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Interview No. 1635

Sheldon Hall

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Sheldon Hall

Interviewer: Barbara Dent

Project: El Paso History

Location: El Paso, Texas

Date of Interview: March 22, 2009

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1635

Transcriber / Summary: Pamela Krch

Although Sheldon Hall (b. 1917) grew up in Ohio and lived most of his early years there and later, in Snyder and Van Horn, Texas, he became a pivotal figure in the preservation and recording of El Paso's Spanish colonial history. After a childhood spent in Columbus, Ohio, Hall attended college, earning a degree in Investment Management. Before he was able to use his education, however, the United States entered World War II, and the United States Army called upon him to join its Army Air Corps, where he worked first as a test pilot on A-31 bombers and then as a flight instructor in Brazil. In South America, Hall trained Brazilian dive bombers, thus reviving the Brazilian Air Force and, at the same time and by necessity, learning to speak Portuguese. Shortly before the war's end, Hall married, and a couple of years after his 1945 discharge he and his family moved to Snyder, Texas, where his father-in-law worked in the burgeoning oil industry. At his father-in-law's suggestion, Hall relocated to Van Horn, Texas, buying and running a successful John Deere dealership. Around 1960, Hall sold the business and move once again to El Paso, where he became heavily involved in civic work. His familiarity with Portuguese lent itself to the easy apprehension of Spanish, and Hall began researching El Paso's Spanish history. Beginning in the 1970s, Hall worked to create and promote the El Paso Mission Trail. In addition, he was a founding member of the El Paso County Historical Commission. Aside from his work as local historian, Hall was instrumental in the Texas "right turn on red" campaign, eventually facilitating its legislation throughout the state.

Length of interview 53 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a