

**NEW MEXICO
FARM & RANCH
HERITAGE
MUSEUM**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT**

CONSULTANT: Lela Harvey

DATE OF BIRTH: 1939 GENDER: Female

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: March 13, 2008

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Harvey residence in Las Cruces, N.M.

INTERVIEWER: Donna M. Wojcik

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM X OTHER _____

TRANSCRIBED: No

NUMBER OF TAPES: One

ABTRACTOR: Donna M. Wojcik

DATE ABSTRACTED: April 9, 2008

RECORDING QUALITY (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Rural living in Roswell area.

DATE RANGE: 1939-2008

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

TAPE ONE, SIDE A:

The consultant was born and raised in Roswell, N.M., in 1939. Her maternal relatives moved from Texas and homesteaded near the Capitan Mountains of New Mexico in the 1800s. Her maternal grandfather ran a freight line from Roswell to Capitan. The name of their community was Spindle, and all that remains of the town is the cemetery.

Her father moved from Missouri to Roswell around 1910. He was a farmer and a rancher. Her paternal grandparents traveled in covered wagon from Gonzales, Tex., to Arabela. From there they moved to Spindle.

Her mother was born in the small town of Meek, N.M., [now an abandoned agricultural center 43 miles east of Carrizozo] located between Arabela and Spindle. Her maternal relatives raised goats in Arabela but switched to raising cattle when they moved to Spindle. Harvey's grandfather and uncles were cowboys for the Block Ranch. Windmills supplied water, but there was a small stream that ran when it rained. There were not any existing buildings on the land when her relatives homesteaded.

Harvey was born in Roswell in 1939. The family moved to Roswell in 1911 or 1912, built a home, and began a travel court [now know as motel] business. Her father also ran a store with service station, and owned a cab company. Harvey attended grades 1-8 at Brenda Elementary School, grade 9 at Roswell Junior High, and grades 10-12 at Roswell High. She enrolled in New Mexico A&M in the fall of 1957 to study Home Economics Education. She met her husband Whit there, and after they married, she became the bookkeeper at the gin.

She loves Las Cruces and is active in the ginning industry. She has been involved in some form of agriculture all of her life. She was the president of the New Mexico Women's Club, was involved in the New Mexico Cotton Ginners Association, and the National Cotton Council. She has belonged to several civic organizations as well. She states that "most everything involved with agriculture, we were usually in the middle of it." In her younger years she showed livestock at the fair and won Grand Champion Steer and Reserve Grand Champion Steer.

She recalls that people did more doctoring at home using old remedies. The best date that young people could go on was to the Shamrock Drive-In. Of course there were school dances and ball games to attend as well, and she feels that there was more freedom in those days. Her parents had expected her to get a higher education. Her father was "very insistent." She wanted to be a veterinarian, but feels she was born at the wrong time because women vets were not accepted except to look after dogs and cats. She wanted to work with large animals. As a result, she was discouraged against pursuing veterinarian school. She chose to major in Home Economics Education and was leaning toward nutrition had she continued with her education.

Her best memory of growing up was getting up early in the morning to ride her horse. Roswell was small and laid back in those days, she states.

She recalls the "Roswell incident" [UFO crash] and says that her uncle, who was with the State Police, was one of the first ones called to go out to the site. Her father received a phone call from the ranch owner, who asked him to come out because "I wanna show you something." However, by the time her father got there the area had already been sealed off. She feels that it was indeed a UFO crash and that it was not a weather balloon. She does not know why it was covered up or why so many lies were told.

She does not believe that the Roswell incident has ruined the town because it has been confined to one area of town and feels that, in many ways, it has been a boost to the town since the closing of the airbase.

If given a choice between life then and life now, Harvey admits that she would hate to give up some of the modern conveniences. She liked the quieter, more laid back way that people used to live and feels that they were much healthier because they did not push themselves as hard as people do now. She believes that losing the old style values has taken the quality out of life, and that this affects the whole society and not just individuals.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B: Blank