



**ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT**

CONSULTANT: Nelson ("Dyke") Clayshulte

DATE OF BIRTH: February 1, 1917 Gender: Male

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: March 9, 2000, and June 2, 2000

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Clayshulte home in Mesilla, New Mexico

INTERVIEWER: Marcie Palmer

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM_X___OTHER_____

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: June 16, 2000

NUMBER OF TAPES: Four

ABTRACTOR: Marcie Palmer

DATE ABSTRATED: June 12, 2000

QUALITY OF RECORDING (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Attended local schools and graduated from N.M.A&M in 1941 with a degree in mechanical engineering. He spent most of the war years working for Stoddard Aircraft Radio in Los Angeles, during which time he met and married his first wife, Gloria Fountain. Shortly before the war ended they moved back to the Las Cruces area. He was a pecan farmer for many years and also served three terms as the mayor of Mesilla. Also, during the latter part of World War II he had some contact with prisoners of war working on various local farms.

DATE RANGE: 1917 - Present

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

TAPE ONE:

Nelson “Dyke” Clayshulte was born on February 1, 1917, in Tucson, Arizona and came to Mesilla in 1919 in the spring. His parents were married on March 9, 1916, and were married for 55 years.

His siblings were John Keith (“Tuffy”), born in 1920, Zane (“Possum”), born in 1922, Lorna, born 15 months later in 1923, Nolan (“Chick”), born in 1924, and his youngest brother, Leslie, born in 1930 or 1931.

His grandfather was John B. Clayshulte, who lived in Mammoth, Arizona. He came to Mesilla for a few years and went back to Arizona. He died and was buried in Mammoth in 1943 at age 85. Mr. Clayshulte describes how John B. Clayshulte’s parents were married, never previously having met face-to-face, on the railroad platform in Benson, Arizona.

Dyke went to college at N.M.A.&M. and was a member of the class of 1941. He received a degree in mechanical engineering and joined the Naval Air Corps in 1941. He resigned from the Navy Air Corps and went to work in Hollywood for the Stoddard Aircraft Radio Company. He was working there when Hawaii was attacked, and worked for them throughout four and a half years, as it was considered an essential industry.

TAPE TWO:

He married Gloria Fountain in 1943. He and Gloria came back to Mesilla just before the war ended. He started farming in Mesilla with twenty acres of pecans. He now raises one hundred and twenty acres of pecan trees. These are descended from three trees originally on his land.

Mr. Clayshulte describes the reasons for his entry into politics and how he came to serve three terms as mayor of Mesilla.

TAPE THREE:

In the 50’s Nelson became part of the Agricultural Products Company in Mesquite and was with them until eleven years ago—a total of forty years. He still works every day in pecan farming, and his daughter Sally works with him.

TAPE FOUR:

The consultant discusses his experiences with German prisoners of war (POW)s that were housed in Las Cruces during World War II. Although his contact was somewhat limited because he was going from farm to farm to run equipment, he was able to form some impressions of the POWs. He had positive things to say about the Germans and remarked that several of them told him they would like to come back to the Las Cruces area after the war. His evaluation of the Italian POWs, also housed in Las Cruces, was not as positive as that of the German POWs.

He said he didn’t observe any signs of abuse, but thought the prisoners were not given enough to eat. Often the farmers would supplement the prisoners’ food.