

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

BOB DILLARD

July 17, 1986

at

Marfa, Texas

By Scott Ellsworth

Abstracted by Vanessa Broussard

For the Marlboro Oral History Project
INTERVIEW #17

Archives Center
National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution

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BOB DILLARD

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

An editor for the local newspaper in Alpine, Texas, Bob Dillard was chosen by the Marlboro account group to participate in the commercial "Cowboy Dreams".

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The interview focuses on the myth of the old West; the disappearance of land and values; the exploitation of western images by Marlboro; and cowboys and cigarettes.

The interview was conducted in Marfa, Texas

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Abstract of interview with Bob Dillard, July 17, 1986
Marfa, Texas
Interviewer: Scott Ellsworth

Tape 1, Side 1

DISCUSSION OF THE IMAGE OF THE OLD WEST

- 2:25 Dillard states concern about the images that are intended to portray the West.
- Dillard grew up with Bobby McKnight, a local person chosen for a part by the Marlboro account group for the commercial "Cowboy Dreams".
- Dillard argues that every cowboy that he knows who smokes wants to kick the habit.
- 4:05 Dillard is a businessman and an editor. As a businessman he thinks that it is healthy for the Marlboro account group to be filming a commercial in a small town like Marfa where they need the money and publicity. The old people who have been there all their lives, however, don't want to see new people move in. Marfa is desperately in need of money. There is sixteen to eighteen percent unemployment. Those who live there think that the land is beautiful as it is. They don't want to see the country changed like central Texas or southern California.
- 6:20 Cowboys in Montana, New Mexico or Arizona know that there are very few places one can be a cowboy because of urbanization. Marfa is the last place

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in Texas considered "cowboy country".

Forty percent of the people in Marfa qualify for federal poverty standards.

7:55

Mono's Bar is a Mexican-American bar. Dillard states that it would be strange to have a bar that was totally Anglo-American. There is a mix in the clientele, however, and the people get along well.

Dillard contends that Anglo-Americans are on Mexican turf; therefore, they must learn Mexican culture. If Anglo-Americans don't speak Spanish or eat Mexican food they don't fit in.

11:00

Marfa has become an oasis for the film, commercial and tourist industries.

11:40

Marfa is in the third generation of residents. Dillard argues that the first generation carved the country and their sons helped to build it. The third generation just wants to visit twice a year or to sell the land. This presents a problem for those old residents who love the land and want to stay. This part of the country is being chopped up and those who do not appreciate the western aspect of the country are changing it. The western part of the country, or what Dillard refers to as cowboyism, is disappearing rapidly.

14:10

Texas is what the myth of the Old West

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is about. In the 20s, 30s and 40s there was no myth. Dillard states that Gene Autry and Roy Rogers are Texas.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

18:05

Dillard originally came from that area where his family ranched. He brought a couple of newspapers eleven years ago. Dillard currently resides in Ft. Davis, Texas.

18:25

DISCUSSION OF MARLBORO MAN

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