



CONSULTANT: Maria Sargent

DATE OF BIRTH: 1932 GENDER: Female

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: August 24, 2000

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Muñoz home, El Paso, Texas

INTERVIEWER: Robert Hart

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM x OTHER

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: December 12, 2000

NUMBER OF TAPES: One

ABTRACTOR: Robert Hart

DATE ABSTRATED: December 21, 2000

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Childhood memories, age twelve or thirteen of the Italian prisoners of war who worked on area farms during World War II. See abstract.

DATE RANGE: 1943 - 1944

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

TAPE ONE, SIDE A:

Maria Sargent remembers hoeing cotton with her father and other local men at the Ivy ranch during World War II when Italian prisoners of war were working on the same farm but in separate cotton fields. Ms. Sargent was about twelve or thirteen years old. She remembers the prisoners as “friendly” people when they would drink water from an outside well they shared with the local workers. The locals and prisoners of war would try to talk to each other. The prisoners’ guards, she says, were very close by whenever the Italians were close to the local workers.

About fifteen to thirty prisoners arrived at the Ivy place in a truck, which seemed like a military truck to the consultant. She said the prisoners rode in the back of the truck. They didn’t sing in the truck or in the fields, even though the local people sang as they worked.

Her father told her not to talk to the prisoners, Ms. Sargent recalls, and told her that’s why they had guards with them: to keep local workers and prisoners from talking to each other.

She was not afraid of the prisoners of war, the consultant says, and said they seemed happy among themselves.

Ms. Sargent said the prisoners were housed at Fort Bliss, El Paso. An American World War II veteran told her years later that prisoners of war were taken from Fort Bliss to the Coliseum, El Paso, to dance. She said the co-worker resented the fact that while Americans in the armed services were “roughing it out” the prisoners of war here were “having fun” at the Coliseum. She did not know if it were Italians or Germans who were taken to the Coliseum.