

**NEW MEXICO
FARM & RANCH
HERITAGE
MUSEUM**

**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT**

CONSULTANT: Art and Wanda Evans

DATE OF BIRTH: Oct.18, 1922 / July 19, 1924 GENDER: M / F

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: June 23, 1995

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Cuchillo, New Mexico

INTERVIEWER: Catherine Hollander

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM_X___OTHER_____

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: December 12, 1997

NUMBER OF TAPES: Five

ABTRACTOR: Sylvia Wheeler

DATE ABSTRATED: June 15, 2001

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Personal and family history of Art Evans, and his involvement with the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Foundation including arranging a donation of farm equipment from the Ladder Ranch. Wanda Evans discusses daily life as a farm manager's wife and social activities.

DATE RANGE: 1930s -1995

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

[Note: Tapes One, Two, and Three (Side A) damaged.]

TAPE THREE, SIDE B:

Art Evans family owned a ranch north of Phoenix; he lived and worked there until 1944. Everything done at the ranch, comprised of desert land and leased graze in the Tonto National Forest, was done on horseback. They had to pack all their food and hay and grain for horses into the camps on the forest service land.

In 1946, after his marriage (1943) and a stint in the military (1944-1946), he came back to farm and ranch with uncles in Arizona. Following that he worked for the Hays and Zwang Cattle Company in Arizona, then in a copper mine. He worked a couple of years for the Arizona Livestock Sanitary Board and for the Tovreas Land and Cattle Company. In 1953, he became manager of the Ladder Ranch, near Hillsboro, New Mexico.

His father had 1200 cows on the forest and about 500 cows on the desert. He ranched about 300 sections. Most of this land is now subdivisions.

He relates an extended anecdote about moving a remuda of horses from their ranch north of Phoenix to a ranch west of Flagstaff, Arizona and then on to Hackberry, Arizona another 200 miles west. He was fifteen years of age, as was his assistant. Describes the many difficulties encountered on the way.

TAPE FOUR:

He became acquainted with Dr. Stephens and his efforts with the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Institute. Evans was, at the time, President of the New Mexico Wool Growers, and he agreed to be on the Institute's Board of Directors in the 1980s. The first fund drive was on its way and the organization had been going for three or four years. At the time Evans was working for R.O. Anderson's Diamond A Cattle Company. Anderson was involved in historical activities through the Lincoln County Trust. Anderson owned the old Chisum Headquarters southwest of Roswell and Evans lived there for eleven years. Museum work interested him because it was the only museum designated for farmers and ranchers.

Evans doesn't feel that there was an unusual amount of conflict on the "vision of the project," though fund raising presented problems. He worked to find sponsors. He also donated artifacts, farm equipment from the 1920s to the 1950s, from the Ladder Ranch, to the Museum.

He mentions a desire to see cowboy artifacts, and old time crop seeds, and bookkeeping ledgers in the collection. He wants children to understand the source of their food; he mentions that only one percent of the population now lives and works on farms. Visitors need to know how cheap food is in comparison to the other things they purchase. Evans thinks the average American family only spends seventeen percent of their income for food, the cheapest food of any country in the world.

Evans says that most of the cattle produced in the United States come from herds of fifty head or fewer, not the big operations. At the time of this interview, Evans says that New Mexico raises fewer cattle than Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. East of the hundredth parallel the rainfall is higher and they can run more than one cow an acre, but here it takes thirty-five to fifty

acres to run a cow. Southern New Mexico is “lucky” to get twelve inches of rain. Evans feels that if there were records to substantiate it, it would be interesting to know what the Spanish taught the native populations about farming. He'd like to see some reenactments of past times given at the Museum.

TAPE FIVE:

Wanda Evans speaks of her role as a ranch manager's wife. As manger of various ranches, Art had an office and since he was always gone, she had to handle the many calls as well as do the housework and cooking (for the family and the crews). They had to keep the owner's house and a guesthouse clean for the many guests and other workers. She had to make up many beds, do laundry, and entertain the visiting families. She had to buy the groceries, run errands, and sew. She says that this has changed and a person in a similar position would have fewer responsibilities.

She speaks of her "social" life as revolving around the Caballo church group. She was chairwoman of the Sierra County Farm Bureau. After they moved to Roswell when she was older, she did join a few groups.