

Socorro County Historical Society, Oral History Tapes

Holm Bursum, Jr. interviewed by Martina Franklin

I am a resident of Socorro, native born, - I was born on March 17, 1908. I was born next to the Chambon house - my parents lived in the brick house (photo in Smith Collection). I live two blocks away now. If you don't move more than two blocks in 64 years, you're not moving very fast, are you? My dad's name was Holm Bursum and my mother's name was Lulu May Moore.

And they came to New Mexico after they married? No, no they were married here or in Silver City - I think they were married in Silver City. My mother lived there on the Mimbres River down there in the town of San Lorenzo. She went to normal school there. Her father was killed in a gun battle there outside of Pinos Altos, near Silver City I read he had been killed in a gun battle - I don't know how - I read in the Silver City Enterprise historical book that has the excerpts - it's made up of newspapers printed over forty years - it was long in 1887 or sometime. I just happened to open the book and found (---) Moore was here father's name and he was shot by (-----) he was courting one of his daughters and he told this boy to stay away from this girl and this boy wanted to fight him so a circle of people searched to see he didn't have any arms on him, and they thought the old man whipped him. And then this young man broke away and got about fifteen feet away and had a hidden gun they hadn't found in his boot or somewhere and he shot and killed my mother's father - he would have been my grandfather. My father was born in Fort Dodge, Iowa. He was born there February 10, 1867. His parents came from Norway. They came over here for their health. In Norway they were healthy or they would die. There wasn't any sick people - they were healthy or dead. Both of his parents - I think they had tuberculosis. His brother died - I think he was six or seven years old. They started west to New Mexico in 1877. He was about 10 years old and he had a sister, Marie, and the four of them, my father, his mother, the sister and the stepfather started out west. They had an uncle down in San Antonio, New Mexico, here, and he was already established in business, so he was going to take care of them and put them to work. So they got as far as Denver, and it was 2 a.m. so Mr. Moore met them and took them back to the house. They got as far as Colorado Springs and the mother got sick and died, so he buried her there in Colorado Springs. He gave the sister enough money to get down to San Antonio and he worked and he was in Raton for about a year, and he got down to San Antonio about 1881. So he was about 15 years old or 14 and he went to work for his uncle, August Hilton.

Where did you go to school? He never went to school. He was, I thought, very well educated. His English was very good, and the papers he wrote were grammatically correct in both English and Spanish. As a matter of fact, he was the first American to make a speech in Spanish to the Mexican Congress in Mexico City. He spoke perfect Spanish and he had a good vocabulary, he was a very able person. One time I was doing some letters for him, learning to type in school so he said something in Spanish and I wrote it down and gave it to him to sign and he said, "Where did you learn to talk Spanish?" He said, "I suggest you get (--'s) Grammar and learn some Spanish grammar. That was the same book we used in high school. I studied Spanish in college, of course I learned to talk it here in Socorro.

Your father was a big man. Well he was about the same size as am - heavy boned - he was about 6' 1".

Was he blue eyed like you? Yeah.

Were you the oldest boy? I was the only boy. My older sister, Clara, she died in 1950. She died of cancer. I had two other sisters, Ruth who was older, and Betty Kay who was younger. She had two children - nieces - and they had children.

How did your father happen to go into the ranching business? Well he first was in the contracting business and he worked for his uncle at the store and then he sold coal mine supplies and he made a commission out of that and then he went to work for the Mitchell Brothers a contractor for the Santa Fe Railroad - in those days under the name of the Atlantic and Pacific. As a matter of fact he brought the railroad down from Santa Fe to Fort Wingate. He had equipment and teams and ran the grades --and in '93 the Mitchell Brothers suspended operations and they wanted him to stay with the company but he chose to come back to San Antonio and brought his equipment with him and traded his contracting equipment off and ran some ox teams over to White Oaks and Fort Stanton so he had all this equipment and he traded that for a band of sheep in about 1893. In 1893 he bought his first ranch. And then he went in the ranch business and he could speak Spanish and go friendly with (---) and ran for sheriff of Socorro County in 1894.

How many terms did he serve? Two 2-year terms. While he was sheriff he got that road over there from Mogollon through the Gila to Horse Springs with prison labor. He'd pay the prisoners the daily scale which was about a dollar a day. And they built that road. They called it the Bursum Road eventually. The reason they built that road - it cut off 50 or 60 miles of travel between Socorro and Mogollon. Mogollon was the county seat and when the sheriff had to go out there he could go by buggy all the way. He could go in from this side.

Who was his deputy? I think Henry James was one of his deputies, and H. B. Hamilton who was later a lawyer here in New Mexico was also a deputy and Cipriano Baca was one of his deputies. He married one of the Barry? girls. Macy was another one and Rachel, I believe, was also.

Being a sheriff in those days was really an accomplishment. Well until they built that road over to Reserve and then the railroad, or you could go by horseback to Rincon and change trains and go to Deming and from Deming up to Silver City by train and then take a stage line out to Mogollon, ninety miles. He met my mother on one of those trips. He went to a dance down at Shakespeare, you know its' famous for being a stop on the Butterfield Stage Line. He went to the dance over there and he spelled the fiddler - he was quite a violin player there. Mrs. Muir whose husband was a banker in Lordsburg introduced him to my mother - that's where they met - Shakespeare.

She was supposed to be a beautiful woman, I've heard. Well that's what I've heard too. They tell me, the old timers, that Mrs. Fitch and my mother were about the two prettiest women. Of course I didn't know Mrs. Fitch when she was young and I didn't know my mother then either.

And then they married and moved to Socorro? Yes she came as a bride in 1898.

To the old family home? No, the first place they lived was right across from Jim Brown's place. Directly across the street where the Andersons lived - the little brick house. That's where they lived when they first came to town, and then they bought this house up there where I was born, next to Chambon's. My mother was widowed, you know, she got

widowed real quick. Her mother was a housekeeper for some of those ranchers down there. She had five children, three girls and two boys. She worked at Sweetser's store and she worked in the dry goods department.

And then all the kids went to normal school. Well that's what it was called then. And Carrie Enloe's father was head of that normal school. He came here in 1920. I don't know how you can remember after 50 or 52 years, but I remember the teachers there and the whole kaboodle. Dr. Enloe was the Superintendent. His wife taught in school and Merton? Bellew? Was the commercial teacher. And Helen Jensen? was one of the teachers there. She taught history. And Phil Campredon's wife was the home ec teacher. As I recall, the year I graduated there, I think there were forty-three students and five or six teachers. The only teachers I remember were the ones that were there in 1920.

How many graduated with you? Oh I think it was seven or eight.

Did you live in town while your dad lived on the ranch? No, he lived in town also.

Where did you go to grammar school? Right here in Socorro.

The little red schoolhouse? No.

Did you go to Mt. Carmel? Were you one of the meaner boys? I just went there a year and then I went to public schools after that. I remember Ruby Griffith was my teacher. She taught for years and years and finally retired.

Did they have graduation from high school like they do today? Oh, yes. Kids would send invitations to everybody they knew hoping to get presents.

Well, it hasn't changed any, has it? I had Ruby Griffith in the second and third grade and I had Mary Harris as the fourth grade teacher and Della Meads? taught in the fifth and sixth grade. Her father was a preacher here - a Baptist preacher. There were three or four girls in that family. That was in the days when the girls used to wear black Gilmores? Della is still alive - she lives in Albuquerque. She married Floyd Hanson. He was the service manager for the Buick Co. up there for many years and he used to live in Socorro. He was the mechanic at Keith's Garage until it burned down. She was a nice gal. She ran the school too.

Did they ring a bell and everything? Oh yeah, they rang a bell - I think they rang the bell at 8:30 and that was to get you there, and then at nine o'clock everybody marched to their rooms. They were just like troops out there.

Did they have separate classes for each grade then? No, the fourth grade was by itself, and then the fifth and sixth had the same teacher, and the seventh and eighth had the same teacher, and then we went to high school. Math was separate and typing was separate and history was separate.

You went to that old high school that they tore down, didn't you? Yeah, that little four-room adobe there. So they built this new high school and now that's been torn down. That was built in 1920, the same year the Val Verde Hotel was built. The same contractor built both buildings. We moved at mid-year to the new high school building. It was around Christmas or shortly after we moved up there in 1921. *And then you went on to college?* I took two years of college over at Roswell. Well I graduated from high school twice. I graduated here in 1923 at midterm and then I went back to Washington - my Dad was a U. S. Senator so I went back there - I was only fifteen so I went to Central High School. I had my credits transferred and then I graduated again in the spring of 1924. Then after that I went to the Institute. Well, before I went to the Institute in 1924 I went to El Paso where I got a job as a collector. I worked for the Hyde brothers for

about three months - about sixty dollars a month - then I came back and went to the Roswell school - I went two years there and finished junior college over there in 1926. I was the youngest that graduated there at that time - I was seventeen. The next year I came over here and stayed at the ranch for a while and then about June I went to Arizona. I went to a CMP Camp - that was a Civilian Military Training Camp they used to have - it was a four-year course. After four years you got a recommendation for a commission in the Officers Reserve Corps. Since I'd been to Roswell and had two years of military training over there, my roommate and myself, we both went over there. We got together in the Blue Course, the four year finishing course and we didn't have to take the other three years. We finished that and we both got recommendations for commissions in the Officers Reserve Corps. We had to take a few courses by correspondence. If I hadn't done that I probably would have been in the army. After I got out of CMP Camp I went to Nogales and got a job. I stayed there until about November and then my sister was getting married so I came back here. After she got married I went to the ranch and stayed there a year until - I guess - the fall of '27 then I went to the University in Albuquerque and I graduated up there in 1929.

Mrs. Bianchi went to school with you - I think it was Mrs. Bianchi. Where? Here. Yes, I believe she died. She was from San Antonio. --- well, Bob Baca the Postmaster, and Lorenzo Baca died and Charlie Zimmerly. I just saw a thing in the alumni paper that the Institute puts out and so Leo Manderley was retired and living in Colorado. I used to ride over to Roswell to school with him. His father worked in the coal mines.

It must have been pretty small? Yes, about five hundred students. After I got out of the University I went to Pennsylvania to law school. While I was there I worked in Wanamaker's Department Store in the credit office after school - about thirty or forty cents an hour - they paid me cash. Every week I went by the cashier's office and got that brown envelope - my wages were in there in cash.

I didn't know you went to law school. Yeah, I just went one year and then I said just give me about thirty minutes and I'll pack my stuff and call 'em at the office and tell 'em I quit and head home.

Didn't your father disagree? No, it was good I came back because the depression was on - see - oh I probably could have finished - I came back here to the ranch. That was in the spring of 1930. That's when times were really bad and '32 was worse. In '29 sheep and cattle were almost worthless.

Where did the city end in Albuquerque when you were there? The University - it wasn't very populated even around the University at that time and the road was dirt. There were streetcar tracks in the middle of the road and then they finally paved the two sides, but the center was all dirt. The heights dance hall was there and then they built the "iceburg" they used to call it.

Who was at the University? Anybody that you remember today? Tip Dinkle - he went to the University - he used to play in the orchestra at the heights and he's senior vice president of the Albuquerque National (Bank?) ---- There was a fellow named Palmer - he was in the lumber business down at Deming and he went to school at the same time I did. Two or three years later, Bob Baldwin went to school up at the University.

Did you play football? I made ---outside tackle up there - yeah, I played football. At Roswell it was basketball and track. I played three sports, basketball, football and track.

Did you like the ranch? Oh yeah, I still like it.

You had cattle didn't you? No we had sheep mainly up to 1954. We had both, but sheep were the main product. After the big drought in 1954, that was the last time we had sheep.

Did you have trouble with coyotes then? We had traps - there's no way you can get rid of coyotes unless you put a hundred dollar bounty on them. They have spread from the east coast to the west coast.

The conservationists don't want you to get rid of them, do they? Well for people in the cattle and sheep business and farm business the coyotes was like skunks. Dad had about a hundred chickens. Skunks down there killed them all - just cut their throats and let them bleed. These varmints are pretty tough on livestock. Coyotes eat chicken, sheep, cows, deer - they kill everything.

When did you go into politics? Weren't you a state senator? No, I ran for office several times, but I never did get elected.

Were you ever sheriff? No, I only run for sheriff one time and I told them I was too young for that. As a matter of fact that was when they got Frank Knoblock to run and Frank was elected. That was way back in the thirties. I ran for state treasurer one time. I ran for governor in 1954. I got beat in the primary.

Who was Governor then? Ed Mechem. I was real pleased with the vote I got in Socorro. I think there about 900 votes in the primary and I got all but about ten votes. I lacked about 1800 votes state wide.

He was a rancher too, wasn't he? Yes from up around Raton and I was always tickled to death I didn't get the nomination because that wasn't a good year for Republican candidates. I think the Democrats won real big that year. In 1956, Mechem was elected Governor and again in 1960. In '58 John Burroughs was elected and in 1960 Mechem was back in 1960.

And then you went into the banking business. Yeah I went into the banking business. John Tierney was president of the bank in December of 1947.

That was when the bank started? It started in July of '47 and I was on the board of directors and the man who started the bank, John Kierney, was sick and didn't want to liquidate the bank. It turned out he had cancer of the prostate, but he didn't know he had it. He was suffering a lot and his doctor knew it but never told him so he sold out. Dr. H. T. Lehman, Mike Harriet and myself, we were the biggest stockholders so we had a meeting to decide what to do other than to let it go. I said, boys, we got a bank here - it's already started. Why don't the three of us just keep the bank, so three of us bought out the stock. So we did that- we made a deal - I think it was on Pearl Harbor Day of 1947. I told Doc, I said hey, we never did talk about who was going to run the thing. He said, by gosh you are. I said I don't know anything about running a bank. He said oh you can do it. So the next morning I went down to the bank as the new president, new presidente. I went from truck driver to stockholder to member of the board of directors to president of a bank all in five months.

When did Dr. Lehman die? Shortly after that? No, he lived several years after that. I think he must have died along about '52 or '53.

When did Mr. Aufill come? He came in March '48. *You were carrying it all alone for a couple of years, huh?* No, Bob came in '48 and he went to work. He was bookkeeper one time in a bank in Las Vegas, New Mexico. He was pretty good - he had banking experience.

This new bank that they started, did it hurt your bank? Well, I don't think it was a lot - of course it's bound to divert some business. You have a hard time pinning down what it did. Of course I don't think any business is going to get all the business in any town. As a matter of fact if you had ten banks here you wouldn't get 100% of the business. People will go to Albuquerque and Belen - that's just the nature of business. We continued to grow. Our totals are more than they were last year. This new bank opened in August. *Which did you enjoy more, ranching or banking?* Well, of course, banking was a challenge - something I knew nothing about. It's still open and it's growing. A commercial bank has to have a lot of rules. You can't destroy records and you can't allow people to ----- In a commercial bank you have loan accounts and escrows and all kinds of stuff that takes an awful lot of people to take care of the peak loads when you're busy people don't like standing around too long. You got to have thirty people in the bank - that's a pretty good size payroll.

You have two fellows? Yeah, Owen? And Michael---

and he was only 13 or 14 --- He was fifteen and a half when he was killed. It was the fifteenth of June and he was born the fifteenth of December. It doesn't seem possible it will be eighteen years this summer.

And you just had the two boys, no girls. No girls.

But now you have a grandson named after you and he plays football in the little league, doesn't he? He goes to Grants in the summertime. He's not big for his age. (rambling and interruption)

Do you know any incidents in your life that were really interesting that you could relate? I can't think of any. When I was going to high school in Washington D. C. I was a pretty young boy.

Who was the president then? Coolidge was. Harding was elected in 1920 and, of course, he died. I used to hang around with some of the guys that worked in the House Office Building and listen to the debates and that sort of stuff - there weren't many people and I spent a lot of time looking around and going to the Smithsonian Institute and the Lincoln Memorial and stuff like that. I was down at the Senate Office Building one time and they were having a Senate investigation and Mr. Doheny you know - and the Teapot Dome - I remember Senator Walsh of Montana. He always reminded me of a bellow? bull? He had real heavy eyebrows and what looked like horns. I heard Senator Doheny say, "I was a poor man and prospected with burros and Albert Fall was my friend so he and I prospected together. In the course of time we got separated and he went his way and I went mine and I struck oil and I got very rich. Mr. Fall asked me if I had \$100,00 and I said I do and to any of you gentlemen that would be like \$10." And afterwards, you know, that's history too. Doheny was acquitted of giving a bribe and afterwards foreclosed a mortgage on father's ranch and took it. (rambling)

We got an old boy there named Ed McBain and people thought he had a lot of money, but he didn't - he was on an allowance from his mother --- so that's what got Fall in trouble and Fall went to jail for one year. He was convicted of taking a bribe, but Doheny was acquitted of giving the bribe. That's kind of strange - there were two different juries.

What advantage would he have had? Mr. Fall was Secretary of the Interior and there was this Teapot Dome lease in Wyoming - it turned out that there wasn't any oil there, but Harry Sinclair was an oil operator and Mr. Doheny was an oil operator and both of

them were carrying leases up there. Well now whether or not there skullduggery about the leases, I don't know - but anyway they were charged with giving a bribe. And the fellow that started the whole thing was Fred Barnes who was on the Denver Post - he was known as a blackmailer and he was the one that stirred up the whole mess to start with. I just happened to be there that day when I heard Mr. Doheny testify - of course that's fifty years ago.

That first atom bomb, wasn't that on your ranch? The first atomic bomb? It was about nine miles south of our place. It was on the McDonald ranch.

Did you see that? I was in town that night. Those cattle went to Oak Ridge, Tennessee. *Did they die?* No, they got all right. When this fallout fell on 'em it was radioactive. It would burn 'em just like scalding hot water. And when hair came back on those spots it was white hair. There was a black cat and after that fallout he had white spots all over him.

For the record, what is the size of your ranch and how much area did it cover? The ranch comprised 175,000 acres prior to the taking of some of it for the White Sands Missile Range. I would say the Missile Range took 100,000 acres and left 75,000 acres outside which I'm presently using. It's about 30 miles along the ranch and it varies from four to ten miles in width. It's all in Socorro County - in the Bingham area.

Where is your main headquarters? It's Hansonburg which is about seven miles west of Bingham and a mile south of Highway 380 and the mountain headquarters is five miles east of there. And of course I have a couple of leased ranches.

Will you eventually get that other land back? Well I don't know. They leased it in April 1942 and now it's 31 years. It's in the courts right now to see if they are going to re-lease it. There's a hell of a big fuss about it right now. The argument is about the lease on the public building - whether it would entitle them to equity on the land or whether it's public domain. The lease is for the Taylor Grazing Act which in effect give the ranchers legal title to the land through the leases that are executed by the Department of the Interior.

Are you allowed to use it? No, we can't use it. I think the land off the range that has been used properly is in better shape than the leased land that has not been used at all. It's a matter of opinion, but that's my opinion of the thing, and I've been in business a long time. Actually they've proved that the land that's north of that land - they shoot over it - could be approved for multiple use. The Army and Air Force could use it and the ranchers could run livestock on it. There are very few places that need to be taken 100% out of service and to my knowledge there has never been anybody hit or any livestock that have been killed by the missile programs. They had those 50-caliber machine guns up there that were shooting all day long. [end of tape] --otherwise they couldn't use the other parts for flying these missile now from over in Utah. They come right over Socorro and land on the range. So it looks to me like they could use a great deal of that country on a multiuse basis.

You own the Opera House, huh? Yeah. If I had the money I'd like to restore it and put the can-can girls in an old fashioned show and I'd like to do that myself. The stage is still there and the boxes are still there. We're all busy paying for water lines and fencing and stuff that goes on the ranch or something else. Apparently it takes four generations to make enough money if you're successful to have something where you could spend that fifty or hundred thousand dollars on a venture like that. I would imagine it would take fifty thousand dollars to restore that opera house. I think you could put it in shape,

probably. If you spent fifty dollars a foot on remodeling that would be fifty thousand dollars. And then of course, if you went ahead and put shows in there you would have to have more. Twenty-five or thirty thousand would make payrolls. It would be something like the melodrama or something like that.

You own the Baca house too, don't you? No, that's Garcia.

The Garcia house? Well that house is where the doctor's office was. Yeah, her husband was the former Senator. I don't know what the relation is between them and the Bacas. After her husband died - I think everybody kind of agrees on this - she built the opera house after he died. And then she just ran out of money. And then when Dr. Duncan? came in he thought she had all the money because she had all this property so they got married and then both of them found out the other one didn't have any money so they got unmarried.

She didn't speak much of him. Well, I guess she took it kind of personal because when they spend it all and then it's gone and they don't have any more ---

He has this book where he said Dr. Duncan? was another one that he mentioned who came into New Mexico and became doctors here. People had a very low opinion of that Mrs. Garcia - I forgot what he said about them. The next time Dr. Duncan married was one of Barry?'s sisters and when I was going to law school in Pennsylvania I lived right across the street from the Episcopal Church and this Reverend Gilbertson? was a brother of Mrs. Berry. Mrs. Baca's oldest boy was named Gilbertson Baca.

What were the Bursums from Norway - Lutherans or what? I think they were Lutherans. I don't know what that is. That's between an Episcopalian and a Catholic.

And what were you reared as? Presbyterian.

You went to Mt. Carmel for one year. Who were the nuns there then? Did they have a big group of 'em? Well, you know I don't remember. I remember that there were McIntyre girls there and two or three of them became nuns. I don't remember who the nuns were.

Now you were Mayor how many years? Twenty-two years. There was a lot of squabbling and carrying on down there. Whether you are Mayor or a member of the City Council everybody is fussing around and it looks like they enjoy the squabbling. It's kind of a chore to go year after year three or four times a month, and if it isn't pleasant it doesn't take you too long to get tired of it. It might have been time for me to get out anyway and that way the people get a chance to see, you know, whether you were a good mayor or a bad mayor. If you're in there all the time, they have no way of comparing you to someone else. I was elected five times and then I was defeated once.

Who defeated you? Frank Dailey.

Oh, he was there one year, wasn't he? Yes, and then I was elected again.

Who did you run against then? Oh gosh, I don't know.

Who did you run against first? (Vandever?)

Who was mayor before you ran? Joe Gallegos.

Had he been mayor a long time? Yeah. My dad was mayor back in 1905 to about 1911, I believe.

Mrs. Hilton was a Democrat, I believe, but she always voted for Holm Bursum's friends. She was a fine Democrat. Well, the Democrats could have been elected Mayor because they outnumbered the Republicans two to one - three to one.

Well, what other public offices did you hold? I was County Commissioner for four years. *And then you were on the State Highway Commission?* Yes, one term, and my term expired a year ago this March. I was President of Boys Ranch a good many years. I had quite a few of those non-paying jobs that people have to give time to or should give time to. I worked for the Flood Control Administration for 15 or 20 years. This was a non-profit organization primarily to develop new sources of water and water salvation and water reclamation for the Rio Grand Valley. In fact that organization was instrumental in getting a trans-mountain diversion of water that transported water from the Colorado River Project to the Rio Grande. This is the first year that water has been coming through. It's diverted 110,000 acre feet to the Rio Grande which was imperative because water is really at a premium in New Mexico particularly in the Rio Grande Valley. You know, all of that stuff you don't think much about. Right now I'm President of the New Mexico Highway Users Association, another non-profit deal which is primarily to get the earmarked tax funds for construction of highways to be used 100% for construction of highways and not allowed to be diverted to other uses. Of course, highways are communication of great importance to the whole United States. The people in Rhode Island, they couldn't care less about highways because they're not even half as big as Socorro County, so they would like to take that money and divert that money and use it for mass transit, airports, and everything else other than highways because they're not faced so much with highway problems as the western states which are large in size and very dependent on federal funds for highway construction.

Are they still providing a lot of funds for it? Yes, of course a lot of it has shut down. You see the highway fund is set up by direct tax and the funds from the gasoline tax and the excise taxes on automobiles and tires and batteries was earmarked in a special fund to be used for the construction of the Interstate Highway system which crosses the U.S. from east to west and north to south. A lot of 'em are after that money and to divert it to other uses. The Highway Users group was formed to protest that attempt and effectively to keep that money where it was earmarked.

Now you're rattlin' around in that great big house, aren't you? Well after a few years you got a lot of junk in there.

I meant rattlin' around in your room. Well, I've always been so busy with these various activities that I really never got to be as much at home as I would have liked to have been. Luckily that I was getting (out of stress?) in this period because Betty? was looking after the mail and she did everything - she was busy all the time, so that gave me more time. After she passed away I had to be the housemother and take care of the house and take care of the mail and the yard or at least be able to supervise it and take care of it so it's caused me to be home a lot more than I used to be. If you're busy it seems like time passes by so as the old saying goes: busy beaver - happy beaver. She was a great wife, you know, and she did a lot in the community and was always willing o help anybody, but the Lord takes your wife--

Was she the one that people said she spoke to you all the time - she remembered you? Yeh, I stopped by Saturday - I was up there for a meeting and I went by the bank there and there was Teresa Chavez, and we were talking and she said "I'll never forget Betty. When I graduated from high school she gave me a trip to Las Cruces?". She was gettin' wheelchairs. Are wheelchairs still hard to get? You know a year or two ago I thought Betty was always asking for a wheelchair, saying so and so was sick and needed a

wheelchair so a year or two ago I thought I'll just buy a couple of wheelchairs and bring them down here and we'd have them in Socorro because they didn't have one in town and they wouldn't let you have one at the hospital. You had to go to Albuquerque and get one from Crippled Children (Hospital). I don't think they're too expensive.

Yes, they are, they are about \$160. Well I know, but considering there is nothing to take their place.

You'd be surprised to hear how hard it is to get anybody to get from the two (---). Well, what I was thinking is buying a couple and having somebody take care of them.

They give you old ones, but by the time they give them to you they are not much good.

They rent for about \$13 a month. Another thing about Betty I think we should mention is she always gave fruit from the yard there. We stopped getting fruit. After she died, Barbara Lockhart said I'll give you all the figs if you'll make preserves out of 'em. We didn't have any figs - oh we had a few, but it was a bad spring.

Can you tell us something about your son and his family? He met Earle Powell, his present wife, on a blind date and they hit it off pretty good and they got married in 1958 and have four children.

One of em's named after you, isn't he. Yeah, well I guess he was named after my father. I'm really not a junior - they got it all fouled up. As a child whenever I signed something it was just H. O., Jr.

Well, who are you named after? His father - he was named Frank Otto, and then my son is named after his grandfather. Well after we had this all fouled up, he really would be the 2nd so this really got involved and his son was the 4th. And you know, since I have title to property as Holm O. Bursum, Jr. I really can't drop the junior. And then some people got to calling us Jr. and the 3rd instead of Big Holm and Little Holm so they got us all fouled up. Nobody knows who we are anymore.

I have learned a lot things I didn't know about Mr. Bursum. I'll bet you did. Did you know about your father-in-law, Frank Sickles? Percy's father? *No.* Well you and I were talking one day about that boardwalk. That boardwalk was here when I was a kid, but when the big flood come along in 1921, the Sickles had a hotel downtown and I used to go there and fish off of that porch because there was a lot of water between the Val Verde Hotel and the Depot and a drain ditch ran through there and I used to catch fish all the time - catfish about 6 or 8, and my mother would cook 'em for me. (rambling) Harry Doherty used to be the District Attorney and he was a Democrat, but he was the best District Attorney and the best attorney and the smartest man. He died when he was about 40 from too much whiskey - cirrhosis of the liver. And when they told me about Billy Griffith's dad, he said there was a real bright man, a fine attorney and a good legal mind and he said he drank too much of that whiskey and he died young in the forties. They told me he would drink a fifth of whiskey during the night. Of course I didn't even know him, but in his pictures he didn't look like a drinking man.

Well thanks for being here for these interviews. I've enjoyed it.