

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mr. and Mrs. W.O. Dunlap, Jr.

February 25, 1973

Eastern New Mexico University Oral History Program

BURROUGHS: This is Mrs. John Burroughs. Today is a bright, sunny, early spring day--February 25, 1973. I'm in the home of Mr. and Mrs. W.O. Dunlap, Jr., to talk specifically about the local election which is coming up in the city, about his mother's part in the woman's suffrage movement in the early 1900's, and then finish off with general recollections of the homestead early era. How are you, Bill? Are you ready to talk as always?

MR. DUNLAP: Well, we always had a group of good, prominent women here: Mrs. Stone (Doug Stone's mother), Mrs. Carr, and many other women that I could name and name and name that were very prominent opposed to the liquor, because of the trouble it caused in our community. It was family troubles it caused. And then they didn't have any welfare, so when people didn't take care of their families, the community had to take care of them. Now we got welfare to take care of them.

BURROUGHS: Now can you give me the approximate date when all this agitation began?

MR. DUNLAP: Well, when we came here in 1898, there was one store and two or three bars built in here right soon after. When the railroad came in here that fall, I think there was a saloon here then. But, when the railroad came in here in the fall of '98, why the saloons began to build up and we had more saloons than we did grocery stores. And they all thrived. I've known people to get killed right here on the streets, and I've known others (I can give names, but I won't do that, because I might hurt somebody's character)....

BURROUGHS: That was the result of the open saloon?

MR. DUNLAP: Yes. They'd get to fighting in these saloons, and shooting at each other, and....

BURROUGHS: These good ladies decided they's put a stop to it, is that right?

MR. DUNLAP: Well they really got out and made a campaign against it and enough men that helped them they put out, that was suppose to have been put out for keeps in this county.

BURROUGHS: Now what year was that?

MR. DUNLAP: That was way back yonder before 19..., I know it was before statehood.

BURROUGHS: Yes. I think it was 1910 wasn't it?

MR. DUNLAP: About 1910. About that, now I won't say what year, but it was somewhere along there. My father had a real estate office down there in town about where...most of the time it was right there...he was one of the city officials...right there by that alley on the second street. Judge Lindsay had a land

office right there joining him.

MRS. DUNLAP: The abstract office, was that it?

MR. DUNLAP: Yes.

BURROUGHS: Smith Wright's abstract office?

DUNLAP: No, no....

BURROUGHS: Jim Booth?

MR. DUNLAP: Jim Booth. When he'd located people, he'd just go into Judge Lindsay's office, and he would finish them up on their homestead.

BURROUGHS: Your father was the locator, then?

MR. DUNLAP: He located, you might say, 75 percent of the people in this part of the country.

(There is apparently a skip in the tape at this point.)

(*Mr. Burroughs?*)

MRS. DUNLAP: This is a new side to your mother I'd like to hear more about.

MR. DUNLAP: Well, my mother and these other women were very prominent in their church work. They believed in it, and they worked in it. My father didn't take so much interest in it, but he never did contradict anything they did. He was always for them. Mrs. Carr and Mrs. Stone....

BURROUGHS: That's Mrs. G.W. Carr and Mrs. J.P. Stone?

MR. DUNLAP: Yes. Such people as that (no need in naming some of the other women), but they were all very, very determined to get rid of these saloons. I always had a saddle pony, and when I didn't have something to do out at the place, I'd come to town and lope around like all boys. And I've been back behind the Bogard

Saloon, right in there about the New Mexico Drug is now, that was one of the biggest saloons. And the Warnica saloons and all those saloons around, and I'd know people be laying back there (they'd pull them back into the back alley and they'd be laying back there), and we didn't have fly killer in that day and time, and they was laying there with there mouths open and the flys on them until they were just in there mouth. I'd bugger the flies out and cover their head up with a newspaper, because I just had that much humanity about me.

BURROUGHS: And they were sleeping off their "drunk"?

MR. DUNLAP: Sleeping off their drunk and the people who drug them out there didn't give a darn what happened to them. Well, I'd cover them up and I always sympathized with them, especially if it was somebody I knew, and I knew about everybody. Whenever they'd get to fighting, I'd stand right in there and watch them fight it out. I never did blink an eye, because it didn't bother me a bit. One time one was shooting at the other one, and I was running right along trying to keep him from hitting him.

BURROUGHS: Well now then, what part did your mother and the women have in bringing this to a vote?

MR. DUNLAP: I don't know, I was just a kid, but I know they finally got up this dry issue and brought it to a vote and beat them in the county and it was supposed to be for keeps. At that time, this county was supposed to be dry and dry from now on.

BURROUGHS: That was about 1910 or 1912....

MR. DUNLAP: Yes.

BURROUGHS: And then what causes all these local option elections to come up every so often?

MR. DUNLAP: Well, the New Mexico law; every two to four years you can bring anything back up for another election. That's just New Mexico law. And you can run it back over through, and the taxpayers have to pay for the darn thing, when you ought to make the ones that bring it up have to pay for it. I want you to let them know that, too.

BURROUGHS: Well, I expect that there are a lot of people that share your opinion. However, this election coming up April 10....

MR. DUNLAP: They're trying to beat us to these eighteen-year-olds.

BURROUGHS: Now, would you comment on that new law, and what prospect you see for it passing this time.

MR. DUNLAP: Well, I personally don't think it's got a chance to pass. I think we've got enough good citizens in Portales that will absolutely see that it doesn't pass. I don't believe all these eighteen-year-olds that they think are going to vote for Portales to be wet are going to do it, because some of their parents won't even send them here to school if this is a wet town.

BURROUGHS: You think that the parents....

MR. DUNLAP: I know parents that won't send their kids to school here if this is a wet town!

BURROUGHS: Well now, this is the only dry town in the state, so where would they go?

MR. DUNLAP: Well, they'd just quit going to college.

BURROUGHS: You really think that's true?

MR. DUNLAP: I know one man that said he wouldn't send his boys up here at all. Well, he was aiming to send his boys from Artesia. He went up here two years and he was the inspector down there. I was talking to him, having him to inspect some bulls I was moving up this way that I'd bought down there, and he just got to talking about it. He says, "I went up there two years (I'm pretty sure he told me) and my boy's graduating this year, and that old judge wouldn't do anything to those dope peddlers, and I'm not going to even send him up there to college." And I says, "Well, where else can you send him any better?" He says, "I guess I just won't send him at all. I'd rather not send him than see him in something like that you people have got up there now." And I said, "Listen, it's not as bad as you think it is." And he said, "Listen, I keep up with it all the time. Don't go telling me how it is."

BURROUGHS: Well, you think then that we can in the county defeat this election again?

MR. DUNLAP: In the city limits.

BURROUGHS: In the city...well, it's restricted to a city vote.

MR. DUNLAP: Yes. And I don't believe these college boys that know they don't belong here are going to try to vote liquor on us when they know it's not their duty to do it.

BURROUGHS: Well now, will you comment on some of the action of the opposing forces. What are they doing to....

(The tape recorder was bumped at this time. The conversation during the movement is unclear.)

MR. DUNLAP:Personally, I've talked to Fred Hensley, and he might not want me to use his name, and I've talked to James Compton, and James Compton says, "Check their liscence, and if they don't have New Mexico liscence....if they say they're New Mexico residents and don't have New Mexico liscences, they've got to get New Mexico liscences or fine them one, or make them get their names off that petition right fast."

BURROUGHS: Yes. Now that was the petition to call the election?

MR. DUNLAP: That's right. We're going to put the "bee" (?) on them, and we just like less than twenty-five people to cancel the election. And I know we can get more than twenty-five off on that one move.

BURROUGHS: Well now, the paper the other day said that 209 names had been taken off, and that you had nine more than the a little bit more than 600 names required. Do you think you can get some more of those names removed?

MR. DUNLAP: I know I can get more than any nine because, listen, whenever we get the state policemen to stop them on the road block and look at their liscence and it's Texas, Oklahoma, and what-not, and they say, "Wait a minute. I've got a list here where you say you live in New Mexico. This is your residence, and you're subject to fine running that car in this state, without being this your residence, so much a day for running it."

BURROUGHS: So you think that they would get their name off the petition?

MR. DUNLAP: I think they'll take their name off of there before they'll pay that fine, don't you?

BURROUGHS: Yes, I imagine. So you think that maybe you can prevent....

MR. DUNLAP: That's just one of my shenanigans that I've got up. I've got the lawyers to say, "Yes, you can do it."

BURROUGHS: Well, you are going to have to work fast between now and April 10, then.

MR. DUNLAP: No, I don't want to do a thing until a lawyer says it's too late for them to get another bunch of names on them.

BURROUGHS: I see, for another petition to be gotten up.

MR. DUNLAP: Yes, I want it to be so late that they don't have time to get another bunch of names.

BURROUGHS: Well, what is the Baptist Church doing about this?

MR. DUNLAP: Well, the Baptist Church preacher, I understand, is taking the leading part on getting the names of all the signers on that wet petition.

BURROUGHS: Now what is his name?

MR. DUNLAP: Somebody told me who he was, but I forgot it.

BURROUGHS: This is the Baptist preacher in the....

MR. DUNLAP: ...Baptist preacher here that I was told by good authority, well, the Methodist preacher here told me he was doing it.

BURROUGHS: So, he is taking?

MR. DUNLAP: He's getting the names of all those that signed that wet petition.

BURROUGHS: What's he going to do about it then?

MR. DUNLAP: Well, we're going to get those and then we'll check them on the roadblock, and you are going to pay a fine for driving that car illegally, or get your name off of that list one.

BURROUGHS: Well now, has he mentioned having sermons against this to...

MR. DUNLAP: I don't know what he's doing.

BURROUGHS: ...encourage people to....

MR. DUNLAP: I didn't want to start anything until I knew it was too late for them to get another petition up.

MRS. DUNLAP: Our church has people who's working in it, too.

BURROUGHS: Mrs. Dunlap, will you move over here just a little bit closer, and tell me maybe what the Methodist Church is planning to do?

MRS. DUNLAP: Our pastor, as well as quite a few of our members, are working with the C.A.L.L., which is the name that they're using on this.

BURROUGHS: Do you know what that stands for?

MRS. DUNLAP: C.A.L.L.--Citizens Against Legalized Liquor. And they are working quite diligently as well as the other members of other churches here in town, as well as enraged citizens of Portales.

BURROUGHS: Now, how many enraged citizens do you think you have?

MRS. DUNLAP: Well, I wasn't at the meeting when they organized, so I wouldn't know.

MR. DUNLAP: We must have had 200 there that night.

BURROUGHS: That was at the Memorial Building?

MR. DUNLAP: Yes. That's the night I got on....

BURROUGHS: The current probate judge, is that right?

MR. DUNLAP: Yes, I told him what I thought.

BURROUGHS: Well, do you mind repeating in a slightly calmer vein what you said to him?

MR. DUNLAP: I hate for this to go into the paper, because he might sue me or something.

BURROUGHS: This isn't going in any paper. He put it in the paper that he thought this was a good idea, and you disagreed with him. Is that right?

MR. DUNLAP: I disagreed with him for the simple reason that I thought that the human being's life was worth more than the little old almighty dollar that he was trying to get. It was proven time and again that it cost more taxes, law enforcement, and so forth, than the revenue we ever got out of the liquor. I told him that.

BURROUGHS: Well, that's a pretty good stance, I think.

MR. DUNLAP: Now they tell me since then somebody told me they've got a proven fact it costs four times as much.

BURROUGHS: To take care of somebody on welfare than....

MR. DUNLAP: Well, where you have liquor, your taxes are four times as heavy as it would be if you didn't have any liquor.

BURROUGHS: You mean that that would increase the city taxes?

MR. DUNLAP: It would cost the taxpayers...cost somebody...soembody's got to pay at least four times as much money as we'd get revenue from it. That was Mrs. Hensley's brother that told me that at the church-house.

MRS. DUNLAP: Oh, Mr. Clay. He is one of the workers in our church on this.

BURROUGHS: I see. Well, both Grover Ross and Walker Hubbard have commented on this to me, and Ross said he thought that the day was coming when we couldn't defeat it by as a large a percentage as they used to--four and five to one. Do you care to make a prediction on this election?

MR. DUNLAP: Yes, I'll say we can't beat it that much because of the United States Supreme Court ruling that anybody can just be here forty some days and register and vote against it when the constitution of New Mexico says that you have to be in New Mexico twelve months to vote. But the United States Supreme Court just ruled recently that they didn't have to do any such thing as that.

MRS. DUNLAP: Had this election been called by the total county, I think we could have defeated them much more, but since it's just the city, people who live in the city limits....

MR. DUNLAP: They're trying to beat us with those college kids, and I don't believe those college kids...I have more confidence in those college kids than that.

BURROUGHS: Well now, someone else has mentioned that, that they thought perhaps the students would not all vote as a block on this-- that many of them came from homes where there had been alcoholic disturbances, and they saw what happened, and that they might not be for it.

MRS. DUNLAP: Well, we have quite a few college professors out here that are working diligently against it, too.

BURROUGHS: I'm sure it might increase some of the problems there. Well, after April 10, we'll run this tape back and put in the results of the election, and I can say, "W.O. Dunlap predicted this."

MRS. DUNLAP: Hopefully you're right.

(The tape is cut off at this point at the request of Mr. Dunlap. It resumes again shortly.)

BURROUGHS: We're going to now go to back to about this 1910 period when the women of Portales and Roosevelt County were doing so much to increase the atmosphere of civility in the times. What did your mother do in the women's suffrage movement?

MR. DUNLAP: Well, my mother and her sister, Aunt Ella Turner, and all of our kinfolks were right in for getting rid of the liquor and whatever the others called on to do. My mother never was a hand to jump out and take the lead on these kind of things, but she was with them and she had her influence with them. And whenever they came to election, we beat them bad.

BURROUGHS: Now, what did your mother do for women's suffrage, to get the women the right to vote? Because they couldn't vote against all these issues until they had the right.

MR. DUNLAP: Well, I don't know just what all those women did, but I know that those women that I was talking to you about, they all stood up for the women's rights to vote. And they got it and the men didn't fight them. The men here never did fight them about voting.

BURROUGHS: I think they helped, didn't they?

MR. DUNLAP: I think they helped them right along.

BURROUGHS: Now Mrs. Dunlap has a book here that details the history of women's suffrage in New Mexico. Would comment on the part of Mrs. Lindsay in organizing this in Roosevelt County? I think there's a mention made that she was active not only in the county, but in the state.

MR. DUNLAP: I think she was, too.

BURROUGHS: And that she had a meeting in the governor's residence in 1918, I believe, when her husband was governor in (1917) and (1918).

MR. DUNLAP: He was a Republican and my dad was a Democrat, but he worked for him like a Turk (?) to get him elected.

BURROUGHS: Why was that?

MR. DUNLAP: Because they were close friends and he knew that Governor Lindsay was a man of his word. And Governor Lindsay, after he went in as Lieutenant Governor, the other fellow committed suicide.

BURROUGHS: No, he died.

MR. DUNLAP: Well, you say he died. He died all right.

BURROUGHS: He died after a month in office.

MR. DUNLAP: Yes, I know all about it. He died. All right, he died and Governor Lindsay took it. My dad and them tried to get him to run again and he says, "Listen, I've been my boss all my life, and I don't aim to go up there and let a bunch of pinheads tell me what to do. And I wouldn't have that job--you couldn't run fast enough to give it back to me."

BURROUGHS: Now that's what your dad said?

MR. DUNLAP: That's what Lindsay told my dad, the way I got it, second-handed. Judge Lindsay just wouldn't think about taking the thing over.

BURROUGHS: But, he did.

MR. DUNLAP: No, he didn't run anymore.

BURROUGHS: You mean for the second term?

MR. DUNLAP: Yes.

BURROUGHS: Well, he said that the first time, but then he was nominated for lieutenant governor, and just by circumstance he happened to be governor.

MR. DUNLAP: That's right.

MRS. DUNLAP: But it came for him to run for his own governorship, he didn't want to run again.

MR. DUNLAP: He told my father, so my father, I heard him tell my friends that Governor Lindsay just said, "No, I won't take that job again--not about to."

BURROUGHS: He felt like he would rather be his own man than be subject to harassment, special interest, pressure?

MR. DUNLAP: I think that's just about Governor Lindsay all the way through. Always my opinion of Governor Lindsay--what he thought was right.

BURROUGHS: Mrs. Dunlap has this page marked here in the book of the history of New Mexico women's suffrage. Would you comment on the part that the Federation of Women's Club had in getting this vote?

MRS. DUNLAP: I see here in 1915 the Federation of Women's Clubs, which our Woman's Club which was organized in 1903 here in Portales was one of those federated clubs, they were able to secure some legislation favorable to women and children as well. And in 1916, the Women's Christian Temperance Union had a prohibition amendment endorsed by the State Republican Platform.

BURROUGHS: Now that's the one that Mr. Dunlap's mother was concerned with?

MRS. DUNLAP: Right.

BURROUGHS: In 1916?

MRS. DUNLAP: Yes. And through their efforts then, this came about. And I was reading past history in our Women's Club recently where the women, when they did get to vote, that our Women's Club president called a meeting in the court house, and the men (I've forgotten