

FARMERS AND RANCHERS

(Documenting the agricultural practices and lifestyles of farmers, ranchers, and their families)

Interview Protocol: Topics To Be Covered By Interviewer

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: (*Obtain off tape to secure privacy*)

1. Name
2. Address
3. Telephone/fax number
4. Date and place of birth
5. Name and address of historic farm or ranch, if different from present address

PART I: FAMILY AND FARM/RANCH HISTORY

FAMILY HISTORY

1. (Complete the family genealogy, identifying family members for interviewer.)

When did your family (or you) first arrive in New Mexico? Where did they (or you) live prior to coming to New Mexico? Was the move to New Mexico their first migration within the United States, if not, describe other moves prior to settling in New Mexico. Please describe what you know about the actual move, e.g., was it by covered wagon, railroad, etc.

2. Why did your family (or you) choose to move to New Mexico? What were their impressions about conditions in New Mexico at the time of their arrival?
How did your family maintain connections with family members in other parts of

the United States or in the "old country"?

3. If your family (or you) did not immediately become involved in agriculture, what did they do when they first arrived?

FARM/RANCH ACQUISITION

1. How did your family (or you) acquire the farm/ranch? If it was purchased, do you recall who it was purchased from? Was there evidence (tipi rings, pottery shards, etc.) that American Indian tribes had lived in the area in the past?

Approximately how large was the farm/ranch, and was it comprised of patent lands, leased lands, or some combination of both? In general, was it similar in size to other farm/ranches in the area?

2. Please describe if additional property was obtained over the years and added to the original farm/ranch. Was any property sold from the original? If changes were made to the original farm/ranch, what was your family (or you) attempting to accomplish with the changes?

FARM/RANCH CHARACTERISTICS

1. What is the principal crop/livestock raised? Was this always the case, and if not, why were changes made in production over time? What was the impact of introduction of hybrid seeds/livestock on the profitability of your farm/ranch? In the case of livestock production, what was the stocking rate in an average year?

2. Describe the terrain of your farm/ranch. What impact did the terrain have on the choice of crop/livestock production?

3. Was there naturally occurring surface water on the farm/ranch? If so, what were the water sources? Were they reliable over time? Did they dry up on any

occasion? Did you develop other water sources, if so, please describe how this was done, e.g., what kind of equipment was needed, how long it took, etc.

Describe any irrigation systems used on your property? Were these systems pre-existing or developed by you or your family? Discuss how they were developed over time.

4. How did the weather affect your farming/ ranching operation? Please discuss any notable droughts that you recall or were told about. How did the winter weather affect your operation? Please discuss any sizeable losses due to weather conditions.

5. Please describe any pre-existing buildings on the farm/ranch at the time of acquisition. If there weren't any buildings, what was initially constructed for shelter? Please describe subsequent improvements to the buildings or additional buildings that were added to the farm/ ranch. In the case of ranches, please describe the location of and buildings on the line camps. In the case of farms, was it necessary to provide housing for occasional labor, and, if so, where was this housing located?

6. Was the property fenced at the time of acquisition? Describe initial fencing, and any subsequent cross fencing on the property.

7. When did the farm/ranch get electricity? Describe power sources used before you got electricity, e.g., gasoline powered generators, etc.

8. If you were involved in producing livestock, what was your brand (get a drawing of the brand).

FARMING/RANCHING ACTIVITIES

1. Describe a "round of work" throughout the year as you recall it from your childhood, e.g., preparing the soil, starting the plants, planting, weeding, etc.; or lambing, docking, dipping, shearing, marketing, etc.
2. When was additional labor hired, if ever, during the year? What chores were left to be completed during less busy times?

KEEPIN' AFLOAT

1. Describe how your family marketed crops/livestock in the early days. How did this change over time, for example, with the coming of the railroad to New Mexico or with the building of roads to remote sites?
2. How have market fluctuations affected the profitability of your farm/ranch over time? Do you recall what prices were paid for your primary cash crop in the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s, etc.? Can you recall any notable boom/bust cycles, and, if so, please describe the impact on your operation?
3. In the early days of the farm/ranch was it necessary to arrange for credit, and where was it obtained? Were there times when credit "dried up", and how did this impact on your operation? Were there any local sources of credit, such as a neighbor or friend, who could be called upon to extend credit in times of need?
4. How significant to the profitability of the farm/ranch was the cost of labor? Did the amount of labor needed change significantly over time, if so, please describe what led to the change.
5. Other than weather related losses, did you have any major losses related to disease, predation, toxic vegetation, etc., please describe.

6. Describe any measures that were taken to increase profitability, such as crop diversification, changing to hybrid seed or livestock, investment in technology, etc.
7. Did any of the federal government programs instituted in the 1930s, such as the Taylor Grazing Act, Soil Conservation Service, etc. have a direct impact on your operation, please explain. In general, if you have had dealings with any federal programs, how easy or difficult has it been to work with them? Are some agencies easier to work with than others? Are some employees of the agencies easier to work with than others, why?
8. Over time have you developed non-agricultural sources of income, that have supplemented the income from the farm or ranch, e.g., from trapping, hunting parties, in town jobs, etc., please describe. Did the sale of eggs, cream, or fresh meat contribute significantly to the family's income?
9. What was produced on the farm/ranch for household consumption (medicines, clothing, soap, fruits and vegetables, wine, liquor or beer etc.)? If things were "store bought," how often were trips made to town, and how were these items paid for, e.g., barter, cash, credit. What merchants would extend credit?

DAILY LIVING

1. Describe a typical day on the farm/ranch when you were a child. At what age were children expected to start doing chores, and what chores were considered appropriate for younger children to do? At what age was a child expected to do the work of an adult?
2. Were there special occasions during the year that the whole family celebrated, please describe. Did your family have any special traditions and rituals they followed, did this change over time? How and why?
3. Did anyone other than the immediate family live with you (grandparents, foster

children, etc.). Was your family different in this respect from neighbors or friends?

4. What kind of ailments or accidents could be treated at home? Please describe some of the home remedies that were used. Where was the closest doctor, how long would it take to get to the doctor before good roads and reliable automobiles? Were any children born on the farm/ranch, and, if so, who assisted (female relatives, midwife)? If a death occurred at home, what steps had to be taken, e.g., did you have to call for a doctor or coroner? Were there family burial grounds on the property, if so, who were the family members buried there?

5. Describe a typical breakfast, lunch, and dinner when you were growing up. Overall, was there much of a variety in your meals? Would you provide us with old family recipes?

6. What did your parents and the children do for leisure activities? Did your family subscribe to newspaper or magazines? About what time did you get radio, TV? Other than during school, did you visit with friends or have them over to your home to play?

7. How did you meet your husband or wife? What would be a typical date? Were dating couples closely chaperoned? Was it typical for people to marry children of their nearest neighbors? Were you aware of any marriages being arranged, or of any "mail order brides"?

COMMUNITY LIFE

1. Who were your closest neighbors? How would you describe the relationship with them, i.e., one where work was "swapped out", neighbors would drop in for meals or to stay over night, etc. What were some of the major social events of the year, e.g., 4th of July celebrations, weddings, barn raisings, fiestas, church socials, etc.?

2. Where did you attend school? If you attended a town or country school, are you aware of when the school was built? At what age did you start school? How many years did you attend school? What was the school calendar, and how has it changed? Did you want to continue your schooling beyond the years you went, and if so, what prevented you from doing so? What was your parent's attitude toward education, i.e., did they see it as important or necessary, or something that took the children away from more important things?
3. Did your family attend church, and if so, what was the nearest church? Do you know when the church was built? Were you aware of any "circuit riding" pastors? Did your parents or other family members hold any special positions in the church?
4. Was your family active in local, state, or national politics, please describe. Were any family members involved in such movements as the Grange, the 1890s Populist Party, the "Free Silver" movement, etc. Was there an individual in the area, who was considered a community leader, if so, who was it? What kind of problems would be taken to this person?
5. What associations (woolgrowers, cotton growers) did you or your family belong to, if any? Did they choose to belong for social or business reasons or both?

PART II: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

1. What are your best memories of growing up and living on the farm/ranch, what were the greatest hardships?
2. Over time did many neighbors and others leave their farms/ranches, and, if so, what were their reasons for leaving? What happened to their land after they left?
3. What has had the greatest impact on farming/ranching in your lifetime? Is the quality

of life on the farm/ranch better or worse now than in the "good ole days", why?

4. What do you believe the future holds for farming/ranching, please discuss.

PART III: WRAP-UP

1. Do you have any photographs, diaries, ledger books, or other documents relating to the early days of farming/ranching and other activities in this area that we could copy to add to your file?