

**NEW MEXICO  
FARM & RANCH  
HERITAGE  
MUSEUM**

CONSULTANT: L. E. (Pete) Davis

DATE OF BIRTH: November 14, 1920      SEX: Male

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: October 22, 1996

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Public Library, Clovis, New Mexico

INTERVIEWER: Jane O'Cain

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM   X   OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: August 18, 1997

NUMBER OF TAPES: Two

ABTRACTOR: Sheila Klug

DATE ABSTRACTED: March 15, 2001

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Personal history is followed by a discussion of his work with the Farm Bureau and the founding of the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum (NMF&RHM).

DATE RANGE: 1920-1996

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

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

Mr. Davis, an original member of the NMF&RHM Foundation board, was born in Ranchvale (Curry County), New Mexico in 1920 to parents originally from Texas. He attended school in Ranchvale at one of the first consolidated schools in the state. He then attended Eastern New Mexico University and New Mexico Highlands University but dropped out when his father became ill. He was the only one of his brothers and sisters to go into agriculture.

Davis discusses the Depression and the drought conditions in the '30s, comparing them with droughts in later years. He describes his brothers' involvement in World War II and how when his father died he was exempted from the draft in order to farm.

Davis was vice-president and then president of the Farm Bureau from 1972 to 1984. He feels the Farm Bureau has been a big booster of the Museum. He describes testifying before the [U.S.] Congress and briefly discusses Congress's recent changes to the farm programs.

There was a brief discussion of how crops and animals will be shown at the Museum. (This continues briefly on Side B.)

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

Davis's involvement with the Museum began when Dr. Stephens, Dr. Thomas, and some others started talking about a heritage center in the Farm Bureau. This was sometime when Davis was president of the Farm Bureau (1978-1984), but he cannot pinpoint the date. There were later meetings at Department of Agriculture, and Davis was one of the people who went to Lubbock, Texas, to see their heritage center.

Davis also describes the efforts to locate a place for the Museum and to raise funds. He also feels that at times people got sidetracked with an emphasis on horses rather than farms and ranches, though he feels Dr. Stephens always envisioned a farming and ranching museum. The fund raising by a private concern created problems, the consultant feels, because many people felt they were being asked to sign over their entire farm. The consultant also briefly describes the political aspects involved with the establishment of the Museum and that the process extended over the terms of three governors: Carruthers, King, and Johnson. Davis left the board before 1993, when the money was appropriated to construct the building for the Museum.

He feels that the most important thing the Museum should do is to give the history of agriculture in New Mexico. He describes the many meetings involved to design a logo, something he felt was blown all out of proportion.

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

Mr. Davis does not feel that the process of establishing the Museum took an excessive amount of time. Although the final concept is vastly different from what was originally conceived, he is very pleased with the outcome. He is also pleased that the Museum is located in Las Cruces and feels that it is located in the number one agriculture county in New Mexico.

**TAPE TWO, SIDE B:** Blank