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Interview no. 930

Harvey Hilley

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Oral Interview of Harvey Hilley
By Carrie Crise
Taken on 11/23/98

CC: Carrie Crise

HH: Harvey Hilley

LH: Louise Hilley

CC: This is Carrie Crise and I'm interviewing Harvey Hilley. It's November 23, 1998, and we're in Socorro, Texas. I'll get started right now with the interview. We'll just start off with the basics, with some background material about you and your family. When and where were you born?

HH: I was born right up across the railroad tracks about five hundred feet from here, and we've been in this house or part of it since I was 18 months old. This part has all been rebuilt, originally it was three rooms and that's where I moved to when I was 18 months old.

CC: So you're essentially from this area then.

HH: Oh yes.

CC: What were your parents names and where were they from?

HH: My dad's name was Harvey S. Hilley and he was originally from Alabama. He worked on the railroad and he was a section foreman at Clint when he saw this place and decided to buy it. Thirty five acres was all it was at that time. My

mother, Myrtle Cornelia [McDonald], was also from Alabama , the northeastern tip of Alabama, north of Gadsden. Both of them were very close together.

CC: What did they do here for a living? Did they farm?

HH: He came here on railroad and then he farmed. That was what he did, he farmed and had a small dairy. When the Depression hit, he worked at the gin and drove a school bus and had the dairy just to hang on.

CC: Did you have any siblings?

HH: I have a sister that's three years younger than I am and I had two brothers one eight years older than I am, one nine years older. The one that's eight years older than I am passed away this July.

CC: What year were you born?

HH: 1927.

CC: 1927. Where did you go to grade school?

HH: To Socorro grade school.

CC: Socorro grade school. Great. When you went to grade school what was the student body size, how many students went? Did a lot of students attend year round or did they have to take time off, etc.?

HH: We had three months off during the summer. I imagine the school was around 300 people. I don't know exactly, but we had two firsts and two seconds, a third, fourth, fifth,

sixth, a seventh when I started. They changed the eighth grade system when I was in about the sixth grade. Each of them had around 30 students.

CC: Were most of the students of an agricultural background?

HH: Yes.

CC: Where did you go to high school?

HH: To Ysleta high school .

CC: Again, some of the same questions. Like Socorro, what was, if you can remember, the approximate size and ...?

HH: Oh, [chuckle] it's a guess, but I imagine that the school had about 700 in Ysleta high. You could find that out by records. My graduating class was about 85. I graduated in 1944.

CC: And again, were a lot of these students also of an agricultural background?

HH: They were very varied, a lot of them were from El Paso. At that time Ysleta took in all the way from out at Sunrise Acres, do you know where that is?

CC: No, I don't.

HH: It's out on the Carlsbad... not the Carlsbad highway, the Alamogordo highway. It was the only high school outside of the El Paso city limits and so it took all the way from Socorro out there. Socorro wasn't in the district, but Socorro didn't have a high school so we went there. San

Elizario went there. At times Clint went there but they had their own high school.

CC: A lot of students were traveling a distance to get to school.

HH: Umm hmm.

CC: What did young people do socially in this area? What did you do for fun when you were a teenager?

HH: We swam in the drain ditches [chuckle] and went to movies and rode bicycles, we did a lot of bicycling. Some of them had horses. We did a lot of visiting at that time.

CC: Did a lot of people go to El Paso, like on the weekends?

HH: Oh yes. We did a lot of work too. We had the cotton.

CC: That ties into my next question. At this time did a lot of young people assist their families with the family work?

HH: On the farms, yes.

CC: What effect did the Great Depression have on this area?

HH: It was very depressed, but people seemed to get along pretty well. My dad had to work awfully hard. He bought the farm and then cotton went five cents a pound. So he had a very, very tough time holding on to the farm. But by having a little dairy and doing the things I mentioned before hand, he held on to it. He started getting better... things started getting better about 1936 and 37 they started getting a hold of things, but it was very difficult. Us

kids, we didn't know anything. We [chuckle] had a good time. A lot of times our diet was pretty limited. We had beans and black eyed peas and sweet potatoes and we always raised some hogs and calves. We did our own butchering and stuff.

CC: I read somewhere that El Paso, within the city limits, lost 6,000 people during the Great Depression. Did you notice Socorro losing people or did it really stay the same?

HH: Socorro was just a small community and as far as I could tell it stayed. You know, I was very small then so I couldn't give you too good an answer on that one, but the same people seemed to stay in the schools. We had a stable amount of people.

CC: Initially, I'm going to ask about the earlier poor farm before the CCC came. Do you recall anything about the poor farm in the 1930's, transients or anything?

HH: Oh yes. They would come and visit. One of them particularly, he was a good friend. He liked kids and he would come over and visit. I remember him very, very well. I don't remember any of their names but his. We called him Arch. His name was Archibald and he shaved his head and we liked to see him come. He'd come and have dinner with us every once in a while. There was several that would come around and visit. They would walk a lot and we would see

them. People didn't have cars and all at that time, like we have now. He'd come around. We delivered milk to the poor farm. Dad had a contract to deliver milk and we'd take the milk over and put it in big flat pans. They were about four feet wide three or four inches deep and then they'd skim the milk and make butter and serve the skim milk. Mrs. O'Shea was running it.

CC: So these were the people on the poor farm, the transient farm at this time, that would do this with the milk?

HH: Yes.

CC: Was Arch an adult or a child?

HH: Oh no, he was an adult. He was probably in his sixties as I remember.

CC: Was he from here or did he...?

HH: I have no idea [chuckle]

CC: No idea. [chuckle]

HH: I'm talking about when I was probably seven or eight years old.

CC: I know you said that you had contact with [the transients]. Did a lot of families here have contact with the transients?

HH: Oh, quite a few of them did. They weren't transients as you would look at most transients today. They were, as I remember, were pretty...they were just people who were really down on their luck or old and couldn't work. All of

them that I remember were clean. They were pretty clean and [well] kept. Mrs. O'Shea wouldn't have stood for anything other than that.

CC: You're leading me into all my next questions very nicely. I was going to ask about the first part of the Great Depression. Was there a stigma attached to these [transients]? I think you pretty much clarified this right there. So no?

HH: No, not that I knew of. As I said I was young, but people associated with them and would have them in their homes and things like that. I remember the trains being just loaded with people. We had no locks on the houses at that time and never missed anything. They were hungry we would come to the door. There used to be a passing track out here where the train would stop. They'd come to the door and if we had anything to feed them we'd let them have something to eat. But they were just normal people, they weren't people that [wanted to harm anything or anyone], they just didn't have anything. They were trying to go somewhere where they could find work. Usually to California. I remember they'd be on the tops of the trains, and on the open box cars and things like that. People now have no vision of what happened then. Unless they lived in that time it's hard for them to imagine. And they were good people they just had no way of

living. They were seeking ways to make a living.

CC: Were the facilities at the Rio Vista center...do you recall what they were like? Were they very nice or did they seem ...?

HH: For that time they seemed very comfortable enough. They were much better than what we had about that time. It was brick building and the rooms as I remember were very clean. They had a big sitting room that was kind of like a hotel lobby at the front of it, not fancy but very nice. To us it was nice because we had very little. We lived in a three room house with outside facilities and all at that time.
[chuckle] They had indoor facilities and things of that nature.

CC: Very interesting. Did any of them work out in the community?

HH: Not that I know of. I don't know. I'm sure that some of them did for whatever reason, to clean yards or whatever. They could [have], but I don't know firsthand.

CC: Do you recall the flood of 1935?

HH: Only by what they said. It didn't affect this area. The flood of '35 mainly affected the Fabens area.

CC: Okay.

HH: Around Fabens where the river...before the levees were built and all. But it really didn't affect us.

CC: Do you recall the CCC, the Civilian Conservation Corps?

HH: Yes...yes.

CC: From what you can recall, about what time might have been in this area?

HH: Well, it was probably in '36...35, '36. My brother and I, we hoed cotton with [a young man who joined] the CCC and I remember him coming back and telling us all about the training and everything they gave them.

CC: Oh, neat.

HH: It was similar to being in the army from what they told us. They were disciplined and they worked. I just remember them telling me that.

CC: What type of people were in the CCC? Were they males...?

HH: I don't know but you could put it...It was mostly young [men], I guess in their twenties [or late teens], who had no place, no way to make a living and that was a way to cope and make a living. They got some good training. I think that it was good for most of them.

CC: How were they perceived by the community? Do you remember?

HH: I don't really know. [chuckle] They were just people.

CC: [chuckle] They were just there. Did they work on any river work or soil erosion or anything here in this community?

HH: They did a lot of bridge work and stuff like that. Bridges and culverts and things of that nature. I was trying to think of other things that they did. I remember they used to

trap gophers on the canal banks. There used to be a lot of gophers and they would come out and send up a crew to trap gophers so that the water wouldn't rise up the canal banks.

CC: So was there a gopher problem? [laughing]

HH: [laughing] Yes, anytime you have ditches you have a gopher problem.

CC: Do you recall Agnes O'Shea? Or just by reputation?

HH: No, I recall her. I was small but she was a very nice lady. She always talked to me and she was over there nearly all the time when we would bring over milk.

LH: Tell her about that recipe she gave us.

HH: We still use the recipe that she had for all of the people over there and we always have it on Thanksgiving and Christmas. It's cranberry salad. It has...how is it? It has a cup of pecans, a cup of oranges, a cup of bananas, a cup of apples, a cup of cranberries cut up and its all in Jell-O.

LH: And a cup of sugar.

HH: And a cup of sugar..in Jell-O and it's very, very good. We look forward to having it, it's very good.

CC: Well you'll have it on Thursday then.

HH: Yes, even in California. My daughter makes it and that's where we are going.

CC: Were there a lot of children at Rio Vista during the 1930s?

HH: No, it was the late '30s. And they weren't children, as I recall. Most of them were young, maybe fourteen, fifteen years old. Something like that, not real young. I could be wrong but that's all I recollect. I knew one of them that was raised there and he went on to work of the experiment station over here. He passed away a few years ago. He spent his life working for the experiment station, which is the old poor farm but it was turned into the experiment station. I'm trying to think of his name.

LH: Pluto

HH: No, but Frank, Frank Hernandez.

CC: Frank Hernandez?

HH: Everyone called him Pluto , [his nickname], but his name was Frank Hernandez.

CC: Oh that's very interesting because he's quoted in the Register.

LH: We knew him very well. He knew more about the...I don't know whether you'd call it an orphanage. But he knew more about it than anybody that I know of.

LH: Isn't he your age? Wasn't he your age?

HH: Approximately.

CC: He quotes in the Register application that Helen O'Shea Keleher was like a second mother to him. From what you recall was that the type of relationship that she had...?

HH: She had a very good...she looked after it more and Mrs. O' Shea looked after the poor farm until she got real elderly and then Helen took over all of it. That's the way I remember.

CC: Helen, tying [her] in with Frank, from what you could tell, did she have a good relationship with a lot of the kids?

HH: Yes, I think they were-

LH: [One of] them went to college, remember? He got his college degree and he was raised over there.

HH: I imagine so.

LH: Later a doctor.[He became a D.V.M. as I recall.]

HH: She...stressed on them to do the best that they could.

LH: Was his name Graham?

HH: Yes, I think that was his name.

CC: I'm very interested that you knew Frank because I've read a lot of things that he wrote because he was interviewed about 6 years ago.

HH: That was shortly before he died.

CC: They noted that he wasn't in good health at that time. You mentioned that there were more children, or teenagers as you said, in the late '30s. Is that the right time?

HH: The best that I can remember it would be in the late '30s. They were where the CCC camp [had been] That was after the CC had left and that had to be in the later '30s.

CC: Okay.

HH: And the poor farm was on the other side of the road.

CC: The poor farm, when you say that, does that normally refer to adults?

HH: Adults, yes. That's the way I always understood it.

CC: With the poor farm, were they elderly people or were they middle aged or...?

HH: The ones that I remember were elderly. Not real old but past the real productive stage, the ones that I remember.

CC: The children who were with Helen, what were they like generally?

HH: You know, I didn't have that much contact with them. I think that they were kids who didn't have a family or maybe the families couldn't take care of them. I knew several of them and all but I didn't know them very well.

CC: Did people...kids from the community, or teenagers from the community, go over to Rio Vista to play?

HH: Not that I know of. More likely they came away to facilities at the schools and all. But I can't say that. I don't remember much about it.

CC: Did the children go to your school when you were attending school?

HH: I don't recall. I really don't. But that was the only school so they must have.

CC: With Rio Vista at that time, was there a lot of coverage about it? Maybe in the press? Was it widely known throughout the community about Rio Vista?

HH: It was. But I don't know about the press covering it much. It was just one of those things that was here.

CC: Tying to the earlier question I asked about the transients, was there a stigma attached to the children? Could you tell? Did people always kind of look at them and think, " Oh they're from the poor farm", or "they're from Rio Vista?"

HH: No, I can't remember that. As I said they were older. I don't remember any small children at all.

CC: What, at this point in the late '30s, did you call Rio Vista?

HH: The poor farm. They called where the young people were, they'd call it the Rio Vista Center. I don't remember. But they called the poor farm the poor farm. This was Poor Farm Road for a long time.

CC: Okay, good. So you called where the teenagers were differently than...?

HH: Yes, some kind of camp. I don't remember exactly. There was a differential between it and the poor farm, but I don't recall exactly. Frank may have, in some of his writings, told you what it was called.

CC: Did a lot of teenagers from Rio Vista stay after they were

grown up, do you know? Or did they leave?

HH: There was a few that stayed and went to school but I don't remember a lot of them.

CC: Did they do any work out in the community or out in the cotton fields or anything?

HH: I don't recall.

CC: And again, kind of what I was asking about earlier [in regards to] the mid '30s; in the late '30s , early '40s was the Rio Vista area pretty? Was it pleasant? Where the children, where the teenagers were?

HH: It was in good repair and all at that time. It was just barracks. Now the poor farm part has always been fairly attractive. It had lawns and landscaping. But the CC camp, it was a group of a lot...You've seen it haven't you?

CC: Yes.

HH: Well imagine it in good condition. That's the way it was. It had some trees and a patio and that was about all.

CC: Now with the poor farm, is that what is now the Sheriff's Department?

HH: That's right.

CC: Yeah, those are very nice buildings.

HH: Yes, that was the poor farm. There used to be a big wooden house right across from the old sheriff's offices there. That was the O'Shea house at that time. It was a big peaked

roof house. They finally built, I think the small house where the sheriff's offices are, for Helen O'Shea later. But the old house, where the parking lot is, was a big house where Mrs. O'Shea lived and Mrs. Keleher too.

CC: Was Helen O'Shea Keleher widely known throughout the community?

HH: I think most people knew her.

LH: She was a [member] of the Yseleta Women's Club. She was active.

HH: Her husband was a shoe salesman. He sold shoes.

CC: I read he was from San Antonio. Did he move back with her?

HH: I suppose so. I don't know where they met and if he moved here but I know he did do a lot of traveling. He was pretty well off. He did pretty well for a salesman.

CC: Did you go to college or university?

HH: I went right in one door and out the other. [laughs] One semester. I went in. As soon as I was 18 I volunteered for the navy. It was wartime so I just had one semester before I was 18. I never did go back after the war.

CC: I [am] going to ask you about World War II in this area. When World War II hit were there any affects on this area?

HH: Oh yes. Everything was rationed for a while. Gas was rationed. We all had drives to get all of the scrap metal. I donated my car to a scrap drive. [laughs]

LH: Stamps.

HH: Food stamps and gas stamps. We got along fairly well but you had to watch what you...You had so much gas. What was it? Three or four gallons a week if you didn't have a business. A farmer got more stamps for his equipment and stuff like that. But I think that normal people had three or four gallons a week. There was different types. There was A stamps and C stamps and stuff like that.

CC: And you served in the war, you said?

HH: Yes. I didn't serve [in combat]. I went in on January of 45 and served until August 1946. I was on a ship going overseas when the war was over. There was a big celebration but we didn't hardly know anything about it because we were on a ship. They started dumping (it was a merchant ship) ammunition overboard and so we knew that it was over. Brand new ship that was hauling the ammunition was dumping it off.

CC: I guess they didn't need it anymore.

HH: They didn't need it anymore. They didn't want it on that ship.

CC: Did you notice when, let's say the people who were at the poor farm, or the teenagers that you were talking about, did they begin to taper off? Were there fewer in time?

HH: Yes, as times got better. I don't remember anything, after the war, being there at all.

CC: Really?

HH: There may have, but I don't remember anything.

CC: Do you recall anything about the bracero program?

HH: [chuckle] Yeah, we used hundreds of them. Not at one time. Every year we would have to get them to pick our cotton.

CC: About what time period did that begin? The bracero program?

HH: I imagine in about 19...Probably about 1945 or '50.

LH: I know it was '50.

HH: Yeah, in '50. Before that we used..."wets" we called them.

They were illegal aliens and they were some of the best cotton pickers we had. They'd just come over, pick the cotton, and go back home. And then we had to have them and go through the government. All to get the braceros. The type of workers really declined in production. When it was people coming over here to work as "wets"; it wasn't uncommon to have a 400 pound cotton picker. 300 to 400. I had one who would pick 500 pounds a day. But after the bracero program started I never saw that. People came over here from all over Mexico. But at the time of the first cold spell- sssheeww- they were gone. We had to go find some more.

CC: Before the braceros, were a lot of the Mexicans who came over, were they just from right over the river in Chihuahua?

HH: No, most of...a lot of them...while some of them were from right across the river, some of them came from the cotton

producing areas of Mexico, Delicias and down in there. And that's where the good cotton pickers came from. They came from many parts of Mexico, but most of them who came before the bracero program were farmers and knew the farm. This is my experience with them. And they were very good- most of them were very good workers. Once in a while you'd have some that weren't, but most of them were.

CC: Do you remember what happened to them after the bracero program started?

HH: I imagine they were commingled in with them. The bracero program got so many over. You were fortunate if you got a real good picker. I won't say that all of them weren't good, there were some good pickers.

CC: Do you recall if they did any work with the braceros, did they process any of them, at Rio Vista?

HH: Most of it was processed, yeah, in the later part. They stayed at the Rio Vista. [That] was one of the key depots where they would bring the braceros and then we'd go get them. And a lot of the assignment work was done [by the El Paso Valley]. This was a depot for them. They'd bring the buses in and we'd have to get them there. And then later on they started you had to go over there to get them [processed]. You the farmer had to go over and get his papers and all.

LH: And then you'd take them back there.

HH: And then you'd take them back. That's where we took them back to.

CC: What was the procedure with the braceros? You mentioned that you had to get them processed. How would you be assigned a worker?

HH: You'd have to put in for so many of the best. Hmmm...It's been a long time ago. You'd have to put in for so many and certify that you had housing for them and everything like that before you could get them.

CC: How long would you normally have them?

HH: Well, usually during the picking season and at some times we could keep some over for farm workers, but that would be few. The braceros would be used mostly from the first part of September until we finished picking, depending on how many of them stayed, until Christmas or after Christmas.

CC: Were they mostly temporary? Did some of them, for instance, who were at Rio Vista, stay there for years or did they go some place else?

HH: Well, when they'd bring over a bunch you might get somebody that you got, you know, that had been over a year or so before but not very often. They would try to come back to you if they liked you. But they didn't have much say where they went. They'd get so many into the United States and

they might send some to Lubbock, some to here, and all over. So they didn't have...when the bracero program started, as far as telling where they wanted to go they'd didn't have a whole lot of say. Now when we selected them for summer work sometimes they'd come and work and you could ask for them and you could get them. Old hands and stuff like that. They didn't come over in the quantities they did for the cotton picking. Cotton picking took a lot of people.

CC: What was their community perception? [How did] you and some of the other farmers view the braceros? Were you happy with the program?

HH I was happy with it in that was all we had. We weren't really happy with the program. Of course, whenever you get the government into anything you lose your options pretty fast as far as selection stuff like that. It was a good program in that we were able to get workers when we needed them. Now, when we started using machines...you know the acres I farm now would have taken hundreds of pickers. Now the machine does it all.

CC: Do you recall when the bracero program ended?

HH: No, not precisely.

CC: Did it kind of peter out? Did it thin out?

HH: It tapered off because the machines came in and we didn't need them. And they went to the green cards. A lot of them

got their green cards. Most of the laboreers we use now are green cards.

CC: Do you recall when the poor farm ended?

HH: No, not exactly.

CC: What is the Rio Vista Center used for today?

HH: Part of [the old Poor Farm] is the sheriff's training and they've moved out. The Socorro's sheriff's taken over. There used to be a county sheriff part on the poor farm side. There's one building that's the Socorro...Socorro Center for the elderly. That's where they serve their meals and all.

LH: 4-H used to be there.

HH: They [aren't there] anymore, I think. But they did use it in certain buildings.

CC: 4-H?

HH: Our kids would go up and have meetings over there.

CC: Just through the years, did the poor farm, the Rio Vista center; whatever it was, the transients, the braceros, etc...Did it have a big impact on Socorro?

HH: I don't think that it did. It was kind of a separate community. The CCC and all, all of their food was prepared over there by themselves. They would get out and people would see them and they were a part of it, but as far as an impact I don't consider them in that vein.

CC: With the Rio Vista, would you say that it was an integrated part of the community or separate? I think that I'm asking you to repeat yourself a bit.

HH: I'd say that it was kind of separate.

CC: How has, Socorro itself, how has the community itself changed within the past years? [laughs] It's a broad question.

HH: When I was your age or much like your age I could go out and hunt anywhere. We had...probably in the whole...Well, in 1961 we had about 760 students in Socorro school and that was in '61. In 64 we started the high school. I went off the school board in 19 and 80 and we had 4500. Now Socorro has twenty-one or twenty-two thousand students.

LH: It used to be a farming community.

HH: It was all farms Now we're surrounded by subdivisions. Now-

LH: You could shoot a .22 without being in trouble.

[all laugh]

HH: Of course Texas 20 over here was a two lane road that handled all of the east and west traffic. [chuckle] I was a schoolboy patrol over there. All of the Greyhound busses came by and all. There was probably not any more traffic on it than there is on Rio Vista here. Maybe a little more.

CC: Have the ties to El Paso, the larger city, changed at all?
The nature-

HH: At one time people did a lot of their shopping in the small town. We had a little grocery store and all of that. It was part of the people. But it got to where everyone went to El Paso. All of the smaller towns, Fabens and Clint, they had...Clint had banks and equipment stores and all when I can first remember.

LH: Drug stores.

HH: Drug stores. Now it's the quick shopping, the gas stations. But the banks and all are gone now. In Fabens we still have a bank and other places. But look at them and see the buildings. There used to be little stores around here. Over that way was a store and this way. Small family stores. You could buy candy and beans or whatever you wanted too. It wasn't anything like today. Everything was close. Not a whole lot of people frequented, but enough to make a living.

LH: And everyone knew everyone then. Way back.

HH: There wasn't any television. We visited a lot and things like that.

CC: How has cotton farming here changed?

HH: It's changed dramatically. [chuckle] I started...'47 was my first crop so this is my fifty-first crop. When I started off farming if you had 200 acres you could make a good living. In fact in 1952 cotton was about the same price it is today.

CC: Wow!

HH: Or more, really. [In 1952 we received about \$1.07 a pound for long staple (pima cotton) and about 80 cents per pound for upland, or short staple. Pima is now at about \$1.00, short about 60 cents.] For a longer streak we were up in cotton but now its 80 cents. So we've had to get larger and more efficient. A lot of the farming I do now would have taken lots of tractors and lots of men to farm. It would have been a very large farm at that time, but it isn't now. One hundred to two hundred acres you could have made a living on in '40...after the war. You could reasonably buy a tractor at that time. And labor has gone from eighteen dollars a week to six dollars an hour plus all of the social security and everything.

CC: Tying in with this, are there fewer farmers now than there used to be?

HH: Oh yes, yes. Everybody used to be farmers. They had little farms. I farm many farms that used to be farmed by families that just couldn't make it so they leased them to me. I haven't gone out and looked for it. They want someone to farm it because they can not afford it. A tractor now, just a good size tractor, would cost anywhere from 40 to 100 thousand dollars. That little tractor out there that my dad farmed with, it still runs, cost about 700 dollars. Of

course, the ones now do much more work and much better work. But you have to have the volume to be able to farm. Cotton pickers, when they first came out, cost about 16,000 dollars for a two row. Which was in 1961. Now a four row, there's not many two rows left because of the inefficiency of them, but you have a four row now running about 200,000 dollars.

CC: This ties into what you just said. How has the environmental change, or landscape, changed? What has been the biggest change?

HH: Lots of houses. [chuckle] Lots of traffic. It's getting very difficult to farm in this area because certain times we have maybe a gridlock in traffic and moving the machines is quite a problem. We have lights and flashers and all. [We can't leave equipment or cotton out away from houses.] They'll set it on fire or steal the tarps. I've had several times where they've tried to set the modules on fire. Do you know what the modules are?

CC: No

HH: No? [chuckle] I didn't figure. There's a bunch of them out there. They are like a huge loaf of bread that we compact about seventeen bales into and then a truck comes and picks it up. We used to load that cotton onto the trailer and then take it to the gin. There used to be numerous gins all up and down the valley, probably about twelve. Now there's two

and essentially there's's one big one. There's one small one that handles a small amount in Fabens. Farming, all that's left is down towards Fabens and around there. There's not much farming in this area. It's gone to houses. [At the price of land in this area, for subdivision sites, it would be impossible to buy land now and pay for it by farming it. Proceeds from farming would not pay the interest payments.]

CC:: Do you think the community now, the young people now, do you think that they know what Rio Vista used to be?

HH: Very few of them. I would think that.