



ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

CONSULTANT: Jared "Jed" Howard

DATE OF BIRTH: April 25, 1934 GENDER: Male

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: October 12, 2000

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Howard residence, Carlsbad, New Mexico

INTERVIEWER: Jane O'Cain

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM OTHER _____

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: April 19, 2001

NUMBER OF TAPES: One

ABTRACTOR: O'Cain

DATE ABSTRATED: April 20, 2001

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Very good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Childhood reminiscences of World War II (WWII) and the prisoner of war (POW) camp located near Carlsbad. Some discussion of the relations between the European American majority and the African American and Hispanic population of the town.

DATE RANGE: 1944-45

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

TAPE ONE, SIDE A:

Howard was in the second grade when WWII began. His father worked for the local irrigation district, and consequently was given a gasoline allotment to travel throughout Eddy County gathering governmental statistics on the cotton harvest. His father didn't discuss much about his work at home.

Carlsbad suffered a "major tragedy" during WWII, as their National Guard unit was "virtually all wiped out in the . . . Bataan Death March."

Howard's German immigrant grandparents moved to New Mexico shortly before World War I, and "felt they . . . suffered . . . a great deal of animosity and . . . unfairness in their treatment."

He believes the POW camp in Carlsbad was established in early 1944. It was located in an old CCC camp (the buildings of the larger CCC camp were moved to the airbase in Carlsbad during WWII) in a "fairly unoccupied area," outside the city limits three or four miles.

The consultant's clearest memory of the POWs was watching them play soccer on Sunday afternoon when his family and others from Carlsbad drove to the camp to watch the soccer match.

Recently Howard talked to a man who had lived with his family at Harroun Farms (eighteen miles south of Carlsbad) during WWII. Harroun Farms also employed POWs, however, he now believes that the POWs were trucked out there from Carlsbad and were not housed there. Some of the children at Harroun Farms communicated with the POWs until they were warned not to. There was a belief by some that the POWs wished to examine the children's schoolbooks in order to determine how close they were to the Mexican border.

Prior to the war the cotton in the valley was harvested by a large number of Hispanic migrant farm workers and workers from Mexico, who tended "to stay . . . sorta hidden away in . . . the system . . . because . . . both the ranchers and farmers didn't mind using them at all, but sometimes it was not always completely legal."

In the 1940s the African American population in Carlsbad comprised five percent of the population, Hispanics twenty-five percent of the population. They lived in segregated areas of the town, and "tended to not have the opportunity to get anything above menial jobs." He states, "there was a long-standing tradition that . . . a person took his life in his hands to be in Carlsbad after dark if he wasn't white . . . we're in what's called 'Little Texas.'" The first Hispanic graduated from high school in 1938. Schools were integrated in Carlsbad in 1952, not long before the Supreme Court decision that mandated integration. He concludes, ". . . this was not an easy place for minorities."

The consultant describes an escape by two prisoners of war, who were found by a local rancher. He marched them back to camp, riding horseback and holding a rifle on them. Howard says, ". . . there was some question in the community why [he] . . . didn't simply shoot them."

American soldiers were being repatriated rapidly back into communities by 1945, "we were having parties . . . welcoming them back." There was much anti-Japanese feeling in Carlsbad that lasted a generation.

He recalls hearing mostly about the war on his grandparents' radio at their farm in Loving. The war was a major event in their lives.