



**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM  
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT**

CONSULTANT: Phil Harvey, Jr.

DATE OF BIRTH: July 10, 1951 GENDER: Male

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: October 3, 2007

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum

INTERVIEWER: Donna M. Wojcik

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMFRHM\_ X OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

TRANSCRIBED: No

NUMBER OF TAPES: Three

ABTRACTOR: Donna M. Wojcik

DATE ABSTRACTED: November 14, 2007

RECORDING QUALITY (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Hereford cattle business in New Mexico and the history of Harvey Herefords, Inc.

DATE RANGE: 1900-2007

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

### **TAPE ONE, SIDE A:**

The interview begins with a brief history of the Harvey family's arrival in New Mexico in 1916. The family ranching business began as the Ancho Sheep Company; however, in 1924 it was traded for the J.B. French Ranch. This ranch, located near Claunch, N.M., was stocked with Hereford cattle. There were ranch acquisitions over the years. Harvey tells the story of a dispute with another ranch over water access.

The ranch at Carrizozo is discussed. Harvey states that Hereford cattle are well suited to New Mexico and able to acclimate well to any country. They do not need a lot of grain and produce high quality beef without being fed a lot of concentrate. In contrast, Angus cattle need a lot of grain and are not as efficient as the Hereford. Shorthorn cattle are better for milking, but still are not as efficient as Herefords. Harvey feels that all English breeds are better and easier to manage while European breeds were not raised solely for beef production. They served dual purposes in dairies and pulling wagons. Originally Herefords were the top breed in the West and were introduced as a replacement for the Longhorn in the late 1800s.

The Carrizozo ranch was the location of the Harvey's commercial herd. C. M. Harvey, Phil's grandfather, was more of a businessman than a rancher. Eventually other ranches were added. C. M. Harvey had three sons: Paul Harvey Sr., Rufus, and Charlie. Charlie had a mining operation in Oklahoma; Rufus was killed in a car accident; and Paul Harvey Sr. was a property owner and had a share in the ranch. C. M. Harvey loved a good adventure. In the early 1900s, he took a trip from El Paso to Banff and Lake Louise, Canada, before traveling down the west coast. One time when he was in Juarez, Chihuahua, he met Pancho Villa.

The Cloudcroft ranch was made up of different homesteads. Sixteen sections of the ranch were forested. It was the largest piece of deeded land in the Lincoln National Forest. The ranch had an abundance of animals for hunting, such as deer and turkey. It was fenced with barbed wire, consisting of ten feet of game-proof fencing with net wire on the bottom and barbed wire on the top. Phil recalls that when he was going to school, the ranch manager's son would come to school smelling badly because he had a trap line and checked the trap line before coming to school.

In 1938 Harvey Hereford Ranches was formed as a partnership between C.M. Harvey, Paul Harvey, and C.M. Harvey, Jr [Charlie]. The triangle H bar was their brand. The ranch east of Cloudcroft was the location of the commercial Hereford operation. It was also the location of the silver fox operation, where the Harvey's raised fox for fur. Mozan Calantine, the ranch foreman from 1948-1983, was also a geneticist. Although he had no formal education in genetics, he knew how to breed the fox through artificial insemination. This involved removing semen from a female that had been serviced by a particular male and inserting that semen into another female that was in heat. The result was good breeding from sire to daughters and then to granddaughters, thus locking in certain desired traits. The foxes produced outstanding quality fur. Phil recalls finding skunks in the whelping pens and using his pellet gun to chase them out. During World War II, the Russians flooded the fox fur market, which led to the ruin of the New York fur market. That, along with the shortage of fox feed, forced the family out of the fox business.

In 1919 Phil's grandfather purchased a seventeen-section ranch west of Alamogordo, N.M., which was made up of 80% deeded land. Two sections of it were eventually taken by White Sands in an exchange for BLM land within the ranch boundary. This ranch was used as winter pasture for the commercial cattle from the Carrizozo ranch and was used for the registered cattle from the Cloudcroft ranch in the mid-1940s. Until 1952 the cattle were trail-driven to the location over a two day period, traveling through

several canyons. In later years they were transported there by truck. The Alamogordo ranch was located eighteen miles from the Trinity Site, where the first atomic bomb was tested. Harvey remembers the stories that Calantine would tell as they were moving the stock, especially the period of time after the atomic bomb was detonated.

### **TAPE ONE, SIDE B:**

The discussion of the atomic bomb continues. Harvey recalls that after the bomb was detonated some of the older cattle had white marks on their skin from radiation burns.

The Cloudcroft ranch, started in 1938, was the location of the registered cattle business. The family owned a farm/ranch located at Hill (north of Las Cruces). Pedigree lines, (or sire lines) are discussed. On an average, 1,200 cows were kept at Hill. These registered cattle were integrated into the commercial business at Carrizozo.

Harvey recalls that his father (Phil Harvey Sr.) was heavily involved in the ranch at Cloudcroft. He took care of the business end of the ranching business and was more oriented towards improvements to the ranch, such as wells, fences, and pastures. He was interested in land use issues and the efficiency of the ranch. He retired in the mid-1990s. Calantine took care of the cattle end of the operation.

In the late 1980s to mid-1990s, the family began selling some of the ranches. The farm/ranch at Hill, purchased in the 1920s, consisted of approximately 600 irrigated acres. Several crops were grown there including cotton and alfalfa. In later years small grains, lettuce, onions and chile were grown. Andy Calhoun and his wife ran the farm from 1936 to the late 1960s, when Andy's son Denny took over operations. The cattle were rotated on wheat, oat or corn silage and kept in feed pens next to the Calhoun arena.

In 1952 Grandfather Harvey passed away and Phil Harvey, Sr. assumed overall management of the ranches, particularly state wage issues and the bookkeeping. No bulls were purchased between 1950 and 1960 because the Harvey's were producing their own bulls.

Harvey Jr. began working with the registered cattle after serving eight years in the military reserves. He states that there has been a genetic flaw of dwarfism in Hereford and Angus cattle. The flaw is a result of academia trying to raise more efficient cattle which are shorter and put on weight fast. At one point they culled one-third of their herd with signs of dwarfism and put them into the commercial herd. As a result, in the late 1970s, they started making improvements by adding modern bloodlines such as D4 Mischief and Line 1 Dominoes. They added clean pedigree breeds from Montana and Washington. Cooper and Holden are two of the top breeders of Line 1 cattle in the United States. Meat packers were looking for cattle with less back fat that were leaner and more muscular.

In 1980 forty-five Sam Donald bred heifers were added to the herd. Also added were the offspring of D4 Mischief. By the mid-1980s the herd had been built up to 200 registered females, and 100 bulls were being sold each year. By the early 1990s several top herd sires were added, and Canadian blood lines were introduced. In the 1950s and 1960s the average weight of a good bull was between 2,200 and 2,400 pounds. Registered cattle with a frame six or frame seven are between 2,200 and 2,600 pounds at maturity. Range bulls weight in at 2,200 to 2,300 pounds.

In 1978 or '79 the Harvey's started showing cattle in Albuquerque and did so for about twenty years. They were members of the New Mexico Hereford Association.

## **TAPE TWO, SIDE A:**

Breed improvements continued into the late 1980s and 1990s. The American Hereford Association began its Performance Pedigree Program, with an emphasis on ancestry, performance, and physical traits. Expected Progeny Differences (EPD) were incorporated, thus giving the rancher a way to select cattle based on statistics such as birth weight, yearling weight, maternal milk, and the ratios of milk to growth, and not entirely on sire. The characteristics of good Hereford conformation are discussed, as is the Certified Hereford Beef Program, which has received good recommendations from the American Heart Association for the tenderness, marbling, and palatability of Hereford beef.

In the early 1980s the family decided to sell their ranches as a result of drought, lack of profitability in the livestock business, and dealing with environmental regulations regarding issues like grazing. The French Ranch was sold in 1986 after battling fifteen years of drought. In 1988 the ranches in Clauch and Corona were sold.

In 1989 Phil Harvey Jr. served on the American Hereford Association board. In May 1996 the ranches at Alamogordo and Cloudcroft were sold. All the registered cattle at Roswell were sold. The bulls were kept back from the sale because it was very dry at the time, but they were sold in the fall in an all-breeds bull sale. The farm near Las Cruces was sold in 2005. Harvey misses the day-to-day operations and says that it was hard on those who had worked on the ranches and the farm for all those years.

In 1996 Harvey and Jim Bob Burnett formed B&H Herefords, located south of Hope, N.M. Harvey does the registration, advertising, and other tasks while Burnett focuses on the cattle. After the calves have been weaned they are moved to wheat pasture for the winter months, which ensures fast growth. They are returned to the native grass pasture in the spring.

## **TAPE TWO, SIDE B:**

Sale prices for cattle and water supplies are discussed. Harvey recalls that there was a severe winter in the early 1960s, with temperatures in Clauch at 39° below zero. A railroad tank car full of water froze solid. Ranch hands had to thaw it out by building fires under the tank. Southern New Mexico ranches face constant challenges of enough food and enough feed for the cattle.

The ranch at Corona got electricity in early 1980, and telephone lines to the ranch were installed in 1985. By the time all the ranches were sold, each had its own electricity.

Marketing the cattle and the availability of financial credit are discussed. Harvey recalls that his grandfather was careful, frugal, and did not make unnecessary improvements. Family members loaned money to each other, especially during drought years.

Harvey did city chores growing up as a child in El Paso, but remembers that when he did go out to the ranch during the summer he built fence, drove fence posts, dug post holes, strung wire, and cleaned the troughs. During his late teens and early twenties he helped with branding, drilled wells, and worked on vehicle repairs. All mechanic work was done on site. He did not always work and recalls that he hunted rattlesnakes in the spring and the fall and shot rabbits and varmints. He also recalls rabbit clubbing.

The nearest medical facility was Carrizozo, but the best treatment centers were in Ruidoso and Alamogordo. Major injuries were treated in El Paso, a 150-mile trip.

**TAPE THREE, SIDE A:**

Harvey's best memories include riding horses and hunting deer and turkey. When asked what he feels the greatest impact on ranching is, he replies that government intervention, the reintroduction of the grey wolf, and the banning of cattle ranching within national forest areas have had the biggest impact. He states that regulations detrimental to animal agriculture production have forced many people out of business.

What does he see for the future of the cattle industry in the next fifty years? "People must eat. The freedom, independence and lifestyle in all forms of agriculture are the basis for this nation. The more our farmers and ranchers are put out of business, the more our freedom declines, and the more dependent we are on food from foreign sources. The day that this nation cannot produce its own food, when that comes, this nation will be gone. It will be destroyed. We have to be independent. We have to grow our own food, produce our own natural resources, and utilize them. When we are stopped from doing those things, this nation will be gone. We have plenty of beef here. We can produce all that we need in this country and export more."

There is a discussion of the fox fur business in the 1930s and '40s and purchasing of cavalry horses from the Army at Fort Bliss for use as fox feed. The interview closes with a discussion of the different brands used by the Harvey family.

**TAPE THREE, SIDE B:** Blank