

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Governor John Burroughs

Inaugural Address

January 1, 1959

Santa Fe, N. M.

Transcribed by Lari Curtis

Eastern New Mexico University Oral History Program

Tape No. 39

Introduction : This is a recording of the inaugural address of Governor John Burroughs, in Santa Fe, January the 1st, 1959. The first voice heard is that of retiring Governor Edwin L. Mechem.

Mechem : I wish the greatest success with the hope of all New Mexicans that the next two years will be New Mexico's finest years. May God be with you.

Introduction : . . . the Honorable John Burroughs, governor of the state of New Mexico.

Burroughs : I wish that every citizen of New Mexico could carry the feeling of responsibility that's mine today. In taking off as the governor of our state, I do so in the firm and sincere hope that during my term of office we will be able to achieve accomplishments which will benefit every segment of our population. To reach such goals and demands, the people of New Mexico demonstrated willingness to cooperate with the public officials they have named to office, and to accept until proven otherwise, the sincere intentions of these officials to work for the best interest of the general public. As it now operates, government no longer permits the public official to make definitive policy level decisions entirely on his own. In government today, the public official has become a mediator between various groups with his greatest problem being that of furthering the rights, privileges and welfare of the private organized citizen. To my way of thinking, good government results from positive thinking and constructive action. In New Mexico, where we're only now beginning to undertake the planning that's necessary to guide us through a period of exhilarating growth, it is essential to permit each administration the freedom of action to get things done. When election time comes around, the people have ample opportunity to declare whether they feel an administration has lived up to it's promise.

But in between times, it's to the benefit of all of us that we work together toward those goals that will be of benefit to all of us. In our state, particularly, the public official must have an awareness of the times in which we live, an ability to link together our past, our present, and our future. We must take advantage of the present, prepare for the future, and preserve what is significant from the past.

Government is not all economics, it is not all statistics, not all rules and regulations. The kind of government we need today in New Mexico incorporates an understanding and a sympathetic awareness of the human problems of our people. It calls for pride in the accomplishment of those who have preceded us. It calls for an unusual degree of concern for the potentials of service that public office provides.

As Governor, I shall do my very best to give New Mexico effective, strong government that's representative of our people's thinking. I shall attempt to work for the common good, and to preserve whatever possible to the individual freedom of our citizens. We shall strive to improve the means by which our citizens can achieve freedom from poverty, freedom from insecurity. I cannot promise that I will not make mistakes, but I do promise that I will not be afraid to admit when I have been wrong. I will not refuse to act for fear of being wrong. As Governor, my motto will be that, if there's a job to do, let's all buckle down and try to get it done.

Conclusion : This address was delivered immediately after the oath of office administered by Justice James McGhee, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New Mexico.