



ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

CONSULTANT: Bob Porter

DATE OF BIRTH: September 3, 1929 GENDER: Male

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: June 15, 2000

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Consultant's home, Las Cruces, New Mexico

INTERVIEWER: Jane O'Cain

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM OTHER: _____

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: July 7, 2000

NUMBER OF TAPES: One

ABTRACTOR: Jane O'Cain

DATE ABSTRACTED: July 26, 2000

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Very good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Recounts memories of the prisoners of war who were incarcerated during World War II in Hatch, New Mexico. The prisoners of war worked on his father's farm near Salem during the cotton harvest.

DATE RANGE: 1943 - 1945

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

TAPE ONE, SIDE A:

Consultant was born in 1929. During World War II, he resided on his parents' farm near Salem, New Mexico. They produced cotton and alfalfa on farmland that was cleared of native growth (bosque).

Discusses cotton harvesting before WWII and during the early years of the war. Harvesters then included migrant laborers (families) from Texas and Oklahoma, school children, women, and, of course, family labor. After a prisoner of war camp was established in Hatch, New Mexico, his father utilized German prisoners of war (POWs) to harvest cotton.

He recalls the German POWs as being cooperative and "very pleasant" to work with. His father, as an inducement, would provide the POWs with rolls or bread. The POWs seemed healthy to the consultant. He does not remember working alongside the POWs, who were under guard, but recalls letting one take a ride on his horse. The guard cautioned him not to do that again.

The consultant also relates one occasion when he observed the POWs being held under guard on the high school's football field. He states they were on "strike," but the strike did not last long, as they were held outside in the hot sun.

Porter did not have any negative feelings about the POWs. He feels that their use as agricultural laborers was good not only for the farmers, but also for the prisoners' mental well-being.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B: Blank