

**NEW MEXICO
FARM & RANCH
HERITAGE
MUSEUM**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT**

CONSULTANT: Jim Bonney

DATE OF BIRTH: August 22, 1923 GENDER: Male

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: November 12, 2011

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Home in Radium Springs, NM

INTERVIEWER: Karl Laumbach

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM

TRANSCRIBED: October 14, 1013

NUMBER OF TAPES: Digital recording

ABTRACTOR: Donna M. Wojcik

DATE ABSTRACTED: March 25, 2014

RECORDING QUALITY (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Grandfather ranched near Pastura, NM. Father herded sheep as a boy in the Las Vegas, NM area. Father inherited a ranch from his employer and built it up to include acreage in dry farming, and sheep and cattle. He describes growing up in Pastura

DATE RANGE: 1900-2011

ABSTRACT (Important Topics in Order of Appearance):

Interviewer is related to the consultant. Family history, the family ranch, and growing up in the Pastura, N.M. area are discussed. Bonney discusses going to school in Santa Rosa, and working on the ranch. He got married just before he went into the military service, and was sent overseas during World War II. He states that he arrived on Omaha Beach the day after D-Day, and recalls that there were still a lot of bodies and artillery shells. He was in the 115th Infantry regiment. At the end of the war he was stationed at Bremen, Germany as a message sender. While he was in Europe his wife lived in Santa Fe with her parents.

In 1948 he went to Mexico to work with the American/Mexican Commission for the Eradication of Aftosa Project, a vaccination program for hoof and mouth disease affecting cloven-hoofed animals. He returned to New Mexico. He made a brief attempt to a law degree, but had run out of his G.I. Bill eligibility, and needed to find work to support his growing family. He worked for a few years for a liquor distributor, then worked for and retired from the State Taxation and Revenue Department.

Bonney has continued to be involved in the ranching world, participating in steer roping and team roping competitions until recently. He returns to the discussion of growing up on the ranch, dry land farm crops, cattle and sheep. He remembers that his father ran about three thousand sheep and approximately a hundred and twenty head of cattle. They hired shepherders to work at the camps. Lambing season was always a busy time. Shearing crews would come to remove the wool which was then sacked and sent to a warehouse in Pastura. From there it was loaded on the train for shipment to market. Old ewes were culled from the herd and slaughtered for eating, and the family hogs were slaughtered and the meat cured. They also had turkeys and chickens. He recalls that although there was plenty of rainfall and the animals were turned out to forage on gramma grass.

He discusses the terrain of the ranch. During busy branding and lambing times neighbors helped each other with the work. Although the land was flat, and there were no naturally flowing water, they had two wells with windmills.

His grandmother was a *curandera*, or herbalist, and would gather, dry, and cure native plants. He shares a story of how as a boy his father used to stutter. After his grandmother told him to put a pinch of alum under his tongue every night before he went to bed his stuttering went away.

Bonney briefly discusses prominent families in the Pastura area, his grandmother's involvement in local politics, and whether or not he is related to Billy the Kid.