



**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**  
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

CONSULTANT: Emmett Knight Patterson

DATE OF BIRTH: November 3, 1908 GENDER: Male

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: September 27, 2000

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: La Villa (nursing home), Roswell, New Mexico

INTERVIEWER: Marcie Palmer

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM  OTHER

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: December 11, 2000

NUMBER OF TAPES: One

ABTRACTOR: Marcie Palmer

DATE ABSTRATED: January 3, 2001

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Mr. Patterson was a farmer/rancher and a bank employee at Roswell, New Mexico, during World War II. He employed German prisoners of war to plant and pick onions on his farmland southeast of Roswell. The prisoners and guards came from Orchard Park POW camp near Roswell. Mr. Patterson describes rationing during World War II and discusses various sources of farm labor.

DATE RANGE: 1941 - 1945

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

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

Emmett Patterson said he farmed, ranched and worked at the First National Bank in Roswell during World War II. He briefly employed German prisoners of war on his farmland. The POWs and their guards were housed at the Orchard Park prisoner of war camp at Roswell and probably had to be furnished with transportation to the farm, Mr. Patterson said.

His farm/ranch was six miles southeast of Roswell in the area of the LFD Ranch, and the consultant grew cotton, alfalfa and onions. The POWs planted and later picked onions.

Mr. Patterson describes wartime rationing: shoes (two per year), tires and gasoline. He said farm labor was also in short supply during the war years. He employed local people to pick cotton and said their grown children would help them but he did not use student labor during the school year.

One day the consultant showed a *Life* magazine, picturing war damage in Germany, to the German POWs. He said they did not believe what they saw, saying it was "all propaganda."

Mr. Patterson thinks the guards and prisoners had to be picked up at the POW camp in Orchard Park and brought to the farm. The prisoners were good workers and usually did not cause trouble, he said. The guards did see tumbleweeds moving across the land one day and discovered prisoners using them as shields. Mr. Patterson said they were trying to walk to Dexter, New Mexico.

The consultant is a friend of Hans Rudolph Poethig, a former German prisoner of war who came back to settle in Roswell after the war. Mr. Patterson said he met Mr. Poethig's mother when he visited Germany and stayed in her home.