



ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

CONSULTANT: B. H. "Tex" Burdick

DATE OF BIRTH: September 25, 1900 GENDER: Male

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: February 2, 2000

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: El Paso, Texas

INTERVIEWER: Ron Nelson

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM X OTHER:

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: April 14, 2000

NUMBER OF TAPES: Two

ABTRACTOR: Ron Nelson

DATE ABSTRACTED: April 26, 2000

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: The necessity for windmills in assuring a good water supply--working with drillers, determining size of mill required, how it was erected, how much they cost and how they were maintained. Also told stories about John Prather, Oliver Lee, a wandering cowboy and a widow's effort to get a gas line.

DATE RANGE: 1930s and 1940s

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

TAPE ONE:

The importance of a good water supply in increasing pasture size and improving cattle herds in the early days.

Working with well drillers—the relationship with them.

Determining size of windmill needed for a given site.

How they anchored and erected a mill.

Costs of windmills then and now.

Replacing suckers or leathers in existing wells.

Doing work for John Prather and Prather's reaction to government condemnation of his property.

Burdick's recollections of Oliver Lee, his trouble with the law, time in New Mexico Senate, ability with a pistol, routing water down from the mountains.

A story about Lee's son, "Hop," and the circus fight.

How long a mill could last. It was very dependent on changing oil when dirty or at least once yearly.

Description of a job installing an eighteen-foot mill on a Texas lawyer's sheep ranch and consultant's encounter with a rattlesnake there.

Description of a wandering, armed cowboy coming into Burdick's camp, staying for supper, dropping gun shells into the campfire and then leaving mysteriously after breakfast.

TAPE TWO:

Description of his "territory"—south of Route 66, west of the Pecos, across New Mexico and into Douglas and Cochise Counties in Arizona.

He tells a story about a widow on a small ranch through which a natural gas pipeline was being run who, with the help of her rifle, convinced the men laying it to give her an outlet.

Record keeping.