



ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

CONSULTANT: Lillian Cothern

DATE OF BIRTH: August 17, 1924 GENDER:Female

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: August 3, 2004

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Consultant's home, Las Cruces, NM

INTERVIEWER: Ron Nelson

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMF&RHM HSR OTHER

TRANSCRIBED: Yes: February 17, 2005

NUMBER OF TAPES: One

ABTRACTOR: Bob Cogswell

DATE ABSTRACTED: July 27, 2005

RECORDING QUALITY (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Rural farm life in the Radium Springs, N. M. area

DATE RANGE: 1930-2004

ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

TAPE ONE, SIDE A:

The consultant was born in Las Cruces in 1924. She grew up on a small farm across the river from Radium Springs. They farmed there for twenty-three years. The farm is still in existence today, and is run by her daughter and son. Her daughter remodeled the old farmhouse. When asked when her family arrived in New Mexico, she replied that they came to the Gallup area in 1923. Before that, her mother lived in Colorado and her father came from Missouri. Her parents were married in Gallup. She states that her father was running a trading post that sold beef and other items to the Indians. When she was older she became a schoolteacher.

When the consultant was about four years old, the family moved to Magdalena because her father was going to be working for the government and would be stationed on a ranch. They lived on that ranch for a while and then moved to the current location across the river from Radium Springs. Her father and his brother split the farm up, with each brother taking pieces on opposite sides of the river. She states that the land has been in her family since 1932. A house was built on her father's parcel of land, and her son now lives in the house.

Ms. Cothorn remarks that there are Indian artifacts all over the valley. She recalls, for the purpose of clarity, that there are two pieces of property spoken of at this point. One was the piece of property at Radium Springs that her mother grew up in. It is on this piece of land that the drowning accident occurred. The other piece is the piece of land that the consultant's parents bought after they were married. It is located six miles north of the homestead property at Radium Springs. She recalls that the land was leased from the BLM (Bureau of Land Management). When she got married, she lived with her husband on the old Ward farm. Her brother lives on the old Garrard place.

The old Ward farm, which is now owned by her son and daughter, has approximately sixty-six acres of cultivated land. Originally, there had been one hundred and twenty acres of land. The consultant sold off some of it. Additional land was cleared of brush, bringing the total number of acres between seventy and eighty acres. After the sudden death of her husband, her son quit working for Burns Construction in Las Cruces to work the ranch. He is currently working for the Elephant Butte Irrigation District. The consultant's brother is now using the farm to grow supplemental feed for his cattle. Oats are generally planted, and the brother plants, irrigates and takes care of the crop and then lets his cattle graze it. The consultant's daughter, Caroline Horner, says that it "helps to keep the cattle going until the rains come again." Some of the other crops that were grown on the land were cotton, lettuce and alfalfa.

The consultant remarks that the land on the west side of the river (the old Ward farm) was eventually sold before her mother moved to Colorado. The land on the east side of the river is still owned by the Girrard family. [NOTE: the land is still owned by the consultant's cousins, although the cousins no longer live on the property.] Ms. Cothorn remembers that when she was a child the family raised cotton. She recalls that in one year, three bales of cotton were all that they got. Water was pumped out of the river with what the consultant describes as an engine from a "Model A [Ford] or something." It was her responsibility to pour water into the radiator of the motor. It was her mother and older sister that actually did the farming. They farmed with a team of mules.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B: Blank?