

**NEW MEXICO
FARM & RANCH
HERITAGE
MUSEUM**

CONSULTANT: Lucille Eichholtz

DATE OF BIRTH: Not given. GENDER: Female

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: April 6, 1998

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Mrs. Eichholtz's home in Mesilla

INTERVIEWER: Karen Keehr

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM X OTHER _____

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: May 14, 1998

NUMBER OF TAPES: Two

ABTRACTOR: Sheila Klug

DATE ABSTRACTED: June 21, 2001

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Her early life and memories of Mesilla and Las Cruces.

DATE RANGE: 1911-1928

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

TAPE ONE, SIDE A:

Mrs. Eichholtz talks about Fabian Garcia, who remembered her riding horseback. She states she loved her horse, which she received for her eighth birthday. She rode the horse to school or had the horse pull a buggy. She had perfect attendance through elementary school and the first three years of high school.

Her family lived on the other side of Mesilla and the Lowrys [?] lived nearby. Dan Lowry referred to her as "that wild Borsberry Indian."

Fabian Garcia and Roy Nakayama did a lot for chile. Fabian Garcia also helped the Lockes [?] with onions, which were grown for the seed. The seed was shipped all over the U.S. She described how the onion seeds were harvested and processed. She said the onions were White Guamas.

Mrs. Eichholtz said almost anything could be grown in this valley. There was a William Scoggins who grew great sweet potatoes and yams. She describes how they were cured. She feels what stopped the growing of sweet potatoes and various fruits was cotton. Everything was "cotton, cotton, cotton . . . Now it's pecan."

She describes how the Stahmanns came here because a man named Harris described the area as a "bee keeper's heaven." She tells how they moved pecan trees to what had been the Snow farm and how he would use twice as much insecticide as the college recommended on the theory that "if a little bit does good, a whole lot does better." She said he was just "cuckoo." Blackbirds and squirrels were also a problem.

Her husband taught in the Engineering Department and worked for Dean Jett until he retired. Then he worked for Jack Clark. When the Second World War came, Clark moved to California to work for the government. Meanwhile, there were few boys left to attend her husband's classes. Mr. Stahmann came to him and asked if he could make some spare parts for him. He worked for him for six years, but was injured in a terrible accident. After that he retired and they moved back to their present house, where they had lived for two years before moving into a new house Mr. Stahmann had built for them.

She describes the work they did to the house over the years and describes the good-tasting water they got from their well.

She reminisces about moving to the area in October of 1911 and going to school for a year at the old Central School and then Mesilla Park elementary school. She recalls the principal, Miss Fanny French, and states that the French family did a lot for Las Cruces. This includes bringing electricity and also owning an ice-cream parlor. At first Mr. French ordered ice from El Paso, which would be shipped by train. He then decided to put in electricity to make his own ice. The consultant describes how the lights would dim and brighten when the cotton gins were operating.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B:

She describes living in the house of Sam Bean, brother of the "law Bean in Texas," and how the family next door, the Winters, had a player piano in the house. They all enjoyed hearing the player piano. The Borsberrys had a piano and a record player and loved hearing the Sousa Military Band.

She also described the music at the silent movies and tells how much she loved the serial thrillers shown on Thursday nights. She described the movies at the Fountain Theater and how Mr. Fountain would editorialize to the audience. She described how fond she was of Mr. Fountain, the oldest son of Colonel Fountain. She describes the last time she saw him and relates how he was not allowed to go to the trial in Hillsboro about Colonel Fountain's death because Mr. Fountain would just cry all the time. The younger boy, Jack, was not allowed to go because he had a bad temper and they worried, "he'd shoot up the whole works." She reports that Mr. Fountain felt that some day he would see his little brother because "no one could be cruel enough to kill a child." His daughter, Elizabeth, told Mrs. Eichholtz that he really knew what had happened because someone involved had told him.

She describes her childhood and her father's wearing a duster as he plowed a hundred acres of land by walking a plow. They had indoor plumbing but Mrs. Locke's house had running water but no toilet. She describes the outdoor privies built to government specifications.

The consultant describes the people living in the area: W. E. F. J. Westle, W. E. A. Watson, the Percy Barkers, Dorothy Locke, and Edith Barrier. She describes how Percy or his father would ride an old mule around in the fields while carrying an umbrella over his head. She also talks about passing fields of chiles on the way to school and how they would grab a chile pod to eat with their lunch.

There also was a goat belonging to a family who needed goat's milk for their son. Mrs. Eichholtz describes how they'd entice the goat to jump the fence. The boy's mother was from Maine and was so homesick for the ocean that her husband, Fred Ferguson, sent her home. After two weeks she was back because she found that she missed that mountains and the clear air.

Mrs. Eichholtz's mother, while living in Maxwell, New Mexico, had to go to a hospital in El Paso and while there made friends with a young boy. His family would take them all over the Mesilla Valley and show her the fruit trees. Her mother kept saying, "Such beautiful fruit." When she went home, she said to Lucille's father, "That is heaven. That Valley is just heaven." They ended up moving to this area. There were no trucks, so they moved the livestock and farm equipment in boxcars.

TAPE TWO, SIDE A:

The freight cars took several days, but the family took the night train from Maxwell, changing trains in Albuquerque. This was in October 1911.

She describes staying in a hotel until the furniture and everything came. The buildings opened up on to Main Street, and at the back there were corrals. After their things came they rented a house on Main Street from the Beans. Her cat, given to her by an Indian ("for the little papoose") when she was born, was missing when the livestock arrived, and she describes how she found it in the boxcar.

She describes going to the theater, just down Main Street and the time when the family animals followed them to the theater. She also relates how her goat would go into her aunt's house and jump on the bed, making her aunt angry. At Christmas Mrs. Eichholtz and her best friend, Marie Talbot, decorated tumbleweed with cranberries and popcorn.

Traffic on Main Street was very light and consisted mainly of horses and buggies. The children loved to play hide and seek, but one night Mrs. Eichholtz jumped through a broken window into a basement and landed in a coffin.

After a year the consultant's family moved to a farm of approximately one hundred thirty acres. She describes Mr. Snow's one thousand acre ranch and playing with his daughter. Mr. Snow suffered from gout and would yell at them to go to the room farthest from him.

They grew mainly alfalfa but grew some grains as well. She describes how her brother and she would eat bran for the cows. It grew sweeter and sweeter the longer they chewed on it. They also had a big garden for the family's use and then her father started growing cantaloupes. Their farm had been an orchard, but all the trees save one pear tree had been removed. The farm was surrounded by an Osage Orange hedge, negating the need for a fence. She also describes the huge mulberry trees, which surrounded the place.

She described the place owned by the Lockes (which her brother later bought) and how they grew asparagus. They picked them and put them in trays of water, and the man who delivered the *Herald Post* would pick them up and take them to the market in El Paso. Mrs. Locke also grew pansies, which the newspaper deliveryman would take to Cutter's Florist in El Paso. They also grew onions and grapes. The consultant describes how many fruit trees died when the seepage came, after the dam was built. When that happened many people planted Thompson's Seedless Grape. The drainage canals were put in then, and many farmers would not allow them to come through their place. Her father did, however, and described the clear and cold water that ran through the canal. They never tried to drink it, though.

She described a Dr. Bailey, who came here for his wife's health, but the wife died. Dr. Bailey put up a tent sanitarium.

TAPE TWO, SIDE B:

The patients lived in the tents, even during the winter. They never came into the house; food was brought out to them. She describes one patient, a young boy, whose father would take him back home because he seemed cured and then the boy would relapse and have to return. The people of Mesilla mourned the fact that the father would not leave him here. The boy eventually died of his tuberculosis.

She describes some of the houses in the neighborhood and who owned them: Dr. MacGuinus, Dr. Heinz, and Maggie Lowry. She also describes a pecan tree planted some eighty years prior given to them by Fabian Garcia because he was anxious to get people planting pecans to harvest.

She talks about the Stahmann who went to Australia and about Billy Stahmann ("Sonny"), who she said was a "nice boy but . . . [not] all right."

She talked more about Fabian Garcia and how wise he was. He did a lot for Chile; it wasn't only Roy Nakayama. She feels that Fabian Garcia was instrumental in the Barkers' putting in so much

chile. They also grew asparagus and harvested mistletoe. She also describes “mountain mistletoe,” which had pink rather than white berries.

She describes the Temple of Agriculture and how the Secretary of Agriculture came for the dedication, as it was said to be the first Temple of Agriculture in the United States. The high school home economics class served a big banquet for the dedication in 1922 or 1923. Although the consultant didn't take home economics, she helped serve. She described their outfits: white pleated skirt and a white midi-blouse with a black boatman's tie.

She describes what parts of the area had electricity and the fact that her family had running water because they had a windmill and later a gas-operated pump.

Mrs. Eichholtz talks about the different variety of apples grown in the area: Arkansas Black, a berry apple, which many people called Borsberry apples (her family's name), and Ben Davis.

She remembers going to school in Mesilla Park, where Miss Lydia Williams (later Mrs. Seth Barrier) was her teacher from third grade through seventh grade. She has happy memories of her teacher reading *Swiss Family Robinson* every year.

She reminisces about various radio shows, including Fibber McGee and Mollie, Ma Perkins, and One Man's Family.

Finally, she tells of her plans to be a pharmacist and attended Colorado Women's College in Denver, then to Sul Ross State Teacher's College [Uvalde, Texas] because of its location convenient to the Lower Valley, where her parents lived. Rheumatic fever forced her to drop out and then she married and went to work in the post office.