

**NEW MEXICO
FARM & RANCH
HERITAGE
MUSEUM**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT**

CONSULTANT: George Meredith ("Dogie") Jones

DATE OF BIRTH: July 23, 1926 GENDER: Male

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: February 8 and 9, 1999

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Jones ranch, Watrous, New Mexico

INTERVIEWER: Jane O'Cain

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM OTHER _____

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: April 24, 2001

NUMBER OF TAPES: Five

ABTRACTOR: Sheila Klug

DATE ABSTRACTED: September 21, 2001

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Excellent

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Includes his family history, starting with his Grandfather Kronig's arrival in Watrous in 1848 and continuing on with the consultant's experiences fighting the foot and mouth disease in Mexico in the late 1940s, working for thirty years with the Cattle Sanitary Board, serving as director of the Livestock Board (the Cattle and Sheep Sanitary Boards combined), and raising Red Angus cattle and quarter horses.

DATE RANGE: 1848-1999

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

TAPE ONE, SIDE A:

Mr. Jones describes how he acquired the nickname “Dogie” from one of Tex Austin’s sons. He then relates how his paternal great-grandfather, William Kronig, came from Germany to Watrous via wagon train on the Santa Fe Trail in 1848. Kronig was a scout for the army and one of the founders of Canon City, Colorado. He then bought Barclay’s Fort, an independent fort and trading post. The supplies came by ox train to the Fort and were distributed from there. He operated the trading post until the railroad came through in 1879.

When the business at the trading post began to diminish Kronig built a Victorian-style house, known as the Phoenix Ranch House, in 1865. He eventually sold that and in 1883 built the house Mr. Jones is living in and operated his store from there. This was on land included in the John Scolley Grant.

Mr. Kronig’s first wife was a Kincaid. She was married at age fifteen and died at age seventeen, leaving one daughter, Mr. Jones’s grandmother. Later Mr. Kronig married one of the daughters of Sam B. Watrous, a pioneer in the area. Many of Mr. Kronig’s experiences are detailed in a diary, which was donated to the State Historical Society in Santa Fe. The diary is written in English; Mr. Kronig and his descendants could also speak Spanish.

Mr. Jones still has many of the old records from the store, though a lot of them have disappeared over the years.

Mr. Jones’s grandmother was born in 1865 at Barclay’s Fort and is buried in the family cemetery on the ranch.

In addition to Mr. Kronig’s journal, there was an article published in a western magazine. This article has been copied and has been placed in the Museum’s files.

Mr. Kronig and his second wife had seven children, plus one adopted child. Mr. Jones does not know her history, but in a photo she appears to be partly of American Indian descent.

After William Kronig, Sr., died in 1900, his son, William Kronig, Jr., took over the ranch. He suffered from rheumatoid arthritis and traveled to several locales seeking relief from the disease. He had to leave the ranch in others’ hands and in doing so lost most of the ranch.

Mr. Jones’s grandmother, Fanny, married a civil engineer name Frank Meredith Jones, who was the architect for the house Mr. Jones is now living in. Mr. Jones stated that there has been someone with “Meredith” in his name since 1601. Frank Meredith Jones came to the West as a surveyor for the Santa Fe Railroad’s right-of-way through the area. He settled there and raised his family in Las Vegas. The consultant’s father was born in Fort Sumner because F. M. Jones was employed at Fort Sumner at the time, but they owned a beautiful home in Las Vegas at 1010 Douglas Avenue.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B:

Although Mr. Jones’s father was raised in town, he worked on the ranch a great deal and became a veterinarian. When he was a child Mr. Jones’s grandparents lived where he currently lived, and his family lived in the “longhouse,” which was a former stage stop on the Santa Fe Trail. His

father, Garnet Meredith “Butch” Jones, was born in 1888 and was one of seven children. They were all educated and became teachers, engineers, etc., and one was an FBI agent.

A son-in-law of William Kronig, Jr. ran the ranch from about 1900 to 1952. Mr. Jones described him as more of a farmer than a rancher and grains: wheat, oats, corn, barley were the main products raised during this period. At some point, though, Hereford cattle were brought introduced.

Mr. Jones described his earliest memories, dating back to grades three and four. Farm work was done using teams of horses. Irrigation was done basically the way it’s done today, though he has been improving it. He’s laser-leveled the land and still uses flood irrigation, but with gated irrigation pipe. Cattle branding is unchanged.

The Hereford cattle have changed; they’re taller and have more of a frame.

Mr. Jones discussed how they used to clean irrigation ditches. The men got a dollar a day for the work; Mr. Jones and his brother each got fifty cents. He also describes how they used horses to cut and rake hay. The ranch did not get a tractor until the year his grandfather died. Mr. Jones clarified why he sometimes refers to William Kronig, Jr., as his grandfather and sometimes as his great uncle.

Mr. Jones’s mother and maternal grandmother emigrated from South Africa at the end of the Boer War. His mother’s maiden name was Pickard. They were part of a large group, many named Snyman or Veljunes, who came here intending to go to Mexico. However a land purchase of 700,000 acres in Mexico fell through and some decided to begin farming in the Chamberino, New Mexico, area. Mr. Jones’s mother and grandmother were with the people who stayed in New Mexico, and eventually went north to Eunice, New Mexico, where his grandmother met and married William Kronig, Jr.

Mr. Jones’s father renovated the old stage stop, and the family moved there in 1939. His father and another veterinarian, Dr. Miller, did not have clinics, but worked out of their cars. He served in the military as a veterinarian in World War I.

The consultant showed the interviewer a book about his grandmother’s group called *Boer Settlers in the Southwest* by Brian M. DuToit. The book talks about the settlement in Chamberino.

Mr. Jones’s parents married in 1924 and for a time he managed the stock for Tex Austin’s rodeo. The Austin ranch was between Las Vegas and Santa Fe and eventually became the Greer Garson ranch.

TAPE TWO, SIDE A:

After Greer Garson’s husband, Buddy Fogelson died, she donated most of the ranch to the National Park Service. The consultant describes the large land holdings the Kronig’s—Junior and Senior—owned. He mentions the Phoenix Ranch, the Clyde Ranch and the Lobman Ranch plus the ranch to the south of them.

The consultant resumes talking about his father’s veterinary practice. Often, the sick animal would be brought to his father. He remembers watching his father operate on a “water-bellied” calf in their back yard. He also describes how he went with his dad to the Fort Union Ranch to

remove a bad tooth from a horse (by making an incision on the nose and knocking the tooth into the horse's mouth). He also remembers his father castrating a cryptorchid horse (one having only one testicle).

By the time of the Dust Bowl (specifically 1933) they were living in the place across from the railroad. He describes how his mother would put a damp cloth over his face while he napped. His father at that time was working for the government killing cattle, which were starving to death. He talks about how he and his brother would watch their father shoot the cattle and how their father would come home with a shoulder badly bruised from shooting cattle all day long.

The consultant describes some of the changes his father and grandfather would see if they were on the ranch today. Instead of taking three days and two nights to irrigate a particular piece of land, now he can do it in about ten hours. The consultant also talks about how the cost of land has skyrocketed and when various buildings on the land were built. Some of the buildings are on the National Registry of Historic Places.

TAPE TWO, SIDE B:

The consultant describes how his great-grandfather was in the ice business, sometime between 1879 and 1900. In addition, he was one of the founders of Canon City, Colorado, also did some gold mining, and was involved in the development of the irrigation system serving the Maxwell Land Grant.

Mr. Jones tells about an orchard on the property. It was planted in 1903 and the flood of 1904 washed it out. It was replanted after the flood and remained until Mr. Jones took it out in the 1950s. The orchard contained Winesap apples, Bartlett pears, and some crabapples. Referring to the problem of late frosts and also his great-grandfather's ice business, the consultant discusses how much warmer it is now, with severe drought conditions.

During World War II, the consultant's father was managing a ranch in Prescott, Arizona for William B. Leeds. After the war he worked for the government in San Diego. He died in the 1950s of unknown causes, and the consultant's mother died two years later of a cerebral hemorrhage.

The consultant describes how his grandfather Jones kept voluminous notes and declares, "I've got these little pocket books. Boxes of them!"

The consultant went through the eighth grade in Watrous and attended ninth grade in Tucson, Arizona, because his father was attempting to eradicate a horse disease on the Papago [Tohono O'Odham] Indian Reservation. At age sixteen he went into the navy to fight in World War II in the Pacific. After being discharged from the navy he took his high school equivalency exam, then went to Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico. He also went one semester to Denver University.

TAPE THREE, SIDE A:

Conversation returned to the flood of 1904 and its causes plus an earlier flood (in his grandparents' time) when the chinook wind melted a big snow pack. He recalls some of the worst droughts, particularly those of the 1930s and the 1950s. He discussed the impact on cattle when an early spring blizzard hits or when the weather gets so cold that the cattle calve early.

Mr. Jones describes how they sometimes submerge a chilled calf in a tub of hot water and then give it colostrum. They've never had problems with toxic vegetation such as pine needles or turpentine weed, as they provide hay as supplement feed if there is snow on the ground. While they feed the cattle hay, they do not give them any grain. They do buy a cake high in protein made at a local mill. He then describes the types of natural grasses that grow in the area.

He believes the ranch got electricity in the late 1940s. He mentions that there are still some people without electricity because they are so far from the main line that it would cost too much money to get the line to their house. Instead, they use generators. When the consultant was a boy they had a Delco plant with fifteen or twenty large glass batteries and the generator would recharge using either wind power or a small engine.

The first house that his great-grandfather built, on the Phoenix Ranch, had carbine lights, which are still there. The house was built in 1863 [earlier stated 1865], and the consultant describes it as "a beautiful old house" with three-foot-thick adobe walls. The house is not open to the public.

The consultant does not remember any old medicinal cures. When the family needed a doctor, they would consult Dr. Gallantine (?) at the Valmora Sanatorium in Las Vegas.

He describes the family's holiday traditions. His grandmother was a wonderful cook, for Christmas she roasted a suckling pig. She also cooked many New Mexican foods, including *buñuelos*, now called *sopapillas*. He mentions that the foods from that era are different from what you get today. He also talks about *chicharones* (cracklings), as his grandfather also raised hogs.

TAPE THREE, SIDE B:

The consultant thinks that one of the reasons they had hogs was to pick up all the apples off the ground.

His mother had a large garden, made her own soap, and churned butter. The consultant has no recollection of making beer or wine. His mother sewed much of the families clothing, plus was a quilt maker.

The consultant reminisced about the many businesses in Watrous ("a booming town") years ago, plus a recreation center at Phoenix Lake. Now there is not even a gas station, and he's had to help many stranded tourists over the years.

Mr. Jones explained his father's connection with Tex Austin, a rodeo promoter/producer and rancher. His father, in addition to being a veterinarian, was a rodeo judge, a job which took him to Madison Square Garden, Chicago, and London.

The consultant described his experiences in the navy in World War II and going to Denver University and Highlands University afterwards and how he eventually became an instructor for boot making and saddle making and general leatherwork. By 1952 the program at Highlands had started to phase out so Mr. Jones leased the ranch from his grandmother after his grandfather died. In 1977 he became a director of the Livestock Board, a position he held for six years. He had had heart surgery and felt he would prefer living in Albuquerque to be near his physicians; his oldest son, Bill, took care of the ranch.

Dogie and his brother, Charlie, bought a pasture adjoining the ranch which had been part of the original property, but later Charlie wanted to be more involved with cattle so they had to sell that property. Charlie lived in Albuquerque but worked in Mexico as a cattle buyer until he died.

TAPE FOUR, SIDE A:

Dogie Jones also worked in Mexico for a time during an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. He relates how he got his job, principally because he was fluent in Spanish. He then describes, in considerable detail, his work vaccinating every animal with cloven hooves down in an area near San Luis Potosi. The job was dangerous because many of the local people resisted having their animals vaccinated. Seven Americans died in the effort, and he tells of the death of one of his co-workers, Floyd Proctor. He showed the interviewer his Mexican driver's license, which was made out of brass.

The consultant relates how he was driving around Leon, Guanajuato, and ran into a man named Hector Snyman, who turned out to be a relative. He delineates his three marriages and the names of his children.

In addition to raising cattle, Mr. Jones also raises quarter horses and has served as president of the New Mexico Quarter Horse Associations three times. He relates how he got into the business, starting out with Warren Shoemaker's son-in-law and a veterinarian named Dr. Kleck.

The consultant also worked for the telephone company in Las Vegas and also spent thirty years with the Cattle Sanitary Board inspecting brands. He describes his work as an assistant direct for northern New Mexico, while Dale Cooper held the same position in southern New Mexico. They reported to Lee Garner. In the 1960s the Cattle Sanitary Board and the Sheep Sanitary Board were combined into the Livestock Board.

After his heart surgery he got back into the cattle breeding business. He bought Hereford cows and started breeding them with Red Angus bulls.

TAPE FOUR, SIDE B:

Mr. Jones talked about the "skyrocketing" prices for land. At the prices some people are paying, \$200/acre for rangeland, there's no way that raising livestock on the land can pay for it. He mentions the ranchers in the area who have herds, but said many are absentee owners from Texas and the rest are yearling operators.

He also discusses the registered cattle business and the use of artificial insemination and his raising of registered Red Angus bulls. He also describes how they sell cattle via satellite video. He said that if his grandfather knew it "would absolutely knock his socks off."

Mr. Jones also explains the difference between Red Angus and Black Angus, and how the Red Angus was developed from Black Angus. The Bectons in Sheridan, Wyoming did much of this breeding. Both breeds can be too large. Most desirable is a medium-size frame with good carcass value in order to produce the ideal size steak.

He next describes some of his quarter horses and the prices some of them can bring. He uses Josh Armstrong in Las Cruces to train his horses. The center of the quarter horse world, he feels, is

Gainesville, Texas. He describes how he keeps all the records for his horses on a computer. This includes pedigrees and physical information such as vaccinations, deworming, shoeing, etc. He also continues his family tradition of keeping a written diary.

In describing the changes in farming and ranching in his lifetime, he mentions the use of fertilizers—virtually unheard of when he was a child. The other major change was the use of a laser leveler because it saves water and labor. In addition money is available from a wider variety of sources; a rancher no longer has to rely on his personal local bank.

He also describes the changes in the telephone system. Years ago you were charged every time you cranked the phone, so you didn't use the phone that much, but if you had a problem the local people would come out to fix it.

As for future changes, he feels that most farming will be done by large corporations, although vegetable farms, like those in the Mesilla Valley, will survive for many more years. He's concerned, too, about the developments on irrigated land that may lead to the loss of agricultural (irrigated) land.

TAPE FIVE, SIDE A:

Highway construction has changed, as they no longer will use river gravel anymore, but go to limestone quarries to get gravel that will pass a pressure test.

There was a brief discussion of brands. His great grandfather had the Hashknife brand, which he still uses on his calling card for his horse business, and he uses the Walking "O" brand for his Red Angus. Brands were first recorded in Las Vegas and the office was later moved to Albuquerque. There was talk of moving it to Santa Fe, which Mr. Jones opposed. He also feels the state should be more careful about spending money on things like high-priced vehicles and an assistant veterinarian.

Finally, he describes how in many Western states it is possible to get a lifetime inspection of a horse. While it costs more, it is well worth it, he feels, because it saves hassles for the inspectors and the owner.

TAPE FIVE, SIDE B: Blank