

NEW MEXICO FARM AND RANCH HERITAGE MUSEUM
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Consultant: Billy Provence
Interviewer: Donna M. Wojcik
Date: March 27, 2015

[Note: this is a digital recording.]

DW: This is Donna Wojcik. We're at the home of Billy Provence, uh, second half of his oral history interview. We're going to be talking about cowboys today. Okay, good morning, Billy. We're going to continue the oral history interview, second half, and talk about cowboys. I'd like to discuss a little bit about your family history. Where were you born?

BP: When or where?

DW: Where.

BP: Trinidad, Colorado.

DW: Trinidad, Colorado, and how did you end up in New Mexico?

BP: Uh, my biological family were transient [*sic*] [transient].

DW: Um hmm.

BP: Uh, there were, uh, fifteen of us kids. I was the number thirteenth one born out of fifteen of us. Uh, we came to a place called Sudan, Texas, up close to the Panhandle, uh, in 1947. I was about a month old, and we traveled by wagon . . .

DW: Okay.

BP: . . . so I don't remember.

DW: Right.

BP: (Chuckles.)

DW: And when did you come to New Mexico?

BP: (Whistles.) Dummy. (Pause.)

DW: If you don't remember the exact date, around and about.

BP: That's what I was tryin' to, uh, '58, 1958.

DW: 1958. Okay, and did you come by yourself then, or did you come with family members?

BP: Uh, well, my step-parents, Sid and Mamie Provence lived in Clovis . . .

DW: Um hmm.

BP: . . . and, uh, my step-dad decided that he wanted to have me, so I didn't have a lot of choice of the matter and, uh, that's when I moved to Clovis.

DW: Okay, and did you grow up in, in Clovis then?

BP: From that time on, yes. Uh, I spent the summers with my grandparents at Sudan . . .

DW: Um hmm.

BP: . . . uh, until I got up, somewhat older, and then, uh, my step-mother kind of insisted that on me a'havin' a job through the summer, and workin' so I went to work for different farmers in the area. Driving tractors, uh, changin' irrigation water and what have you.

DW: Okay, and in the earlier interview you said that you learned your blacksmithing skills from your grandfather . . .

BP: Yes.

DW: . . . so that would have been when you were spending summers there with him then.

BP: Yes, well, and then younger, too.

DW: Okay, okay. So, did your, um, step-parents farm or ranch?

BP: No. Uh, my step-mother was a beautician by profession . . .

DW: Uh huh.

BP: . . . and, uh, my step-dad worked, uh, civil service at Cannon Air Base.

DW: Okay. Do you know ho-, did they live in town or . . .

BP: (Simultaneously.) Yes.

DW: . . . outside . . .

BP: (Simultaneously.) Yes.

DW: . . . out of town. Okay. What was housing like in those days?

BP: What was . . .

DW: Housing like in those days.

BP: Well, they had bought a two-bedroom, uh, a nice house but it was one of the, that the government helped GI's with . . .

DW: Uh huh.

BP: . . . so, uh, it was in a, uh, 'pefic [sic] neighborhood on the west side of Clovis called the Rose Addition.

DW: Um hmm.