



ADAM DIAZ 1909 - 2010

Honored as a Historymaker 1999 Humanitarian



The following is an oral history interview with Adam Diaz (AD) conducted by Reba Wells Grandrud (RG) for the Historical League, Inc. on February 17, 1998 at Adam Diaz's home in Phoenix, Arizona.

Transcripts for website edited by members of Historical League, Inc. Original tapes are in the collection of the Arizona Heritage Center Archives, an Historical Society Museum, Tempe, Arizona.

RG: As we were talking earlier, congratulations on being honored as a Historymaker. We'll start by you stating your name and birth date and place.

AD: My name is Adam Diaz and I was born in Flagstaff, Arizona in 1909, although my birth certificate states 1910. At that time Flagstaff was a pretty small town. It didn't even have a registrar. We moved to Phoenix right away because my dear mother thought the weather would be very severe in Flagstaff for me. She prevailed upon my good father to move down to Phoenix. And here, when she went to the registrar's office, she got a little confused and stated that I was born in 1910, but I was born in 1909. That's when we first arrived here in Phoenix. My father was not very happy with things in Mexico. The campesino, the working class, were just as mistreated as they are now. So he joined the group of the revolution and they battled for quite some time, several years, and he had my mother all during the campaign. She would follow him and carry all the cooking equipment, because she had two children on the campaign. Finally, he had this friend, Candelaria, Manuel Candelaria. They owned a huge Spanish grant in Flagstaff, almost from Flagstaff all the way to McNary. It was huge. Manuel told my father, "It's not nice that you're dragging your wife and your kids with you. Why don't you go to Flagstaff? I could sure use you there. I have cattle and don't even know how many head of cattle I have. I would like to just have you go over there and ride horseback and go over the whole area, and keep a fairly good count of the cattle." My dad agreed. They came through Juarez. At that time, we just paid five cents to cross, and you were given a work permit. So he crossed the bridge at

Juarez into El Paso and then came into Flagstaff. We were there only a few months because my mother was about to have a child, me, so they stayed in Flagstaff until I was born.





RG: What month was it that you were born?

AD: September the 2nd.

RG: Now, your family had been in Chihuahua; is that right?

AD: Yes, we started in Veracruz.

RG: Oh, in Veracruz?

AD: Oh, yes, Veracruz and Puebla, Puebla and Mexico, and Mexico City, and then down through Chihuahua and then all the –

RG: Across the border there into Juarez?

AD: Yes.

RG: What was your father's name?

AD: Jose.

RG: And your mother was?

AD: Soledad.

RG: And were the two older children girls or boys?

AD: I had a sister, Aurora. She was my older sister, and little Irene, but she passed away. She was very fragile and the trip was hard, so she passed away. She [Aurora] just passed away here recently. She was with me for a long, long time.

RG: And Manuel Candelaria, what was the name of the grant?

AD: The Candelaria Land Grant.

RG: Now, he got that during the Mexican period or do you know?

AD: Oh, the old Candelaria Spanish Grant, it was all part of Spain at that time.

RG: Okay. I understand that there's nothing left. The old Candelaria Grant is gone. I wonder, do you have





any idea who owns any of it?

AD: Well, the Cady Lumber Company, I suppose – owns quite a bit of it. I really don't know. The Babbitts in Flagstaff, I suppose they acquired part of it.

RG: So your father came down to Phoenix. And what did he find to do here?

AD: My father was a boiler maker. Because during the campaigns in Mexico, they had to appropriate railroads from the government, and somebody had to learn how to service the engines. So he learned, he was a boiler maker. And, of course, when he arrived from Flagstaff into Phoenix there wasn't any problem and he immediately applied for a job at the old Arizona Eastern. It was just a trunk line from Maricopa.

RG: Right. And it ran from Wellton to Picacho and came through Phoenix.

AD: That's right.

RG: Okay. I didn't remember it was called Arizona Eastern but I know which one you're talking about.

AD: Yes. So he immediately thought of purchasing a little piece of land because -- he wanted to build a house here for us. He decided that Phoenix was a good place to bring up the family. He was well paid, seventy-five cents an hour, for a boiler maker in those days. It was good, because the rest of the employees of the railroad, they were [earning] 35-40 cents an hour. That's all they would pay. But as a boiler maker, he was doing well. So, therefore, he bought two lots on east Madison Street, 12th Street and Madison and another one on Adams Street on 12th, off of 12th Street and Adams. And then he proceeded to start building, making some concrete blocks by hand, because there was -- well, I shouldn't say by hand, because they had a little mold -- a little form, just mix the concrete and the sand and the gravel, and then make the little blocks and set it out to dry. Of course, that took a long, long time because one block at a time, and letting it dry and then hauling to it Madison Street where the house was built.

RG: Now, was this adobe?

AD: No, concrete block.

RG: He was using concrete?

AD: Concrete.

RG: Making bricks just one at a time?

AD: One at a time, and he had to have thousands of them, because he wanted a big house. And with his big strong arms, he did a lot of the work himself. Then for the walls, he hired a Mr. Munoz, I remember him so





well.

RG: Do you remember his first name, by any chance?

AD: Jose, Jose Munoz. He did the laying of the walls. He laid all the concrete blocks. He did a marvelous job of building the walls and the partitions, all concrete. Really, really solid house.

RG: How large a house did he build?

AD: Well, it was sort of a duplex. He thought we would live in one half and then he'd rent the other half. And it worked -- perhaps there was about six, eight rooms. Eight rooms, and four were rented, we were about a block from the roundhouse. It was very convenient, because he could just walk across and work there. He had enough space so that we would raise our own corn and vegetables and everything that we needed. And we grew a lot of turkeys, baby turkeys and we just turned them loose in the area. In the area there was no problem.

RG: Right, right. Did you have neighbors nearby?

AD: Yes, we had two neighbors. I even forget their name. I think it was Olea. I can't think of their name. But they were not too far away. They were about two blocks away. And then all the rest was very, very small little huts, that the people would build. Because then, in those days the Hispanics were all there, from Seventh Street to Sixteenth Street. That's where the Hispanics lived, and that was the work force for the city of Phoenix.

RG: South of the railroad?

AD: Yes, south, between Jefferson and the railroad, and that's as far as we could go. They wouldn't let us go north of Van Buren. We Hispanics couldn't. We were not permitted to go back on the other side.

RG: What did you do about school during those early years?

AD: There was a Washington School. When I was five years old my sister, Aurora, enrolled me in Washington School, which was at Ninth Street and Washington. It was kindergarten through fourth grade only. Then once you completed the fourth grade, you moved to Monroe School, they had just built that school, and that school was from fifth through eighth. And then after that, the ones that could afford it would go to high school.

RG: Right.

AD: But when I finally completed my four years at Washington School, I went to Monroe School. Then I graduated in 1923 from Monroe School. And my father had accumulated [some money] -- he said, "Well,





you're going to go to high school." And that was unheard of, because, the kids in our area after the eighth grade and then to the work force to help out the family. But my father said, "No, you're going to go to high school." So he had \$48 or something like that saved so that I could buy my school supplies so I could go into high school. But he came home one evening with a cold and in two days, he was gone.

RG: Oh, pneumonia, or -

AD: Pneumonia. He passed away.

RG: How old was he?

AD: Well, he was about 70 years old. He was a young man, strong, powerful man.

RG: What year was that, do you remember?

AD: About 1926. I was 14, almost 15 years old. And there was nothing else to do but use that money to buy a bicycle, transportation so that I could go to work.

RG: So you went to high school a little while?

AD: No.

RG: Oh, you never did get to go?

AD: No, never got to go to high school. And that was really hard, because the high school was right there.

RG: And you wanted to go?

AD: Oh, desperately. I wanted to go so bad, but it was necessary -- I was the oldest, it was necessary for me to go to work. And by that time, I had three brothers and my sister, Aurora, and my mother, and it was necessary for me to go to work and provide.

RG: Who were your brothers? What were their names?

AD: Moises and Samuel and Virgil. And now the only one that's left is Virgil because the others are passed on.

RG: Did he stay in the area?

AD: Yes, they all did. We were all real close. We were all very, very close.





RG: What about your -- did your father have any schooling? Had he gotten an education at all in Veracruz?

AD: Well, in Mexico he read a lot, in Huejutzingo, Puebla, which was where he was really born. The state of Puebla. He accumulated a lot of knowledge. He was a very brilliant man. He knew a lot. And where he studied, I really don't know.

RG: But he did know how to read?

AD: Oh, he read beautifully.

RG: Well--

AD: And he would read to us in Spanish. And that's -- and I think that was one of the reasons that we were all bilingual. We speak Spanish, all my brothers and my sister and I, we can read it, write it. We never studied it in school.

RG: You used Spanish at home?

AD: Oh, yes.

RG: But English in school?

AD: Yes.

RG: How do you feel about bilingual English at this point? How do you think children should be taught?

AD: I'm very much afraid that we have to have English because everything is English. All business is English. However, I don't think that they ought to just forget about their Spanish. I think at home they should preserve their culture. They should be taught about their background because it's beautiful.

RG: Oh, yeah.

AD: Mexico – Mexico's beautiful. They are very cultured people. And I think that it's up to the parents. Unfortunately, the parents that we have at the present time are not interested. They -- I didn't mean to say this, but they are careless. They are just letting their kids go by themselves.

RG: You know, that goes over all the different ethnic groups.

AD: Yes.





RG: White, everybody.

AD: Yes.

RG: And all socioeconomic levels; the kids -- the parents do not have the interest.

AD: It's a shame. It's a shame.

RG: Do you know much about your father and mother's background in Mexico? Do you have any idea when their parents -- where they came from, whether they got early in from Spain?

AD: Very little. I know very little about -- my father used to tell me a lot about Mexico, Huejutzingo, and my mother, Veracruz, she used to tell me how beautiful Veracruz was and how beautifully she was raised, and how lovely the Pacific Ocean was, how they loved the mountains in Puebla. They would go to Mexico City and visit their lovely Mexico. They were in love with Mexico.

RG: What was your mother's maiden name?

AD: Chanez. It was Chanez. And they were very humble people. They -- my father, they were almost Aztecs-- my father's father. All I know of them is pictures that my dad brought with him, but they were Aztecs, Aztec Indians, and very proud. Very, very proud people. I knew very little. But he used to tell me so much about his work in Huejutzingo and about his travels that when I started making trips into Mexico -- I've been to Mexico many, many times -- I would retrace some of the steps, that my dad used to tell me about. I could almost see -- almost feel as if I've been there before. But he was a great teacher. He taught us much respect, I think is something that was so interesting, respect for your neighbor, for your fellow man, which I always consider that as being something lacking at the present time.

RG: I'm afraid so. Was there any particular revolutionary leader during that 1910-11 that he was interested in?

AD: Yes, it was Zapata. And then when he came -- when they came to as far as Esparla, he was a little bit associated with Pancho Villa, but not much, because he left. Pancho Villa was quite strong after my dad left.

RG: Right. This -- just one more question about Senor Candelaria. Did he come on up to Flagstaff during that period himself or did he stay in Mexico?

AD: He stayed in Mexico and we never knew any more about him. They were a beautiful family. And, as I say, back in the 1800s, 1810, 1811, must have been a very, very lovely family. All Spanish, but during the war, during the revolution, we never know what happened to Manuel [Candelaria].





RG: Well, back to early days in Phoenix, then, your dad built the home. Do you recall what was some of the outstanding things that happened in those early years? Was there anything that really stands out in your mind?

AD: The building of the streets, the building of the buildings that we now have, all were built by the people that lived in that area between Seventh Street and Sixteenth Street. The contractors would come down and recruit some of the people, and that's how we lived. Because we were paid 35, 40 cents an hour for the work, they did the pick and shovel work. They didn't have any machinery then to build the streets and to dig the trenches and to dig basements. It all had to be done by hand; pick and shovel work. So that's how -- that's how all of the streets of Phoenix were built, by just a lot of hard work from the people in the area. And I think we did very well. Everyone was happy. We were not worried, concerned about the north part. We were not permitted to go over there, but we thought, well, that's the way it is, that's the way it is.

RG: Didn't worry about it.

AD: Didn't worry about it. My father, would--on Saturdays, payday, he would take us to town. The first place we stopped was the Woods Candy Kitchen where we had a great big ice cream cone and a huge ice cream--nickel for the cone. Then we'd walk and he'd show us the various places like the old Hubbard. So many of those stores; Piggly-Wiggly and the Hurley Store. There was a butcher shop and also candy -- they had candy in barrels. I remember the sawdust on the floor, and right next to it was Donofrio's Ice Cream and the Talbot and Hubbard Hardware. They had a huge iron dog out in front, and all of us used to ride, get on top and ride the horse. Then the horse, the great big horse on the opposite side, that was a saddle shop, which is -- I have it written down somewhere. They are still in business. What is the name of that?

RG: I don't know. So it was fun for the kids on payday to go to --

AD: Oh, yes. And we'd walk as far as the movie houses. There was Amuso Theater and there's a Plaza Theater, and then on to the Central Pharmacy, which is Wayland Central Pharmacy, was owned by Roy Wayland. Then a little farther was a brand-new Strand Theater and across the street was the Rialto Theater, then a bit farther was the old Fleming Building. There was a Phoenix National Bank there in the first floor of that Fleming Building, and then up a little farther on Second Avenue -the building's still there, I noticed the other day -- was the JC Penney Company. And we would go in there and my dad would buy clothes for the children.

RG: So your dad really did pretty well, considering being a boiler maker? He did better, probably, than the average?

AD: Oh, yes, he did very well, very, very well.





RG: What do you remember about the automobiles during that time? Anybody in your neighborhood have a car?

AD: No. Oh, no, not in our neighborhood. We didn't have any cars. Horses and, of course, the wagons.

RG: Right, horse and wagon.

AD: The wagons, we used to use the wagons for the work to haul the dirt and haul everything. But we had a lot of horses in the area, and we had a zoo. People by the name of Bush--right on 11th Street and Madison, the property was about four lots, and they had lions and tigers and ostriches and monkeys. And it was free, all of us would enjoy that.

RG: I don't think I've ever heard of that. On 11th Street and Madison?

AD: Yes. It was the northwest property, I imagine, about three or four lots, and they had those animals well kept. Mr. Bush didn't charge anything, we used to go in and enjoy. There's many of them that don't remember that, but I sure do because we enjoyed the monkeys.

RG: Right. What happened to the zoo? Do you have any idea?

AD: I don't know. Then later the brewing company, A-I Brewing ... But then someone came in here and built a brewery right on 11th Street across the street from the zoo called the A-I Brewing Company. Lancer, a Joe Lancer, yes, he's the one that built the brewery, and very successful. He first -- called it Lancer, and then they call it A-I Brewery Brewing and ... boy, that's the only beer that we had in those days.

RG: Isn't that the one that later did quite a campaign and Lon Magargee did all those paintings for A-I Brewery, "The Cowboy's Dream," some of those?

AD: Yes.

RG: Collectors' items. On the cloud with --

AD: I know. Yes, they are collectors' items. And I'm so sorry, of course, we had access to all this stuff and we had them at home.

RG: Right. Where did you get your water for the neighborhood, the water, drinking water?

AD: There was a Water Works on Ninth Street and Van Buren, and they would pipe water to -- we didn't have water in our homes, then we had faucets outside, we filled our buckets. It wasn't very long before we had water piped into the house that my dad built. We had water inside and we had a bathroom, we had a





toilet bowl and a nice bathtub. Not too many in the neighborhood had bathtubs. They just had water, then in the summertime, why they used a hose.

RG: Right, right. You weren't very old when World War I came along, but do you remember anything about World War I?

AD: Ah, I remember all of the fanfare, all of the parades, and all of the fundraisers, how they used to have actors in all of the places raising money. There were Liberty Bonds and a lot of excitement. A lot of excitement. Ah, yes, in 1922, General Pershing was here in town, and he came the visit Monroe School. I do remember General Pershing walking around.

RG: Ah, you remember seeing him?

AD: Yes, greeting the children. We all stand, the whole school, assembled outside because he was on the front steps, and he spoke to us and waived at us.

RG: Had on the uniform, I suppose?

AD: Yes, General, he was he was quite a guy, that, I remember. And, of course, the parades. That was -- all the soldiers would parade, on Washington Street, and mostly a lot of patriotism and to raise money, because money was needed, because of the horrible war.

RG: Did your dad and mother become citizens?

AD: They never did. My dad and my mother spoke nothing but Spanish, no English. No English at all. And I tried to teach my mother, but my dad was too busy. He wouldn't sit down long enough to – because my dad used to go around and visit a lot of neighbors and try to see if they needed anything. If anybody was sick, he would summon my mother, who ... knew quite a bit about traditional medicines. My mother assisted many, many of the ladies to have their babies. We had a Dr. Brockway that whenever it was anything serious, he was called and he would come down in his horse and buggy. I don't know when he slept because he would come at all hours of the night. I remember Dr. Brockway very, very well. He was rough, tough, but he took care of a lot of people. Some of them didn't have any money to pay him but it was all right.

RG: Where did you go to church in those early years?

AD: St. Mary's. St. Mary's wouldn't let us go upstairs. We had to go to the basement. My mother, very, very religious, she would gather all of the kids in the whole area from Seventh Street to 16th Street and she'd set up a big canvas among the mesquite trees on the floor and she would teach catechism. She would teach them the necessary prayers. She would find out when the Bishop would be here from Tucson. The diocese was in Tucson. Then she would herd us all -- and I mean really herd us, a whole bunch of us, take





us to St. Mary's and then we -- the Hispanics--would go to the basement. I ... remember that Father Novato was there, a Franciscan priest, real hard man with his cord. You know, he would tell the Chicanos, "Down, go down basement. Go down basement." And the little gavachos, we'd call them, the white, so-called white boys, "Come on, you go upstairs."

RG: What did you call them, the white boys?

AD: Gavachos ... it's very slang, a very slang word, and the nuns would be waiting for them up there, all dressed real nice. They'd take them into the church, and the Chicanos, we had to go to the basement and wait for the Bishop to conclude his services. We could hear music and singing upstairs and then the Bishop would come down and quickly give us our First Holy Communion. Then outside, the nuns had a nice big table full of goodies for all the kids, but not for us. My mother would say, "Come on, let's go. Let's go." She'd herd us back to the house, [lay] a great big canvas on the ground, and she had some pan de huevo and chocolate for all of us, so we enjoyed it very much.

RG: Good. Later, did you go to Sacred Heart?

AD: My dear mother was very concerned. It didn't seem to bother us. We thought, well, that's the way it is. But she didn't like that, and also the fact that we had to go to the basement for the Masses. So she started working with the neighbors and said, "Why don't we make enchiladas and tamales, and this and that, and sell them and let's raise a little money. Let's see if we can make enough money to buy ..." We had a piece of property there on Ninth Street and Washington that really belonged to a fellow by the name of Orta, and we thought we'd build a little chapel there of some kind. But the Bishop, the diocese in Tucson, they saw that there was a very aggressive move from those people in the area so they offered to loan us money to build a church. And the result is that Immaculate Heart was built at Ninth Street and Washington. And also the Spanish could not go to grammar school at St. Mary's, so then they had to go to public school. Many of them wanted their children to go to the Catholic grammar school but they were not permitted. So the diocese loaned us enough money to build a portion, for a school (it's still there). We had Catholic education there for grammar school for quite some time until we ran out of nuns, because teachers were very difficult to find. And by that time I think that the diocese relented a little bit and let us go to St. Mary's Grammar School. As a matter of fact, afterwards, I married, had some children and sent them to St. Mary's Grammar School. But the Immaculate Heart church was built, oh, golly, I can't even think of the year. The altar was donated, I think, by some very rich people; that altar was brought in from Spain. That's a very beautiful altar, and it was assembled here in Phoenix. And it really is a jewel; it's very beautiful. And the work is very lovely, because you don't have that anymore. All the rest of the churches that we have, all we have is a cross and nothing else, but that's a beautiful altar in Immaculate Heart.

RG: That building, I know, is 50 years or more, old because I believe we listed it in the national register maybe six or eight years ago.

AD: That was built even before St. Anthony. St. Anthony was built 52 years ago.





RG: Oh, okay.

AD: And that was built before, so it must have been -- gosh, it would have to be 55 years or 58. Years ago.

RG: At least. What about -- now, when you had to go to work after your father died, what did you do? What did you get into?

AD: I went to work with the Western Union. And I did very well, because I'd get up real early in the morning. We didn't have a lot of telephones, and all of the businesses transacted by Western Union. And so I used to go 4:00 o'clock in the morning and get all piles of telegrams to deliver to all of the cotton brokers. We had many, many cotton brokers and we would be paid a nickel for each message. I did very well, I'd come home with \$60, \$65 a month, which was very, very good. I worked real hard with Western Union, and it gave me a wonderful opportunity to ride allover town, go north. I could ride and see all the beautiful homes and beautiful gardens and lawns and paved streets, sidewalks. We didn't have anything like that where we were.

So I began to wonder, hey, what's -- how come? How come? So, you know, in all my running around, I went south to a place called Friendly House. And it was a wood building, a big structure, very, very old. Because that was a building was built by Swilling, a fellow by the name of Swilling, and they were really the founders of Phoenix.

RG: Jack Swilling.

AD: And also the Frenchman that built the adobe house across from Friendly House, he came here for his health and he stayed here. The house, the adobe house is still there. They tried to demolish it but I objected very seriously because that is really about one of the first houses built in Phoenix. Darrell was his name, Darrell Duppa.

I knew [of] him because of George Luhrs. In my dealing with the Western Union, I had to go into the Luhrs Building many, many times with my telegrams, delivering the telegrams. The building was built in 1923. So I got to know George Luhrs, the old man, the original George Luhrs, and his son, George Luhrs, Jr. The old man knew Darrell Duppa quite well. I used to enjoy visiting with the old man; long beard and very, very small man, a wonderful man. And I also knew a little bit of his background; that he was -- he had a mine and he used to build the huge wheels. He was a wheelwright and working for -- oh, my Lord, that mine is still there.

RG: Oh, the Vulture?

AD: The Vulture Mine. He used to build those huge old trucks, those huge wheels. He used to tell me about a lot about the gold mine, and he knew Darrell. He used to tell me about him. I didn't know Darrell Duppa, but he used to tell me that he was the builder, an A-I builder in Phoenix.





RG: This is Mr. Luhrs that would tell you about Duppa?

AD: Yes. And Darrell was the one that named Phoenix. He saw the possibilities. He liked Phoenix. His health improved greatly, so he could see just coming out of ashes.

RG: Like the Phoenix Bird.

AD: Phoenix Bird, yes. So that's the reason why it was called Phoenix. And while working delivering telegrams, I got to know George Luhrs, Jr. And then about six, seven months afterward, you know, George Luhrs had seen me so much running around delivering telegrams, that he said, "Adam, why don't you come and help me with the elevator operators, at least relieve the boys for lunch." The elevator operators were all dressed in their real swank uniforms, with buttons and caps. And he says, "I need somebody to relieve them. Do you suppose if your employer, Western Union, boss will let you take off a couple of hours? I'll pay you well for you to relieve the elevator operators two hours a day." So I was very happy to do so, more money to bring home.

So, I started doing that and then in no time he says, "Well, now you're old enough, you're almost 16." You couldn't run an elevator unless you were 16 years old. So he says, "You better come work with me, you'll be one of my elevator boys." That was so wonderful because I got to know so many people, so many lawyers, brilliant people. The Arizona Club was on the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth of the Luhrs Building. Why, it had only very, very select people from the whole state of Arizona. They used to live there, the Bimsons and the Lynches, and as an elevator operator I got to know them well. I think I was a little outgoing, I wanted to chat with them and know people and know what kind of business they were in. And they thought it was kind of funny that a little guy like me would be asking them all those questions, so they would give me a lot of information. So, knowing as many people as I knew, I was able to then begin to help Friendly House, I used to admire the work of Mrs. Placida Smith.

RG: Was she there when you first started going?

AD: No. Mrs. Green was there.

RG: Mrs. Green. What can you tell me about her?

AD: She wasn't there very long. I knew Mrs. Green for a couple of months, I guess and -- that's all, and then she retired. She was getting quite aged and she had arthritis, so she left and Mrs. Placida Smith took over; very young, very young, very active lady, very concerned about the people in the area that needed help. She was, oh, wonderful. She's in heaven now for the work that she did there.

RG: And in the Women's Hall of Fame.





AD: Oh, yes. I started visiting with Placida Smith, and I used to ask her, "Why is it that there's such a difference here? This area is so poor and this area so well off, the beautiful homes"

She says, "Adam, all of you are suffering because of lack of education, that's the whole key. These people where you live in the area, why, eighth grade is maximum. That's as far as they can go, but you need much more than that. You need at least a high school education, the very least. College would be by far better, but forget college, because you won't be able to afford it. It's expensive."

So I thought, well, all these people, there isn't any reason why they shouldn't go to high school. High school doesn't cost very much money. They had to buy their books, because they were backward. We're still backwards. You know, we still have to buy our books for high school. All the other states in the union, they provide their high school, but we don't. But books were inexpensive because we used to buy used books.

So it doesn't cost very much to go to high school. So we started -- as I say "we" because Placida Smith took me into her confidence, and I would be there as much of the time as I could watch the work that she was doing, which was incredible. She would work from early morning to way late, placing -- she would teach all these immigrants, that's the reason it was called the Phoenix Americanization Council or something, and it was funded by the City of Phoenix. Well, then the city of Phoenix got tired of expending their money. They didn't have money, so we lost the funding from the city. So Placida Smith actually went to work teaching at Glendale, it's still there.

RG: Community College or public?

AD: I guess it's Business International -

RG: Oh, the Thunderbird Graduate School of -

AD: But it was called something else.

RG: Okay.

AD: What was it? Well, she would go there and work and then come down and teach the classes from 5:00 o'clock to 10:00 o'clock at night, you know, because she taught, she taught Constitution, and she would teach all of the immigrants. We had German, we had Chinese, we had Arabs, we had Mexicans. We had all of the races in the world would come down and they were treated with open arms. We loved having immigrants coming here, so she would teach them. And I used to admire the fact that they would go in there with all different languages, all different ethnic groups and she would teach them English, all different languages. How she did it, I'll never know. But, also, she saw that those immigrants were poor and they needed a little income of some kind, so she started teaching the ladies how to do housework, and she would place them. Everybody loved Placida Smith in the whole city of Phoenix, so they would call her





or she would call them and say, "Well, I have some people here that need work. We've already taught them how to iron, how to use a mangle, and how to use a washing

machine, and how to use a stove." They didn't even know how. So she placed hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of ladies. And she had calls from many, many people and many of them helped sustain their families with the housework that they did, and they would be proud of it. She would teach them how to get on the streetcar, and, oftentimes, providing a little money for them, a nickel for the ride. Streetcars were a nickel.

She hired a girl by the name of Bea Estrella, Beatrice Estrella. And Beatrice would work from early to late, it got to be quite an employment agency. She was secretary and she was employment counselor while Placida Smith was out visiting. She knew everybody in the whole neighborhood by name, and she knew their condition. She knew how they lived and whether they needed help, and she could always supply them with help. We didn't have any welfare then. Later we had commodities. But Placida Smith, I had such great admiration for her. I worked with Friendly House for a long time, because every once in a while she'd say, "Adam, there's a family that needs help and I just don't know what to do, we've run out of everything." So I go back to the Luhrs Building, my little elevator, and cry on the shoulder of Walter Bimson, the great big Valley Bank man and I'd tell him the plight of some of these people. Never failed, I could always get a little check for Placida Smith. And many, many people, the Ellingtons and the Whitneys. Oh, I had a list and I had to be careful not to hit the same people too often. So that's the reason I had so many of them. And I would help out Friendly House for a great, great many instances. Then I got to be Board member. They elected me to the Board.

RG: How old were you then, do you think?

AD: Oh, gosh, I must have been 25 by that time.

RG: So this is getting to be the early '30s?

AD: Yes.

RG: Were you married by this time?

AD: Yes, yes.

RG: Tell me about that.

AD: Well, I was 26 years old when I married.

RG: How did that happen?

AD: She's such a lovely girl. I was with her almost 50 years, but she passed away here just 16, 17 years





ago. And, oh, she was so helpful, because I was busy -- I got involved with so many things. I belonged to many, many clubs. I have a list of all of the clubs that I used to belong to: The National Conference of Christians and Jews, and all with the thought that they would help me with grants of assistance to these kids. I would cry on their shoulders, and we all managed to get enough little grants for the system for 30, 40 kids and it helped. It helped them greatly. But that was the reason for my joining so many, many organizations.

RG: Those contacts that helped you raise the money.

AD: That's right. And then I always go back to George Luhrs. George Luhrs, my employer, was a nice man. He knew what I was doing. And then I would have to take off sometimes in the afternoon for a meeting with some group, and he'd say, "Okay, go ahead."

RG: So you continued to work the elevator?

AD: Always. I worked with George 53 years. We got to be very, very good friends. Very good friends.

RG: Now this is George Sr. or –

AD: George, Jr. Senior was getting along in years. He got to be pretty feeble and he was not active towards the end. But it was George Luhrs, Jr., he helped me a great, great deal. Let me go back a little bit to my education. All I had was eighth grade grammar school. So there was, in the Luhrs Building, the Central Building, which was the part of Luhrs Block. We have Luhrs Building, we have Central Building, we have the Arcade. But in the Central Building a Mr. Wilder opened a school, business school, called the Gregg Shorthand School. And one day he said, "Adam, just what is your

educational background?" I said, "Mr. Wilder, nothing. All I have is eighth grade, and I've had to go to work and no opportunity." He said, "Would you like to go in my business school?" He said, "We teach many things." I says, "Mr. Wilder, nothing would please me more, but you charge \$48 a month and I can't afford it." He says, "I'm not going to charge you anything." He says, "I'm going to start a new class, evening class, and I have 18 students. And if you would want to take the time, come down at 6:00 o'clock and only four hours, from 6:00 to 10:00, why, we'll teach you anything you want to learn." So I was so happy. I would run home 5:30, grab a bite to eat and see the family was still there, and run right back to –

RG: Now, were you married at this time?

AD: Yes. Then I'd run right back to Gregg Shorthand School. And in 11 months, I graduated from Gregg Shorthand School. I learned shorthand, which was very necessary, shorthand, typing, business English, which was so important to me and letter writing, that was important then. Well, that's all the subjects that was the most important, and I graduated. And George Luhrs says, "Well, you're doing very well." He said, "Now you can come help me in my office, you know a little bookkeeping." So I continued to work in the elevator because I enjoyed that. I had made a lot of contacts. So, however, I needed more money, so he





says, "I'll pay you \$10 every night for you to come down and work from 6:30 or 7:30, whatever time you can come down, and work to 10:00 o'clock and I'll give you \$10 every night." Well, that's good, good money to take home. So, I did. I started doing his bookkeeping, and I started doing it -- because he was doing all of that himself.

RG: Himself, wow.

AD: His billing, we'd send bills to all of the tenants and if they didn't pay on time, we'd have to send them a reminder. And letters, whatever business letters he had to write, I'd write them for him. I did a lot of typing for him, and we'd get along very well. My family was flourishing. I paid off all of the debts that we owed, because my father borrowed money from Foxworth-McCalla to build a house. So I paid off everything, and we were very comfortable. I bought my nice car.

RG: Oh, what was your first car?

AD: Oh, it was a Chevrolet. It was a sports car. Oh--when I was going to Gregg Shorthand, I wasn't married yet. I'm just remembering now that I was not married yet, but I used to see that car. Ed Rudolf, he opened an agency on Third and Adams, and all he had was one car in the showroom, that's all. So he had this Chevrolet convertible with a rumble seat. Did you ever see a rumble seat?

RG: Right.

AD: And, oh, I used to pass by there and I would admire the car.

RG: What color was it?

AD: Blue, and white side walls. They were just getting started with those side walls. It was a 1927, I think. 1927 Chevrolet, and I went home and told Mom. I said, "Mom, one of these days I'm going to raise enough money to buy me that, buy me a car like that." Then she said, "How much is that car?" "Oh, Mom, it's \$675." You know, brand-new car, mind you. I said, "Oh, that's a lot of money, \$675, so it will take me a little while." But she says, "Well, I want you to go buy it." I says, "What?" She says, "I want you to go buy that car." And from her saving from all the money that I -because I'd give her every penny. She would do everything. She'd give me a little spending money, but then she -- "Here." She started to take money out of her savings, \$675. So I went over to see Mr. Rudolf, Ed Rudolf. He used to only sell cars, one or two cars a month, I guess, that's all he had there. He used to clean the place and he used to wax the floor and he used to keep the cars all dusted and cleaned all by himself. So that day I went to see him. I said, "Mr. Rudolf, I want to buy that car." "Well, that car's expensive. It's going to cost \$675." And you have to pay cash because they didn't have credit in those days.

RG: Right.





AD: I said, "Well, my mom gave me the money. Here it is." Oh, boy, I drove that car out of the showroom. I was -- I was real happy. And, oh, I was the only one with a swanky car in my neighborhood.

RG: Do you have a picture of the car?

AD: I wish I did.

RG: Wouldn't that be nice?

AD: You know, I made a terrible, terrible mistake.

AD: When my wife died, I thought I was going to die, too, we were so close. At work I was sick. And then I belonged to American Legion because I had served a little bit, and I would have a glass of beer there, and tears would roll down. Finally, one fellow said, "What's the matter with you?" I said, "Nothing." I said, "My little wife died and I'm miserable." I says, "I can't sleep, I can't eat." So I had been a member of the YMCA forever, ever since they were on Third Avenue and Van Buren. And that was a whole building that they had, and they had the swimming pool and -- that's all they had was a swimming pool. Well, while I was at the YMCA -- I used to go there every morning and work out and box because I used to box a lot. Why, there was a person there that I knew quite well. He was a psychologist. He said, "You're losing a lot of weight." He says, "You look terrible. What's the matter with you?" So, there again, I blurted out to him what was wrong, that I couldn't sleep. And he says, "I'm going to give you an hour of my time. I want to see you. Come to my office." So I laid on the couch and he says, "All right, I want you to tell me everything," so I blurted out everything. So he says, "Now you're going to go home and you're going to sell that house with everything." I said – geez, that was a little rough, you know, because, my gosh, I had a lot of stuff in there. She and I had accumulated many things, the library and books and everything that my children had accumulated. He says, "No, you're just going to get rid of everything, otherwise you're going to die because you're just -- you can't live in that house." So I talked it over with George Luhrs, and he said, "Well, he's a psychologist, he knows what he's talking about. You better do it." So I called the realtor and I said, "Sell the house with everything." There goes everything that I had in my files and my library and the TV and all of the furniture. I just walked out of there with some clothes, my suits.

RG: That worked?

AD: Immediately I was fine. Because I could see her in the house.

RG: Yeah, you'd just been there too long with her.

AD: Sure, sure. I would go to bed and she would talk to me. So the result was, I couldn't eat, I couldn't sleep.

RG: Where was the house?





AD: We built that house on 1313 South First Avenue, and I see that house every once in a while.

RG: It's still there?

AD: Still there. But I sold that house with everything. And I hated to do it because I had -- my children were grown and born there. I raised all my babies.

RG: How many children do you have?

AD: I had three girls and one boy. I – I still have three.

RG: Do they live here?

AD: Sally is the only one that lives here, and one boy. Sally was the first FBI girl. Women were not allowed in FBI at one time, but she took a course with the Federal Bureau, and she was assigned to Mexico City. She was in Mexico City for a very short period of time and she didn't like it. So, therefore, she came back here and she worked with the Federal Courts. She retired from the Federal Courts. She was one of the big wheels with the Federal Courts. And then my Olivia, she's a physicist now. She's in Warrenville, Illinois. She's in the Fermi Lab. It's a huge laboratory, atomic laboratory. And the -- come on, I can't even think of my daughter. And my son, of course, he went into the service, Joe, Vietnam, and he came back a mess. Oh.

RG: It happened to a lot of them, didn't it?

AD: Suffering from epilepsy. And now he's retired from the Marine Corps. He gets well paid because of his injury, but he looks good. He looks good, but he has seizures he's never been able to control. Now, there's Olivia and there's Sally-- my Mary Louise--I lost her.

RG: Oh, Mary Louise is your daughter?

AD: She's a -- she was a nurse. She was a registered nurse and she's in heaven. She was wonderful.

RG: All of your children were able to get an education apparently?

AD: Oh, yes.

RG: Did they go to the schools here?

AD: Yes.

RG: Did they go to Catholic schools?





AD: ASU. They graduated from St. Mary's, all of them.

RG: And then to ASU?

AD: To ASU, yes, all of them. And then my son, he went to Denver University, as sick as he was. Why, he was at the V.A. Hospital in Denver. He was well enough there to attend Denver University, and he graduated from Denver University and then he came back here to ASU to get his Master's. And now, the little of the times, he's trying to be a lawyer. And he can't, really, because he can only study two or three months and then he gets seizures and he can't study anymore.

RG: Tell me, if you can, if it doesn't bother you to talk about it, just a little bit about your wife. Where did you meet her, and was she part of a neighborhood?

AD: Well, she was on the west side, they had another colony there of all Hispanics.

RG: Like Litchfield or out in that area?

AD: No, no, no, here in Phoenix, about 11th Street and Sherman. She liked to play ball, softball. And she was with a team that I was sponsoring, because through Friendly House, I used to sponsor many teams of boys. Boy Scouts, we used to raise enough money for the Boy Scouts, and for girls teams. And she used to like softball, so I met her through one of those teams. She was just a sweet little girl, just as sweet as she could be. We attended many of the functions, dances. And we used to have many clubs at one time, Hispanic clubs, Mexicanitos Club, Spanish-American Social Club, Latin American Clubs, and all were the same purpose: To raise funds for little grants of assistance to our schools, Grant School, Adams School, Lowell School, Stevenson School, Lincoln School, all the schools which had all Hispanic kids. Why, that's to urge them here with wasn't much, \$25, \$50, but it was just a thought to point out to them how necessary it was and somebody would be there to help them a little bit. But we weren't able to help too many of them to go to college, although we formed the Vesta Club, which is very busy at the present time. Vesta Club, that's composed of college graduates, and they raise enough money to send some of these high school graduates into college.

RG: Where does the name come from, Vesta.

AD: Vesta, Greek Mythology. Vesta queens or Vesta something. I read quite a bit about it, but I can't think about it right now.

RG: Of all the community service that you've done, what are you the proudest of, do you think?

AD: I would think that the National Council of Christians and Jews, they were very helpful. The Sertoma, Sertoma Club was also very -- we could get them to put out some money to promote education to our





youngsters in our area. And, of course, the Chicanos por la Causa, CPLC -- I was one of the organizers. And then LEAP Commission.

RG: What is LEAP? I'm not familiar with that one.

AD: The city of Phoenix, they started leadership and the advancement of the persons that are in need, you know.

RG: Oh, okay.

AD: I can't think of the -- Leadership Advancement -

RG: I probably have that somewhere.

AD: Oh, I'm sure. I'm sure you have. That was the city of Phoenix, they started that program, and it was an excellent program.

RG: Is it still going?

AD: Oh, yes, yes. What they would do is take the youngsters out of grammar school that have the potential for higher education and made it possible for them to go to high school. And it taught them how to be leaders and just a variety of manners to further their education, to point out to them how necessary a little higher education was. And the CPLC, Chicanos par la Casa, they are still doing good work. There is still a lot along the same lines; sponsoring children going into the University. I'm so proud -- I haven't done so in the last 20 years, mind you, because in the last 20 years I've slowed down a lot, but before, I used to attend all of the graduations at ASU. I used to go to Flagstaff, and U of A, and it was such pride.

RG: To see the students you knew?

DIAZ: Yes, yes, all of the youngsters.

RG: Are any of them that have become famous that we might recognize their names?

AD: Oh, Lord, of course, Val Cordova. He was a federal judge. He passed away not very long ago. And later we fought to get him appointed to the Federal Courts.

RG: He was a Federal Judge?

DIAZ: Federal Judge, yes. And then Alex Cordova, his brother -- when I was with the city council, I talked the city council into hiring him as our City auditor. We needed a City auditor, and they started advertising nationally for an auditor. I kept on pointing out to them, "Why do you do that? We've got people right here that have all the qualifications, and maybe more, and it would be such pride to hire





somebody." But they didn't have an Anglo name, so it was very difficult. But, finally, I talked to Alex. I said, "Alex, I want you to make an application." He says, "Oh, come on, Adam, I can't do it. Call them up. Forget it. They won't even consider me." I said, "No, you go ahead and I'll battle for you. I'll do everything I can for you because you have all of the qualifications. Good Lord, you're a certified public accountant. You graduated from UCLA, from ASU and you've got everything that we need." So, finally, you know, it was -- Ray Wilson was the city manager, and Charles Esser. And then I had a number of councilmen, that were good friends, like Rosenzweig and Ms. Kober. I took them one by one and I said, "Why? Why are we doing this, just because his name is Cordova? Why, Good Lord, he's overqualified for this position." Yes, we got him appointed because it was an appointment. And since then, of course, the city is full of Hispanics. I've been accused-- they say, "You're making a little Nogales." But it's not me, it's just that we started pointing out that these boys were qualified. We didn't want anybody that would not qualify. We wouldn't sponsor anyone that would not qualify. But once they were qualified –

RG: Why not?

AD: Sure, we go all out. We had the schools, the Elementary No.1, they had difficulty because they wouldn't appoint any principal that was Hispanic. Well, then is when I ran for the Board. I ran for the Board, Elementary No. 1 and I was elected, and immediately I went to work on the whys. I said, "Good Lord, here you have some people -- we have worked like the devil to get them to go to college, they graduate from college and then they end up with all of the qualifications and you won't appoint them."

Dr. Eugene Marin, he wanted to be a principal. He applied for a job and they wouldn't even consider him. I called him. As a member of the Board, I pointed out all of his qualifications, and they couldn't do anything. There was nothing they could do but appoint him. And, of course, since then, why, we have principals all over.

RG: That's all it took.

AD: That's right. Then they needed a superintendent. We had lost Mr. Vaughn who was our superintendent. Well, we didn't lose him, we had to let him go because he wasn't doing a good job. That is when I was with the Board, Elementary No. 1. And, there again, the Board had advertised again nationally for a superintendent. We had three here. We have the Rodriguezes who had all of the qualifications. They were really overqualified. Finally, there was a Ralph Goitia, a Hispanic from Flagstaff that wrote to me and he said, "Well, Mr. Diaz," he says, "these are my qualifications." And they were beautiful, just beautiful. So I went to the Board and I said, "This is the one that we want. You

don't have to advertise nationally, we have him right here," and they appointed Mr. Ralph Goitia as our superintendent for all of the Elementary No. 1.

It was a big step and when he retired, why it was an easy thing to get Luis Rodriguez in his place because Luis worked with him as the assistant to Ralph Goitia, and he also had beautiful qualifications. So I was very proud of those accomplishments.





RG: Right. Well, mentioning Ray Wilson makes me think of the charter government, and he served with the CGC. Was that what it was called?

AD: Yes. The Charter Government Committee, in 1944, I guess. And persons like the Rosenzweigs and the Goldwaters and Kober, Margaret Kober. What a wonderful lady Margaret Kober was, and Dick Price and, oh, Lord, six or seven others, very well known persons. They started that movement because our city government was not the best then, because we didn't know from one day to the next who our city manager was because they would fire him and appoint another one. And the chief of police, we never knew who our chief of police was going to be from one day to the next; fire chief, the same thing. It was chaos, just absolute chaos.

RG: The Commission was running everything?

AD: Yes. One group would control the fire department, another group the police department.

I thought it was very, very interesting, that movement, because I knew what was going on--the fact that the government was chaos, just absolute chaos. It was a disgrace. So when this group started to work hard in preparing a new charter, I was asked to join them. I thought it was a great honor, because, good Lord, here you have people like Barry Goldwater and Dix Price, a brilliant attorney, and the Rosenzweigs and Margaret Kober. And, you know, I have a list of the others, but I'm afraid I can't think about them, of all of them right now.

One day Barry Goldwater came to see me at the Luhrs Building and he says that we would like very much to have you join us. It took me by surprise, really. I said, "Well, goodness gracious, I'm very, very happy to do so, but I work. I don't have a great deal of time." Well, Dix Price, who was, as I said, a very brilliant lawyer, said, "You can help us a great deal because we want to cover the whole City, and you have been very active with all these organizations and schools and we'd like very much to have your input." So I said, "Why, yes, I will be very happy to do so, but, there again, you meet in the afternoon and sometimes they are very lengthy." They used to meet at the Arizona Club, you know, so I knew the hours that they were meeting. So he said, "Well, we'll talk to George Luhrs." So they went and had a nice chat with George Luhrs. And George said, "You go ahead because it's work that has to be done." So I worked with them, and I hoped that my input was important.

RG: Oh, I'm sure.

AD: But they thought it was good work that all of us did. Well, after the charter was completed, they had to put it to a vote, and it was approved. Then they said, well, we're just going to run a slate for the City council, because this new charter has to have a whole new council. So they had a number of them, and they included me. They wanted me to be a member of the council. There again, I said, "Well, you know, Hispanic, Diaz, I don't know how many votes you are going to be able to get." Because our Hispanic





population in those days were not interested in registering and voting a great deal. So they said, "No, we would like very much to have you because you belong to a number of organizations and we think that you will be very helpful to this group." So, there again, a committee was formed of Harry Rosenzweig and Barry Goldwater. and Dix Price went to see George Luhrs, and said, "George, we need Adam to be on our slate and it's going to take some time because the meetings, you know, are on Monday. We would have a special meeting to hash out the agenda, and then the formal meeting would be on Tuesday." And, of course, it was most of the day. So, there again, George Luhrs had to agree, so he let me go, he was so good. George Luhrs was so happy that I was going to be a candidate that he not only gave me the time but he says, "I'll even pay you, continue to pay you. Don't worry about losing any money." So I ran, and I think I did very well."

The vote was excellent. As I said, there again, because of the many organizations that I belonged to that they knew me. The name Adam Diaz was well known in the state, so I did very well. Then for two years I served and, I think, well. I put in a lot of time at night, studying the agenda and preparing myself for Monday night's meeting and also the regular meeting on Tuesday. However, I felt inadequate, really and truly, because I didn't have the educational background, you know. Many times I had difficulty in expressing myself as well as I would have liked to. So at time for reelection, I didn't even bother to run again, so I said I would rather be on the selection committee if you don't mind, and I explained why. And they said, "Well, you get along very well, you do very well, but we understand. If you feel uncomfortable, we understand." So then I went to Val Cordova and he was a lawyer and brilliant, a well-versed, young wonderful person. So I said, "Val, you are going to run. I'm on the selection committee and I think I can get the rest of the committee to agree on you to be a candidate." He says, "Well, you did it, the name of Diaz. You show it can be done that the people will vote for Hispanics, so I'll run." So we elected him. And then, of course, it was just a series from then on. From then on we have we followed through and -- except now I noticed that now we don't have any Hispanic on the city council for the first time. But we've had representation ever since, you know, since 1949--'50 -- well, '52, I guess.

RG: What were some of the things you did that first term? Do you remember anything particular? **AD:** Well, there again, the south part of town didn't have any swimming pools. We had some schools, we had some parks, but no swimming pools. So I was able to talk to City Parks, you know, in providing three swimming pools in the area,

RG: What were those?

AD: Grant, and the one on 15th Avenue. I don't even know the name of it. Not Harmon, because Harmon was there already –

RG: That's all right.

AD: I went blank. But it was -- but it was very interesting.





RG: How did you feel about annexation, or did that come up during your term?

AD: Yes. I was not very happy with annexation. I believe, and I still believe, that going out in those areas is very costly. We annexed huge tracks and then we lose money for two years, you know, because for two years they don't pay taxes. We have to supply them with police department, fire department, water, light, sewers, cleaning of the streets, and it's very expensive. However, they keep telling me you can't stop progress. It's going to keep going. What I didn't like also was the businesses leaving the downtown area. That worried me a great deal when the fellow by the name of Brubaker built the Park Central. That sickened me because it just meant that the downtown area would die if they started building these shopping centers, which they can afford to build because they were only paying farm assessments. That means that they can have all the huge parking lots because they don't pay hardly any taxes. They're assessed as farmland. And that's unfair, because downtown they're assessed real high commercial. These parking lots, they have to pay the tremendous taxes. The parking structures that we build are very expensive. And downtown the taxes are very high. For the Park Central, for so many years they enjoyed farm taxes, not only the parking structures but the buildings. For many years they were practically untaxed. That bothered me just a great, great deal, because they are very unfair, very unfair to the downtown area. I'm a firm believer that to be a metropolitan City, to be a big city, you must have a strong downtown. The downtown has to be strong. It's like a great big wheel. Without the hub, the whole thing would collapse. And I'm so pleased that right now we're doing a wonderful job. Finally they woke up to the fact that the downtown area must be strong, and finally it's being done. But all the having to fly to the outskirts to build these huge shopping centers and take all business from downtown, that's wrong.

RG: How did you feel about the Civic Plaza when that was built? That was supposed to keep businesses downtown.

AD: Oh, yes, that was very important.

RG: But it really didn't work as well, did it?

AD: Well, it's paid off. We don't owe anything. The City Plaza paid off all of the expenses. They are making money at the present time. The city of Phoenix is enjoying profit from the Civic Plaza. And then we have a place where they can have the big conventions. Those big conventions draw a lot of people into the downtown area. The hotels are all filled. A lot of people seem to think that there's not enough activity there, that they don't see a lot of activity so that it's losing money, but it isn't. The Civic Plaza has paid for itself. All the bonds have been retired and we're making money, so the Civic Plaza is all right.

RG: Recently I mentioned to a class about the five C's that Arizona was built on: cattle, copper, citrus, cotton, and climate, and someone popped up and said "What about Colangelo, Jerry Colangelo?"

AD: Absolutely, absolutely.





RG: What do you think about the America West Arena?

AD: Oh, it's wonderful.

RG: And the Diamondbacks? Is that part of helping downtown?

AD: I think that's wonderful. They bring in a lot of money to the business people. The hotels are all full, restaurants are just jammed, and parking, they make a lot of money in parking. They draw a lot of people downtown.

RG: So you were not averse to having the Diamondback stadium downtown?

AD: Oh, Lord, no, that's part of downtown. This is making Phoenix a real strong metropolitan city. All big cities, Philadelphia, they have their facilities right downtown. New York wouldn't think of building a baseball stadium 20 miles away; it's all right there. Chicago, the same thing. All big cities, they have everything downtown. Los Angeles, they're learning that they can't go clear out in the suburbs. All of the big entertainment is all downtown, which is important, very important.

RG: Right. What about this period of World War II. Were you in the military during that time?

AD: It was odd about my military service. For 12 years I was with the National Guard. I used to take time out to go and train, because I was with the headquarters company, and we were training Company K and E Company and Rifle Company, and we were training them for jungle warfare here in the desert, mind you. And, of course, it has always worried me just a little bit. I said, "Why were we doing that? How did we know that we were going to have a conflict with Japan? Why are we doing this?" You keep quiet about those things. But for that many years I worked with the Headquarters Company, 158th Infantry. I was a staff sergeant in charge of supplies.

Well, on December the 7th, 1941, the whole the world came down on us. And I wasn't called because I went to work at 7:00 o'clock in the morning and there was a call there that Colonel Carl McDonald wants to see you. We had a recruiting office on the fifth floor of the Luhrs Building.

RG: Oh.

AD: We had it there for years, 10 or 15 years, and Colonel McDonald was in charge of it. And he had his Sergeant Simpson, a great big sergeant, Simpson. Well, I remember the call, "Colonel McDonald wants to see you," so I ran up there, but I knew that the world was coming to an end in Hawaii then, because of the radios and everybody knew about it. So I ran up to see the colonel, and he says, "Here's a little plan that I -- that Sergeant Simpson and I have been working on. We are going to need 14,000 to maybe 17,000 square feet of space." And I was just about to say, "Colonel, we don't have that much vacant space," but I saw, and I think he anticipated that I was going to say that, because he glared me with those steely eyes and





I said, "Yes, sir."

That's all I could say. So he says, "This we want, and don't ask me when, because we need it now." So, there again, I saluted and I said, "Yes, sir." So I walked out of there and I said, "What am I going to do?" I immediately thought of calling George Luhrs, but George Luhrs was playing golf, and I guess he didn't know about -- the boys out shooting golf they didn't know about what was happening in Pearl Harbor, so --

RG: This was on Sunday?

AD: Yes.

RG: On the Sunday?

AD: Yes. So George wasn't available for a little while, so I went down and I said, "Now, what in the world am I going to do? What are we going to do?" And it had to be ground floor space. So I thought, my God, this is occupied. We have tenants in those buildings. We had the post office which, of course, I didn't worry too much about the post office because a government office, throw them out in a minute. But then we have Lenzenmeyer, a big grocery super store. That was the first super grocery store that we had in Phoenix, they were there. And then we had a restaurant, and then a health center, which everybody works out there. So I said, well, nothing left to do but let them know that they have to get out. And not a matter of a week or ten days or a month, now. Now. So, immediately I called Whitey Chambers with the Chambers Transfer and Mr. Coffin of the Light and Delivery. Of course, they have storage space, so I said, "This and this is going to have to happen so you better get your coolers ready

to come down and move these poor people out." They're like calling Betty Lenzenmeyer in Colorado, rouse her from her bed at home, and I said, "Betty, you've got to move. You've got to go." "I don't want to go." I says, "Well, I've made arrangements with Whitey Chambers and Coffin of 'Light and Delivery' to store all of your stuff." So there was nothing we can do. Everybody's got to get out. I didn't worry about the post office because the post office, they already knew about it so they started hauling everything out. And the little restaurant, you know, they closed up and it wasn't a big problem because it wasn't too large. And I also had called Cliff Maddox, a construction firm. They are the ones that did all of our work, construction work. In the meantime George Luhrs had shown up, so I said, this and this is happening. So in no time they hauled everything out, and Cliff Maddox's crew came in and started removing walls and knocking down, cleaning it. In very little time, why, the place was cleared out, rubble all taken out, and they started building the partitions. It's little cubby holes, y partitions that they needed -16, or I forget how many. They had to have toilet facilities -- of course. We had plumbing, fortunately, allover -- and washbowls and electricity.

Then my brothers, Sam and Virgil, well, we had put them to work at the Luhrs Hotel, Luhrs Building, and they learned about plumbing and they learned about electricity and refrigeration. They knew all of that. So they started working immediately. Of course, there were others. We had to hire others to help them to run sewage lines, sewer, and install washbowls, toilet bowls, light fixtures, all in a matter of two and a half





days.

RG: My goodness.

AD: Two and a half days, because the busses had already started bringing in the inductees from all over the state.

RG: Now you didn't have Papago Park National Guard at that time?

AD: Oh, no, no, we didn't have guards, Papago Park, it was later. They were at Seventh Avenue and Jefferson. The Army was at Seventh and Jefferson.

RG: Oh, right, I know where that is. It's still there.

AD: Oh, yes. Well, the Colonel Said, "You've been with the 158th Infantry for 'x' number of years and you have supplies that you -- you know about Army supplies, so you are going to stay here and keep us supplied with everything here. And then as far as your two brothers is concerned, you're going to put them to work doing all of the electrical work, and then they'll do the maintenance here." So I wasn't really eligible, you know, to go into the service because I had three children and I was 40 – almost too old. So I stayed there doing the work at the induction station.

RG: Very good.

AD: -- and I was paid by the Army. And for two years that's what we did, all those inductees. Oh, golly, they brought in thousands of them. They would just mill them through, you know. They would just sign the little paperwork. They had to sign them in to be examined, and examine them, and at the end when they were at the end of the line, they already had the Army shoes and Army stuff and go on the bus and on to two weeks training. God, it was murder.

RG: So then what happened after that, after the two years?

AD: Oh, after two years, they gave up the space. They didn't need it anymore. So they gave up the space and they put everything back and proceeded to rent -

RG: Rent the space out again?

AD: Yes.

RG: What happened to Lenzenmeyer, where did they go? Did they open up somewhere?

AD: No, they didn't open up anymore, they gave up. That was a very nice store. Of course, by that time,





other stores began to --"Bayless" came into the picture. And then we didn't have any downtown stores after that, and no big grocery store downtown. We had -- before, we had a Hurley's, the meat market right downtown, right on Washington Street and First Street, but that was kind of the end of the grocery business downtown.

RG: I guess there's a new grocery going in or already in at, what, Osborn and something?

AD: Third Street and Roosevelt.

RG: It's where a car dealership used to be.

AD: Yes, very nice. Very nice.

RG: I think that's going to be very useful.

AD: Oh, they're doing well. They're doing a lot of business there.

RG: Well, with all the new apartment buildings and condominiums and town houses downtown, lots of people downtown now.

AD: Oh, I'm so pleased, because, as I keep saying, if we're going to be a metropolitan city, we're going to have to live downtown, have those big apartment buildings and that will end all the gangs that we have, maybe a lot of drugs.

RG: And a lot of pollution, it will cut out people driving so much.

AD: Yes, you don't have to drive so far.

RG: What else happened during your term on City Council? Anything that you remember? Any people that stand out in your mind? Who was mayor?

AD: Murphy. Frank Murphy. Oh, rough, tough, rough and tough, but we had a stable city council. I think that we did very well all during that period until later, you know, somebody came in and ran against the charter government and won.

RG: Yes, 1980.

AD: Yes. But I thought that we got to be a well-managed City. As you know, even now we have the distinction of having one of the best run cities in the country.

RG: True. What about transportation? Did that come up, transit systems and so forth in your term, because





freeways were just beginning?

AD: Yes, freeways just started.

RG: And I think the city kind of drug their feet a little, didn't they, with federal money and --

AD: Yes. We had a lot of trouble because the federal government put out a lot of money. And we thought that we could build the freeways for a million dollars a mile, but we didn't figure on some of these rascals. You know, that right-of-way, they found out that highway was going to go through their property so they raised the price. And it cost -- it got to the point that it cost a lot more than a million dollars because buying those right-of-ways, was horrible because many people made a lot of money on the right-of-ways and selling property to the City. And it got to the point that we had \$23 million and we thought we were going to have 23 miles of freeways. We ended up with seven miles of freeway for \$23 million.

RG: Wow.

AD: And, of course, you know, that was kind of a blow to the Highway Department, because they were even -- they even thought there was fraud there, you know, somewhere. But it wasn't. It was just that some of these real estate guys made a lot of money, made a lot of money by raising the price, because it leaked. We had leaks to where the freeway was going to go, and that's bad, bad business.

RG: But is it possible to even keep it quiet?

AD: Oh, no. RG: Probably not.

AD: No. Even right now it's costing a lot of money. However, before they raise the money for the freeway, they find out how much the right-of-way is going to cost. And it's very costly where we're building it by Pima. It's horrible, because we are going through some neighborhoods and the houses are million dollar homes. You know, we have to buy them, we have to tear them down.

RG: It takes a lot of land for those freeway systems.

AD: Oh, just terrible, terrible. And the more freeways you build, the more problems we have, too, pollution.

RG: Right.

AD: And they are very expensive, very expensive to operate.

RG: Can you think of anything in your long career with the city and working that you wished had been





done differently? Sure, there are a lot of the things that we can always look back on, but --

AD: Yes. Oh, I don't know. I think that the original persons that planned the city did a good job, and I don't know if we could have done any better. The only thing is that management is what we had difficulty with for so many, many years until the charter government came in and we hired a manager, a strong manager. And that's so important, to have one strong manager, because the City council, they're just advisory, really.

RG: Right

AD: You know, they're supposed to have a feel for the people in the area. And the person says, "We would like to have this alley cleaned," why, he has to go back to the council and say, "Well, I'd like to have" -- this councilperson says, "It would be nice if we can have this done." Then the city manager is given the project. He will check it and find out how much it's going to cost, and then report back to the city council. He'll say, "Well, it's not feasible, it can't be done because it would cost this money," and so that was the end of it.

RG: Yes.

AD: Before, it was not that way.

RG: He was told to do it.

AD: That's right. So a strong city manager is a most wonderful thing that could possibly happen to us, and it all started with the charter government. And we were criticized for hiring a city manager, Ray Wilson. That was back there where a lot of fraud. But he was good, he knew what to do, and he was strong. And if he said no, that was the end of it.

RG: He stayed 11 years, I think.

AD: That's right. Eleven years, and he would train his staff. He was a boss. He trained the staff and placed them and make sure that they did exactly what they were supposed to do. And even now, with the persons that do not like the charter, met with him, they liked the strong management form of government. We paid him well so he doesn't think he has to take bribes. And the result is that he was a strong one.

RG: He's outside of the politics that goes on?

AD: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

RG: That's good. What about some of the people over the years. Did you know Del Webb?





AD: Very well.

RG: For example?

AD: Very well. Del Webb was a carpenter and he worked within the building, with the construction firm that built the Luhrs Tower. Del Webb made his money during the war when they needed these huge Luke Field and Marana.

RG: Williams.

AD: Williams Field, and he was lucky to get in with some of these powers to be. They needed somebody that would build something real quick. It was wartime. So he would be paid 40 percent of the cost. His profits would be 40 percent. There's a hundred million dollars and 40 percent was his share. In no time he made a lot of money. But it was building huge Marana and Luke Field, Williams Field, that's where he made a lot of money. And he's very astute. He's a good businessman.

RG: What about John F. Long; did you know him when he first came?

AD: Yeah. He was a member of the city council. Oh. He was-- oh, I guess he was a real estate broker, but he didn't have anything. But he saw the possibilities, so he made arrangements to acquire all of that land for practically nothing. All that Maryvale land, practically nothing. He bought it. And then he talked to some of these poor people, to moving out. The city had cleared out all of 16th Street and Buckeye Road. There's a lot of Chicanos living there in little huts, very, very modest houses. But they already owned their little house and they didn't have to pay hardly any taxes, because the house was very modest. So he would talk to them and say, "Well, for the money the city's going to give you for your property I could build you a nice, new home in the area and I can build a home in three days." He would build -- he started building little houses in three days. He says, "In three days you can move in." So he sold thousands, thousands of little houses. Many of them are in disrepair right now, I notice, because they were put up so quickly, because the concrete was just barely dry -- oh, but he had made a lot of money.

RG: Are you familiar with -- I'm sure you are -- the area out toward 24th Street, toward the airport with the church that stands out there, the Bourne Center, Sacred Heart.

AD: Sacred Heart.

RG: Did you know that area where they moved all those people there?

AD: That's where I'm talking about. **RG:** Is that where you're talking about?

AD: All that area.





RG: Oh, okay.

AD: They had their humble little houses that they had built for many years prior, and the city wanted to clear it out. I'm trying to think of who the city manager -- who the City councilmen were.

RG: That's about 20 years or so ago, I guess.

AD: Oh, well, they thought this would be a good time to do some urban renewal work and clear out the area and build something for the airport. They thought that many -- that many, many big firms would move in, and warehouses, big modern warehouses and some industry that would be clean industry. Was it Goddard, the old man Goddard?

RG: I don't know.

AD: But he talked to the city into clearing all that area and installed -because they had to -- they installed sewer and they installed water and they installed everything in there, ready for the manufacturing, clean industries that we wanted there. So it hasn't worked out that way because it's --

RG: Just not -- nobody's taking it?

AD: Nobody's taking it. But it brings back a lot of memories, but I don't think I want to talk about it.

RG: I know that the people still go back once a year for their Christmas mass to the Sacred Heart Church.

AD: Yes.

RG: And they really want to keep that building if they can.

AD: Father Albert (Braun) built that. He was a very good friend of mine. And Father Albert, he decided that he wanted a church there because it was all Hispanics, the whole area was Hispanics. So he talked a lot of us into going over there and helping him. So we would go there and build benches. And a fellow by the name of Leonard Calderon had a bar and a dance hall on 16th Street and Buckeye Road just a little ways from where we were building the benches. Leonard would provide much of the lumber. He would use his own resources to buy the lumber. Then the church was built almost adjacent to the bar, within 50 feet, 30 feet. And then the church was built, and everybody was real happy and filled with Hispanic people. We loved the church, we would go there many, many times, and we think we helped build the church and Leonard helped a lot. Well, Leonard wanted to expand his business. He only had a No. 12 license and he wanted a No.6 license so he could sell all kind of liquors and build a big dance floor, dance hall. So he made the application and Father Albert opposed it. He said, "That's too close to my church." So Leonard came to me and he says, "Adam, Father Albert has ruined





me, because without the license for all of the liquors and if I don't increase my business, I'll close up because what I have now is nothing and Father Albert's opposing me." I says, "Father Albert, how can he?" I said, "My gosh, he knows that he built the church right next to your property." So he says, "He has a lot of signatures on petitions." Of course, a priest can say, "Sign here" and you sign, regardless. You don't know what you're signing.

So I went before the city council and I explained it to the city council, "Leonard has been there a long time. He's been a businessman for many years. He has the approval of the police department, fire department, health department. They all approved it because he's been there, he's an established businessman, so we cannot understand why there's any opposition." And the city council said okay, gave him his license, and to go ahead and build his bar. And Father Albert was there, oh, he was so mad at me. He ran up to me right in city council chambers, he ran up to me and says, "I'm going to have you excommunicated. You're doing something. You're opposing me. I'm a priest. You're opposing me." I said, "Father, I'm terribly sorry, forgive me, but . . . "I'm not going to forgive you." I said, "But right is right." Leonard--he's in heaven now.

RG: We're just kind of winding up on talking about Sacred Heart Church and a problem with Father Braun in expanding a business very nearby. Could you describe Father Braun? What did he look like? He was older at that time, wasn't he?

AD: Oh, yes. Father Braun, of course, was a great war veteran. He went all through the conflict and he was right on the front lines ministering to the boys.

RG: Was he in the South Pacific or in Europe?

AD: Europe. Oh, he was a real hero. He's a great man and we loved him dearly. You know, he's rough and tough, but he was a real priest. He was very good.

RG: He came here from New Mexico? He had served with the Indians, I think.

AD: Yes. I don't know too much about his background. We knew him here, and he was a wonderful person.

RG: Did he ever forgive you?

AD: Oh, of course, I never saw him. Oh, I'm sure. I'm sure he did, because he had to have. [It] didn't bother his church at all. Leonard had the business for many, many years. And, and why the Good Father built it, wanted to build his church there is beyond me, because he's so close to an established business. That business of Leonard was -- he was a good businessman. He never bothered the police department or the fire department or the health department, and he had the approval of all of those. That's really the basis of a liquor license, approval of the police department, approval of the fire department, approval of





health department. Once they approve it, there's nothing else. But, as far as being a nuisance is concerned -- we didn't think he was much of a nuisance. Father was always "Yeah, we'll have kids there, you know, dancing to 3:00, 4:00 o'clock in the morning." And the only contention was that he built his church knowing that the bar was there. We loved him. He was a great, great hero. He did wonderful work right on the front lines ministering to the dead and to the dying.

RG: It's almost dinnertime here. Maybe we should kind of wind it up. Is there any -- if you were going to give advice to young people, someone like you were when you were 14 or 15 and wanted to go to school, what would you tell them?

AD: Oh, I have so much to talk about in that area that would take another hour.

RG: Right, I'm sure that's true.

AD: Because I feel so bad, so bad that our school system has failed miserably. Because I worked with McDonald's for six years, and I was 80 years old. My granddaughter -- well, do we have time?

RG: We've got time. We've got at least 30 minute on the tape.

AD: I have a granddaughter that is with McDonald's. She's been with McDonald's for 18 years or so. And here when I was 80 years old, almost nine years ago, she said, "Papa, I'm going to put you to work because I never see you. You're always traipsing allover the country, Europe and Puerto Rico, and I never see you." She says, "You don't even know your great grandchildren." So I didn't pay much attention to her because me work for McDonald's. So we had already planned a trip to Spain, so we left. When we came back a month later, there was a telephone call "You're due for orientation at 43rd Avenue and Bethany Home Road." Well, I had forgotten about it. I -- curiosity killed the cat so I went. Training started right away, I started pushing buttons and selling hamburgers. So after working there about two or three hours, she says, "You can work at your pace, any hour you wish be all right with me. All I want you to do is be a person that -- we're going to show the world that old people can work at McDonald's. They had a McMaster's Program and that's the reason I want you there, so you can just work 10:30 to 2:00 o'clock any time you want." So after working there a while, I told her, "Honey, I can't work here, I have a wife at home and she hates to be alone. I can't do it. Sorry." She says, "Well, you bring her with you tomorrow. You bring her with you." So I came home and I said, "Well, Honey, they want me to bring you with me." And she says, "Well, I'd rather, because this sitting around, I don't like staying at home alone." So, the next day I took her with me, and we were there for six years -- but not at 43rd, but at Indian School and 32nd Avenue because they just built a new McDonald's there, you see.

Well, my role was to, oh, mostly host, see that the people were well taken care of and a nice clean place for them to sit. But in the meantime, I saw youngsters come in and apply for jobs for McDonald's and some of them couldn't even fill out a simple application, a simple McDonald's application. And they called me and I said, "If you need help, let me know." And it just sickened me. Because here they're grown up and





graduated from grammar school unable to read or write. You know, that's an indictment against our school system.

RG: Oh, absolutely.

AD: Against our school system. Even when I was with the elementary board, I used to stress to teach them to read and write. Even if you don't teach them anything else, teach them to read and write. Geography is wonderful and all of the others is wonderful, but the important thing is for these people to read and write. But I think we had good -- we started some good program, but they kind of die on the vine because other school boards, they want everything, science system and geography and many other things, which are good. But some of these youngsters, why, they graduated from grammar school unable to read and write, and then they were told to go to high school. Well, poor kids, they will go to high school and enroll and then how can they function in high school if they're unable to read and write. High school doesn't teach them how to read and write, they're supposed to know that by the time they get to high school. Well, the result is they end up dropping out. They drop out and then when they drop out they become so frustrated, that before you know it, it's drugs and gangs and what have you. That's absolutely wrong. I'm very much opposed to our schools turning out these kids unable to read and write. Because once they drop out, once they drop out of high school, the very next thing is the police department. They end up in prisons because of their drugs and they're stealing and doing everything, because I say because of the frustration, unable to cope with high school. Well, the next thing is the penal system. We spent \$6,000 on each child in the south part of town, and we spent \$14,500 in, I call it the high rent district, the places that the tax base is higher. There they have the finest schools, big auditoriums, swimming pools, if you please, refrigeration, small classes of 20, 25. A big class over there is 25. Here we have 30 to 35 to -- God, there's teachers sometimes, they throw up their hands and they just walk out. They can't teach that many kids all at one time. Well, there is what we get -- and then, as I say, go to high school. How can you perform? And they say, "I can't do it." Well, as I say, it cost \$6,000 to run a kid through school here and \$14,500 clear up on the high, in the higher tax base schools, which I guess I can understand, but it cost us\$45 to \$48,000 to incarcerate them because you have psychologists, you have teachers, you have clinics, you have dentists, you have doctors.

RG: Right.

AD: Wouldn't it make sense to educate them instead of spending all that money? I told the legislature. I argued that point. And I don't know if they even listened, because I know they're having their argument on the financing of the schools. But that doesn't make sense to build them, to push them out of grammar school unable to read and write and then they are criticized because they drop out of school.

RG: So what we've got to do is do something about equalizing the school system?

AD: Oh, yes.





RG: Put more money in them?

AD: Teach them how to read and write, even if it cost a little bit more money. It costs more money, as I say, to incarcerate them. I go to Marana, I go to Fort Grant, and there is where they are spending a lot of money. They're spending a lot of money and that's good, because some of them, after they're in prison for four or five years they come out and at least they know how to write and read a little bit. But that's costly. They should have done that in grammar school.

RG: Sure.

AD: So, you have heard me.

RG: Well, I'm glad you said that.

AD: I'm sorry, that's a beast that's so close to me. I feel so bad about that. When I saw those youngsters unable to fill out a simple McDonald's application, big handsome person and then know that they can't go to high school.

RG: Well, that just means our work's not done, we've still got lots to do. Thank you so much, I've enjoyed this.

AD: Well, you edit that stuff, don't you?

RG: Yes. What we'll do is, we'll make a copy, have it typed, get it back to you and you can look at it and make any comments or whatever before it's all finalized.

AD: Because you see, we talked kind of at random.

RG: I think it went pretty well. You are very articulate, and I just thoroughly enjoyed it. Thank you very much.

