



## NMSU Library News Release

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### **Rio Grande Collections Mounts Web Exhibit on Prisoners of War in New Mexico Agriculture**

The Rio Grande Historical Collections of the New Mexico State University Library is pleased to announce a new online oral history resource. Detailed abstracts of the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum oral history project *Prisoners of War in New Mexico Agriculture* are now available through the RGHC web site. Full transcripts and the interview tapes are available for use in the repository. The web site also features photographs of prisoners and guards and a map of POW camps located in New Mexico.

This collection of audio and videotapes documents the use of prisoners of war (POWs) in New Mexico agriculture during World War II. Both Italian and German POWs were housed in New Mexico and some worked as laborers harvesting and planting mostly commercial crops. Two large camps were located near Roswell and Lordsburg, New Mexico, and there were many smaller base camps established (usually in refurbished Civilian Conservation Corps camps) throughout southern and eastern New Mexico.

The collection contains the oral history interviews of former POWs; farmers (or their descendents) that utilized the POW labor; townsfolk and children's perspectives of the POWs; guards, civilian camp employees, and adjunct workers; and program administrators. Topics cover the work and daily life of the POWs, the farmer's assessment of the work of the POWs and of the program and the administration of the program by state and local government officials.

The exhibit "*To Get the Job Done*": *Employing Prisoners of War in New Mexico Agriculture During World War II*, based in part on the oral history collection, was recently on display at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum. The exhibit will be installed at the Fort Bliss Museum in El Paso, Texas, September through December 2002. More information about the exhibit can be found on the web site, or call the Farm and Ranch Museum at (505) 522-4100.

To view the collection *Prisoners of War in New Mexico Agriculture*, please visit the Rio Grande Historical Collections web site at: <http://archives.nmsu.edu/rghc/index/pow/>. For more information about the collection, please contact Portia Vescio at (505) 646-4746 or [pvescio@lib.nmsu.edu](mailto:pvescio@lib.nmsu.edu).