

## Socorro County Historical Society, Oral History Tapes

### Ed Burris interviewed by Ellen Davis

Edward W. Burris, I was born June 28, 1901. *You were born?* In Rosedale, New Mexico, *Your father was in the ranching business?* Yes, we ranched at Turkey Springs south of Rosedale, about 7 miles south of Rosedale where we started there in nineteen and three. *And they were formerly from Oklahoma.* They came from Oklahoma here in 1899 to Magdalena. *How was Magdalena when you came? Was it a thriving little town?* Yes, it stayed that way until after the First World War - it was a real thriving town. When my people got here, Magdalena was just a small ranch town and the railroad went there to the mines at Kelly. *They had one of the largest cattle shipping centers in the United States, did they not?* Yes, there was larger cattle shipping centers on the coasts. *But they had the huge cattle drives and that sort of thing.* In nineteen and twenty two me and my brother worked there in Magdalena for about 40 days shipping cattle out of there - they shipped 'em to old Mexico. They shipped 72,000 cattle to old Mexico. *It seems strange now because we usually hear of cattle being shipped from old Mexico to us.* Well that too, on account of the droughts. We had one of the worst droughts here in 1922 that I guess they had ever had - because they had a lot of cattle in this country and so more cattle died in that year than I think I ever saw any time in my life. A lot of the cattle in the country where we was - they call it the Red Canyon country. A.D. Rooster? finally bought it and ranched there and it was Rooster Logan that at that time - and we had cattle there too and we had a little well in Red Canyon. We used to try to pump water to the cattle and they died so we couldn't bring water with a team fast enough - day in and day out. *And it affected this whole area, right?* I don't think this country has ever got back to where it was before that - it don't seem to be the cattle business. I don't think the range has ever come back to where it was. I think that was the starter of a change in the livestock business in New Mexico. *How about the mines in that period? Did it peter out?* Well I guess it did. My father used to work in them mines back along about 1907 he worked there a while. Kelly (Hughes?) his father and I guess them mines has just petered out, I don't know. They had good ore in them at that time and I knew a lot of men that worked in them mines. Bill Hutchens used to be the foreman in those mines and they used to think they was a rich mine. They shipped lots of ore out of Magdalena, you know. And I think the mines all over the country - Rosedale when we went there - in 1900 when my people went there, there was about 700 people there in those days. And there' nothin' there now. *Well, is Rosedale when you go past Grand Union and go south?* On the east side of the San Mateos. *There's nothing there but ruins, right?* That's right. The mine is about 735 feet deep and there's a lot of drifts and all down there. *Is that what brought people to Rosedale - was the mines?* That's why my people come to go there. They came out to Magdalena - they come out to work for Jim Medley and they lived at Dog Springs and then afterwards they moved to the Datils out in the Datil Mountains out there and then went to work for the Red River Land Cattle Company - three crosses was their brand. Then they went down on the San Augustine Plains at the C-bar Inn windmill out there - and he put up the first house and the first windmill there on the C-bar Hill on the San Augustine Plains. And now it's Marvin Ake's now. And then they left there in the fall of 1900 and went to Rosedale. And then from there in 1903

we went to Turkey Springs and started ranching there and ranched there till 1930 at Turkey Springs. From there we moved back on down on North Canyon and ranched there until my father passed away. We sold out the ranches. Well I moved back to Magdalena in that time and then Darryl? Hutchens ran a bar in Magdalena. In nineteen and thirty-seven. And then I moved down here to Ft. Craig Service Station and stayed there. *Did you get out of the cattle business?* No, I had cattle down there. *Is your wife a local girl?* She was born in Silver Spring, Maryland but their people moved out here in the Datils. One of them's boys still lives out there. I met her here. They come here from Montana, I think. Down to El Paso. He was in the Revenue Service in the first World War and I met her here in this Catholic Church. I moved down there to Ft. Craig - I moved down there and built that place and named it Ft. Craig Service Station. It was an old fort down on the river, I think it was called Ft. Craig. It had been an old Civil War fort and before that Civil War I guess, and when I moved down there on the highway I just named that station on that old fort. And run that station for over thirty years - thirty years and three months till I moved up here. *When you retired. You were more or less retired here.* I am. *Well you retired from a hard life, right.* Yes, and a good life. The best part of my life was when we ranched at Turkey Springs. Then after we left Turkey Springs and moved down on North Canyon there I followed lots of ranches over here to Magdalena - we called it the big rodeo ranches. A lot of them are saddle pack (riders?). And I moved back in nineteen and twenty-six and I stayed there eleven years. *I understand you've been involved in ranching, you might say.* Yes. *Maybe it was you or your daddy mentioned something about the Texas Kid or something ---* Do you want me to tell you all about that? *Surely.* Over in turkey Springs, that happened in 1904. And this pack of kids, they had started to Tennessee with a bunch of Indians that they captured down here at Apache Pass. Geronimo and the Indians went on the warpath at Fort Apache down there and that's where they took 'em in down there and they started to Tennessee with these Indians and one of these Indians jumped off the train in Kansas in a corn field. They never did ketch him and he went back to fort Apache out there and then he come ran down over this country and outlawed till he finally went over here to Mescalero. The Mescalero Apaches and the Apaches of Arizona are the same Indians only a different tribe. And he stole a girl out of Mescalero and there was a bunch of girls that was swimmin' in Mescalero Creek and he went there on horseback and just picked up one of them and he kept her and they went to Mexico. When he come back to this country he come back through somewhere about there in Rodeo, Mexico, up there in those mountains, and when he got over here to Kingston why he went after some people there and made 'em (cringin'?) and shot at some of 'em and shot ata boy and run him off and then he come on down Lucy Creek there above Monticello and there was some people living there name of Dobbs and there wasn't no one there but the women folks. All the men folks were out on the roundup wagon so he went out there I the canyon and shot a steer down and cut a quarter of meat off of him and took it over to the house and made them cook it for him. His wife and four children and there was a Mexican girl there at this place with Ms. Dobbs and Ms. Barnes daughters and she was afraid of this old Indian - this Mexican girl - and he put his elbow under her chin and pushed her over against the wall until he choked her down to let her fall down to the floor and that's all he bothered. When he left there he took all their saddle horses that they had around the place, and he had other horses and he had somewhere about 38 horses with him. So he

come up into the top of the San Mateo Mountains and camped up there in what they call the cyclone saddle on top of Blue Mountain. So somebody went to this roundup wagon and told them what had happened. So these men started from somewhere over here about Dusty to see if they could track him down so in the night they saw his campfire on top of that mountain and they finally got up there and when they did, well, they crawled up on the rocks there where he was campin' his horses that he put out on top of the mountain on the grass and they waited there all the rest of the night for him. The next morning just about sunup he come walking up this trail to go back to them horses and these men that was down there in these rocks - one of them's name was Albert (---) and the other's name was (Steve?) Charles. And old Albert said, "See him a-comin'. You whistle and I'll shoot him." So he said when old Albert whistled that old Indian just straightened up - he didn't know what it was, and old Steve shot at him and he said I hit him right there, right between the eyes. So there he was. So then they left there and there was about seven of them in the bunch and they started down to this camp in cyclone saddle and when they got right down close to this camp, two Indians jumped out and run off the side of the mountain there and they would shoot the men and they killed one of them. So when they got down there it was a squaw about 14 years old or something like that and the other one went off in the opposite direction. So they went on u to the camp and there wasn't no more Indians there at the camp. So they got an old axe with about half of the handle on it and they went out there to dig graves to bury this Indian squaw and they got down about three feet on the side of that mountain and they hit a solid rock so they just cleaned it off on this rock and put her in there and they built up a square rock wall about two feet high, maybe, and filled it full of (burials?). And that grave's there yet - a lot of people don't know where it is, but that's what it is. So they went on back up there again to round up these horses, and a lot of the horses they didn't know - the men that was there to claim the horses - and these they didn't know was comin' off there in a canyon where this (---) camp and took 'em up there and shot 'em. Nineteen head of them, and the reason I know there was 19 head of them was because there was 19 horse heads there and they all had a bullet hole in them, so they left and taken these other horses that belonged to 'em with them you know and they killed those horses because the Indians were there and they didn't want them to get those horses. Well this old Indian squaw was camped in the next canyon just over from where they shot these horses and she had these two little children with her. These other two older ones was with him in the camp. So she never showed up. I seen the holes for the tepee where she was camped over there and she told this herself now because she went to Mescalero. She left there after the shootin' was over and walked all over that mountain and walked down on Milligan's Gulch right on this side of the river there and there was an old Indian there - lots of people thought he was a Mexican - but his name was (---) Gonzalez. He married a woman and her name was Gonzalez. And he taken her name and he was a full blood Apache. So when she got down there she went to his place and she left these two little children with him and she went on down the canyon a little ways and to old Sam Dugan's? place and stole one of Sam's work mares and rode her to Salinas Peak. Right across the river and she stole old Gene Thurgood's horse there at his ranch and rode him to Mescalero and turned him loose. And old Sam got hi mare back and after she got over there she got on the train and come back to San Marcial and picked up them two little children and taken 'em with her back to Mescalero. And this Indian that ran off the mountain up there - this boy - his

mother had showed him where she used to live in Mescalero and he got away, and he walked to Mescalero and finally got to Mescalero. After she got there and I was sittin' down there in my station years after this and an Indian man and two Indian squaws walked in there and he looked at me and he said - this man did - he talked good English and he said you've been in this country a long time. And I said yes, I was raised here. Was you up there in the mountains when that Indian was killed up there? And I said, yes I was and he said they called him the Apache Kid and he said he wasn't. He was that Indian that jumped off of that train in Kansas and got away. He said his name was Pish? I don't know how you would spell it, but that is what he called him. And I said, "Where are you a'goin'? Where did you come from"? He said I come from Mescalero. I asked him where he was goin' and he said I'm goin' back to Mescalero. And we talked a little and I never did ask him if he wasn't that boy that run off of that mountain up there. I never have seen him since. *It would leave you to believe that he might have been.* That's what I got to thinkin' afterwards. If I really thought about it right at the time, I would have asked him. And he said that these children that this woman taken with her off of that mountain -- -- to San Marcial. He said when they taken them to Mescalero he said they feed 'em feed like a white man gets Post Toasties and things like that, and he said they used to be in them caves over there eatin' roots and birds and stuff like that and he said they didn't live long. *That's too bad.* So he never went into details about who he was and I never asked him too much. They always tell that was the Apache Kid, but he said he wasn't, and I know Ellerbee? Said the Apache Kid was a half-breed. Apache and white man. And he never was here in this country. He was in Arizona. *Arizona and old Mexico, right?* Yeah, but I don't think in my own mind that that Indian that was killed out there was the Apache Kid. *Well this Indian that spoke to you probably has ---.* I tell you what he was talkin' about and if I'd asked him it probably was his father. *It could have been, because he knew an awful lot.* Yes, he come there a'purpose to talk to me cause you see a lot of the time the come to talkin' to you an Indian don't talk much. Of course, we talked about the camp where it was at Cyclone Saddle, and I told him and I told this a lot of times when I went there years afterwards -- see I was only about three years old when that Indian was killed. Well after I got to be about 18 and I was big enough to ride a horse, we used to go up there. It was only about just the way a crow would fly about four miles from where we lived. We was there at this old camp and my father built the first trail that was ever built on that mountain for the Forest Reserve in 1910. When he went there why this Indian was still layin' there on the mountain where they had shot him but when we went up there you could just see the bones where they was scattered down the hill - you know they never buried him. There was a cottonwood tree there about that big around and somebody had hit that tree about six inches from the ground and bent it over. And it was still leanin' over and that tree where he was killed, there was a piece of blanket - an Indian blanket - and a piece of human skin on that blanket where he had laid there on the ground. A man come from back east somewhere and went up there and got his head and took it off with him. And old Cap Cooney that used to live here got his jawbone and made a spur out of it and gave it to his son, Charlie Cooney. He had it all fixed - that spur - and Charlie give me that spur but I didn't want to take it. The government wanted to get men for killin' that Indian but nobody wanted to say what I said about it for years. Before they killed this Indian up there we lived at Turkey Springs and there was a bunch of other Indians come down that canyon by our

house that night . My mother heard 'em with these horses go by there and the next morning there was an old fellow come there and his name was Wells, they had some cattle there in that country and he saw all these tracks down the canyon and he told my mother and he said I didn't know whether I would find you and the children alive . Those Indians wasn't there, but they went by there you know and off to Mescalero - they come from Arizona maybe - and I don't think this woman that was over there at Mescalero she said she didn't know anything about these Indians - them was just another bunch. *Well, they hadn't hurt anything had they? I don't know why they felt they had to shoot--* Well, they had. Now down near Hillsboro on Turkey Creek there was an old feller herdin' goats up there - a feller by the name of A.C. Johnson and somebody thre a rock off of this bluff and killed him. There was a feller in that country by the name of Hyler? Bill Hyler. He had one ear off. They called him one-ear Hyer and they picked him up because he and this man hd had an argument of some kind and Hyler had told him "I'll kill ya'." And they was mad, you know. When they found him there they tied him up and sent him to the pen for it in Hillsboro. And when they killed this Indian over here on the mountain that man had a gold watch on him when he was killed and in that Indian's (--) that gold watch was sewed up in it. And they cut it out and took it over there to Hillsboro and they turned old Bill loose. He spent two years in the pen up there for killin' that man that he didn't know nothin' about. When that ranchman got to him in that time back in that time it hadn't been too many years before that that they had taken these Apache Indians from over there on Appaloosa Creek and put them on that reservation over there on north Mescalero. They took these horses to keep these white people from killin' them all. Because you see, they'd had so much trouble with them that they would have killed 'em all if they han't done something for 'em. So they took 'em over there and those Indians used to get out of that reservation - they used to patrol that with soldiers - and they used to slip out and go back and forth to Fort Apache and Mescalero and there was a hot spring there - there's an old fort there But the soldiers went there ---and after Ft. Craig got here and they used to go back and forth - I guess that's the biggest town right there in New Mexico - an Indian town. A long time before that when they built that fort up there - they put Ft. Craig down there you know to police those Indians and they sent about forty nigger soldiers up there to try to do something with them Indians but they'd go down to Monticello and kill those people, you know -- farmers down there and they killed all of them forty nigger soldiers. They're buried there. So the government put a fort up there and put a bunch of soldiers up there and they couldn't make them behave and they built a reservation at Ojo Caliente for that bunch of Indians and when they was mean they couldn't get them to behave themselves, the soldiers picked them up and took them to Mescalero and put 'em on that reservation. They policed them and any time they caught them out of there they mad 'em go back a long time. Of course, now it's past history. Whenever they would come out here and kill everybody on these ranches and scalp 'em, you know people got desperate about that. *But really, it was the tension on both sides.* It had to be, or they would kill 'em all. There was men that honored them. *Unfortunately that seemed to be the feeling.* Yes it was. *Was Magdalene a wild town - I've heard people say it was a pretty wild little town as you remember it?* Well, not in a lot of ways. Out at Magdalene they used to have some shootin' scrapes there and they had some here too. But it was a prosperous town. There was one time it had more money in it than any town in the state. They had a little mail in the Post Office in

Magdalena, but it was not until 1914 they got a Post Office in Albuquerque. And it was a (---) town. *I suppose it was the cattle business declining and the mines being shut down that made it what it is.* Yeah, it hasn't got any resources and the trucks have taken the shipment of the cattle away from the railroads. Magdalena has no future any more. *It might someday. They might even reopen the mines - our natural resources are getting so scarce, they tell us there may be very little some day --and they can make it feasible you know to go in and start mining again.* If they can find a source of ore there they' start in on it again. *I heard -- you see my father was a mining engineer - I heard people like this talking and they say in some cases there is a lot of the ore there but as it got more expensive to mine, see, but anymore as scarce as some of our resources have become they may think it worthwhile to get in there and start operations again.* Do you know anything about the earthquakes here in Socorro? I can only remember one earthquake sometime back in nineteen and six, I think. They had one that shook the flues? off the roundhouse there in San Marcial, We lived in Turkey Springs then and I can remember them talking about it. They just remember a little bit about how it roared in the mountains there. And that's about the only one that I ---. You take the way them mountains and rocks was shook up why there is bound to be --before any white men come in there, there must have been a lot of earthquakes in this country because it showed it. *I understand that they had a few mild earthquakes in here between 1906 and 1910 - something like that. It probably didn't do much damag.* I don't think it done much damage. *People didn't panic?* We heard very little about it especially where we was out on these ranches. *Well they seemed to hit more in this area than they did up in Magdalena.*

They say Socorro is subject to more earthquakes than any country around. *Would you say Magdalena is settled in the old Spanish style like Socorro?* No, Socorro was settled a long time before Magdalena and what made Magdalena was the end of the railroad up there. They built Magdalena mostly just out of lumber houses. *It doesn't have your Spanish influence like Socorro has.* More than likely there was a lot of Spanish people that lived thee but they didn't start it by the Spanish people like Socorro was. But they used to talk about you know they used to talk about moving the county set to Magdalena. Socorro and Catron County was all one, you know and they used to talk about moving the county seat to Magdalena because it would be more in the center of the county, but they wouldn't want that today. *Well then Magdalena was more like, you might say, your western frontier town.* It was a pure frontier town.

That's the way it started and that's the way it was always. I guess Socorro is more of a farming district and always was, but Magdalena didn't have any farms. *So you sent to school where?* At Rosedale - they had a school at Rosedale. It was just a public school by the people there - they had to pay about a dollar and a half a month for a teacher. And my mother used to teach school in Magdalena - I mean in Rosedale. She got the first school that was ever taught there. They used to be lots of people that lived in San Marcial and went to school up there. She taught school in Oklahoma before she came here. She taught at a Choctaw Indian school and my mother as far as anyone knew about it was the only one to be a graduate in New Mexico. She graduated out of Butler College in Fort Worth, Texas. That was something to brag about and she might have been the only one - I don't know. The Forest Rangers used to come to her to help them with their books, you know. My father couldn't read and write, hardly. And I only went to the

seventh grade, but my sisters and them got a degree. *In those days if you got through the eighth grade you done good. If you managed to get through high school, that was really something.* I don't know where you would have went in the state at that time - you might have went to Las Cruces. Nobody went to high school and a lot of them didn't even go to grade school. *Yours was a big family, Mr. Burris.* Yeah there was nine. I had a sister buried at Rosedale and my mother and father is buried at Rosedale. That was kind of our home, you know. *You said your father wasn't too happy when the Territory became a State. Do you know why?* Well, he said that Territories was cheaper to live in than a state. That the United States Government appointed officials, you know, and they didn't have to put up for all them state officials. That's the way he looked at it. Of course, the majority voted for statehood. After it become a state he probably found a lot of things he liked better. *Well Mr. Burris, I sure enjoyed talking to you.*