



ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

CONSULTANT: Petra Estrada

DATE OF BIRTH: April 3, 1928 GENDER: Female

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: July 11, 2000

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Pressler residence, Lordsburg, New Mexico

INTERVIEWER: Mollie Pressler

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM OTHER _____

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: December 29, 2000

NUMBER OF TAPES: One

ABTRACTOR: Sylvia Wheeler

DATE ABSTRATED: April 20, 2001

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Describes activities of prisoners of war at Camp Lordsburg.

DATE RANGE: 1940-2000

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

TAPE ONE:

Petra Estrada's family moved from Columbus, New Mexico, to Lordsburg. Prior to their living in Columbus they had lived in Mexico.

Her parents ran the Green and White tourist camp in Lordsburg during World War II. Many soldiers or their wives came through and rented there. A camp for Japanese internees had been built just outside Lordsburg. She recalls a visit made by the Japanese internees to her school during which they explained bonsai tree cultivation.

(Eventually the camp was utilized as a prisoner of war camp.) Italian POWs also visited the school, singing opera. German POWs visited and explained their art. While students knew the POWs were enemies, they were young and unafraid. The POWs also seemed to accept their status and did not act angry. She saw an art and craft fair in town where prisoners displayed their crafts, and their diaries of daily activities. She felt that the POWs were well treated and wondered about her brother and cousin fighting in Europe and the status of POWs over there.

Later, her young husband joined the navy, and was serving on the USS Missouri (earlier the USS North Carolina) in Guam when the Enola Gay dropped the bomb on Japan.

She recalls learning to knit wool scarves of different colors: olive green, white, and navy for U.S. soldiers. The colors indicated the area in which the soldiers were fighting. She remembers saving scrap metal, turning in grease, and rationing. Everybody pulled together during that time, she says.

She recalls being given a small bag with oranges, or raisins in it, to have in case they had to go downstairs during a raid. She also remembers hearing the camp sirens in case of trouble there. Growing up during the war was interesting, she feels.