says, "Better every day". When asked about the future she said she didn't know.

TAPE SEVEN, SIDE A:

Here is a discussion of Horace Bounds' family background. His parents were Buck and Eva who were married in 1900. They moved to Wilna in the Deming area in 1913 from Van Horn, Texas. Jane reads a little historical piece for the record that Horace wrote about his brother, Luis' death in 1915. The family lived in Separ with Young Bounds, Buck Bounds' nephew until their barn was built. Then they lived in the barn while they built a house.

Horace's mother's maiden name was Eva Wagonfehr.

Ruth said that there was a one-room school in Separ when the Bounds' arrived. Later they moved to Deming. Horace went to school in Van Horn where he was born. Horace's father sent him later to NMMI in Roswell for a year or two during World War I. He then enrolled at New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Las Cruces. She then speaks of the flu epidemic. They were ill but lost no family members.

Horace went to college with Taylor McDonald and Barkly McDonald, neighbors. After that Horace went to business college in El Paso for a while. He worked in mining for about a year at Hurley and Santa Rita.

The Buck Bounds family moved to Isleta at about this time. Buck Bounds worked for the Border Patrol. They went broke on the New Mexico ranch. Ruth tells about the problems of open-range ranching. Ruth and Horace drove his cattle, fifteen or twenty head, from Separ to Santa Rita when his family left Separ. Horace did not like that flat country.

TAPE SEVEN, SIDE B:

On the prior tape Jane had asked about Horace's siblings. Here Ruth said Jennings worked at the mines and died young. Helen married Marshall Kelly who worked for the phone company. Fred Bounds worked for El Paso Natural Gas in El Paso and then retired to Hobbs, New Mexico.

Mrs. Bounds talks about 'Nigger' Will who was with the family in Van Horn on the Circle ranch and came to New Mexico with the Buck Bounds family.

Here is a discussion of Ruth and Horace's philosophy of buying and improving land for farming and ranching. Ruth speaks of labor for their operations, Mexican nationals, and displaced persons after World War II on a government program. They did not have prisoner of war laborers. They did participate in the bracero program. They had participated in the CCC program in the 1930s. Ruth's father built a CCC camp on his land. Ruth felt the CCC people were good workers unlike people on welfare.

Jane talks about the displaced persons program. Mrs. Bounds was proud of the trees they had helped plant.

Jane talks about Horace Bounds' philosophy as expressed at his funeral (February 14, 1997). They refer to a scrapbook belonging to Eva Bounds' mother, Helena Snits. It is dated 1873 and will be donated to the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum.