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Interview no. 1634

Granville M. Green

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Granville M. Green

Interviewer: Barbara Dent

Project: El Paso History

Location: El Paso, Texas

Date of Interview: March 18, 2009

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1634

Transcriber / Summary: Pamela Krch

As one of the “greatest generation,” Granville “Bill” M. Green witnessed first-hand many of the twentieth century’s historic events, including the Great Depression, World War II, and the country’s explosive post-war growth. He reminisces about his experiences working on the ground floor of the nascent airline industry, as well as El Paso’s early auto sales and banking businesses. Born in 1916 in Chicago, Illinois, Green had a rosy childhood, but the Great Depression forced him in 1936 to leave Northwestern University before graduating after his father lost his job. Fortunately, Green managed to secure a position the very next day with American Airlines. During the Second World War, the United States Air Force assigned Green, as a civilian, to head up its Air Transport Command. In this capacity, Green oversaw American Airlines’s planes deliver supplies around the globe to U.S. troops and to ferry casualties back to the States. In addition, some of the planes under his command brought back uranium ore from Africa for the Manhattan Project and, at war’s end, were involved in the Berlin Airlift. Post-war, Green headed up American Airlines’s flight attendant school. Green left the airline in 1946 and relocated to El Paso in order to work for his father-in-law’s car dealership, Watkins Motor Company. Upon his father-in-law’s death in 1951, Green left the auto sales industry and went into manufacturing, first opening up a small brewery and later working for the company that produced “Billy the Kid” boys’ jeans. When the company began floundering, Green looked to the banking industry. Friends had founded El Paso’s Southwest National Bank in 1947; Green joined it in 1961, growing the bank from \$18 million in assets to around \$600 million by the time of his 1982 retirement. Throughout the interview, Green shares his memories of early El Paso and Juarez; in particular he discusses in some detail El Paso’s twentieth-century growth and development.

Length of interview 146 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a