

**NEW MEXICO  
FARM & RANCH  
HERITAGE  
MUSEUM**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM  
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT**

CONSULTANTS: Fred and Naomi Ewing

DATES OF BIRTH: Jan. 9, 1923 / Nov. 25, 1919 GENDER: M / F

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: July 26, 2000

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Ewing residence, Lordsburg, New Mexico

INTERVIEWER: Mollie Pressler

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM  OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: August 15, 2000

NUMBER OF TAPES: One

ABTRACTOR: Sheila Klug

DATE ABSTRACTED: April 16, 2001

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Documents their recollections of their jobs at the prisoner of war camp in Lordsburg plus their memories of watching the Japanese internees being brought to the camp (prior to the prisoners from Germany and Italy).

DATE RANGE: 1942-1943

## **ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):**

### **TAPE ONE:**

Although they were both living in Lordsburg when the prisoner of war camp was established, they do not have specific memories of how they learned of the camp. Rather, it was simply by “word of mouth.”

Fred described his work for the contractor, M. M. Sundt, who built Camp Lordsburg. He cannot remember the exact pay, but says it was an improvement over his job in a gas station or with Phelps Dodge. Naomi started working at the camp in early 1942, and agreed that the pay was better than her previous job at a local bank.

Mrs. Ewing remembers watching the Japanese internees marching from the railroad to the camp. She remembers that many of them were old and looked very sad. She felt sorry for them and thought it unfair that they had to march in the heat. Fred witnessed the same situation but does not remember feeling sorry for them. At the time he didn't make a distinction between internees and prisoners of war, although much later everyone was made aware that they were indeed civilians.

Mr. Ewing worked at the camp only for six to nine months, and then trained briefly at Compton Junior College to be a tool designer before being drafted into the U. S. Navy in early 1943.

Mrs. Ewing worked in the engineer's office until the camp was almost finished. Rather than be transferred to Douglas, Arizona, she resigned and went to work for a local bank.

She never observed the internees once they went into the camp and was too young at the time to be aware of the camp's impact on the local economy. She never saw any German or Italian prisoners being taken to camp. Mrs. Ewing said that her memories of that time are very blurred, perhaps because it was a time in her life she did not enjoy.

After the war the camp was deactivated and the buildings were sold, with veterans being given preference. They bought two buildings and moved it to the ranch. One building was converted into a house and the other into a barn. Neither they nor any of their neighbors used POW labor.