

TEMPE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
Tempe Historical Museum  
3500 S. Rural Road  
Tempe, Arizona 85282

May--October, 1987  
Project Director: Kristina Minister, Ph.D.

Narrator: LUCILE HANNA PYLE

Interviewer: JEAN STENGEL

Date of Interview: June 12, 1987

## TEMPE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT NOTES

The objective of the first phase of the project was to train a pool of oral historians and to research the recollected experience of persons who were part of early twentieth century Tempe agriculture. I gave 12 hours of basic oral history training to 8 volunteers and 3 interns. Historian Janet Burke researched written sources and presented a lecture on early Tempe history with a five page summary of research topics to address in the interviews.

The 20 interviews initiating the project were conducted in the narrators' homes or offices, and in two cases, the interviewer's homes. Scott Pfister, Tempe Video Production Coordinator, recorded each session with a Hitachi SPZ31 camera and a Sony three-quarter inch VO6800 video recorder. Although Pfister consistently set optimal conditions for good narrator-interviewer communication, the camera, lights, video recorder, and supplementary tape recorder, a Tascam 246 Porta Studio, required ten square feet of space and the intrusion of electrical cords and lights in various locations around the room. During the interviews, Pfister remained behind the camera and gave standard studio hand signals to the interviewer. Every 20 minutes the interview was stopped to accommodate the changing of video tapes. Because interviewers were not encumbered with equipment and tape management and thus were free to concentrate on narrators, video recording was only moderately intrusive.

From a submaster audio tape, I produced the transcripts, doing half of them myself and closely supervising the production of the other half. The interviewers were responsible for auditing each of their interviews, monitoring word by word the type to the audio record, making corrections and verifying spelling of proper names. I edited the final documents. Historian-archivist Carol Martel made recommendations concerning format, storage, and retrieval.

The transcripts are verbatim representations of speech; they are not writing. Every word including the common vocal fillers "a" and "and" is represented as it was spoken by narrators and interviewers so that nothing will be hidden to future researchers who will edit the video and audio records for their special purposes. Scriptwriters also will be assisted by the explicit false starts, fillers, and repetitions that they may wish to edit out. Accordingly, readers should be aware that the transcripts are verbatim, raw material of speech. Watching the video record of the interview will be more satisfying than reading the considerably reduced transcript.

1. Incomprehensible words are indicated by a line: \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. References to the interview situation and editorial remarks appear in brackets.
3. Dashes appear before and after sentences embedded within sentences.
4. Three spaced periods [ . . . ] indicate an incomplete thought.
5. Three non-spaced periods[ ... ] indicate overlapping speech or interruptions.

Kristina Minister, Director

## BIOGRAPHY

Lucile Hanna Pyle was born September 2, 1905 in Tempe. Her father, James Edward (Jim) Hanna and mother, Lula (Lou) Pearl Gregg farmed at Baseline and Kyrene roads and helped build the town canals. Lucile graduated from Tempe Union High School in 1923 and from Tempe Normal School in 1925. She taught school for five years before marrying Howard Pyle in 1930. The Pyles have two children, Mary Lou and Virginia Ann. Mrs. Pyle was active in the Tempe Woman's Club and the Christian Church. She was Arizona's First Lady from 1950 to 1954 during the two terms that Howard Pyle was Governor.

## FIELD NOTES

I have always been an amateur historian, enjoying history of all kinds, particularly areas of social and cultural history as well as family and individual histories within the context of social and cultural events. For the past 18 years I have resided in Tempe, read with interest Peggy Bryant's historical anecdotes on early Tempe days published in the Tempe paper, and followed the founding and development of the Tempe Historical Museum. But full-time career responsibilities and professional activities kept me from more active involvement. In February 1987, while on leave of absence from my nursing faculty position, I responded to a call for volunteers which appeared in a Tempe Daily News article on the Tempe Oral History Project.

I was born the only daughter of four children and raised in Rochester, Minnesota where my father practices medicine. After completing a BS degree in nursing from the University of Oregon and an M.Ed. from the University of Minnesota, I practiced clinical nursing for 10 years both overseas (Vietnam 1963-65) and in various places in the States (Alaska, California, and Minnesota) finally settling in Arizona in the late 1960s. At that time I met and married my husband and embarked on an academic career as a faculty member in the College of Nursing at ASU. I received a Ph.D. in 1983, continued to teach until June 1987, and then retired from active teaching. My professional interests have always focused on community/public health issues, and I continue to be active and interested in issues and concerns in this area. I have been fortunate in that my professional life has enabled me to travel widely both in and outside the country and to have close contact with people from a variety of cultures. I am an avid reader of mysteries, history, religion, to name a few topics, and presently am pursuing a study of early Jewish, Christian, and church history. I enjoy music, especially from the early Baroque to early Romantic periods, plus most country and folk music. Presently I am involved in a hospice program, church activities, and professional interests. And I love to play bridge.

Preparation for the interview with Mrs. Pyle included searching documents in the museum pertaining to her father's family and other relatives as well as the documents about her husband's life. Several topics were identified for interview topics: early childhood including life while her father was building the canals, town and social activities during schooling years, and life in Tempe from 1920 through World War Two.

I was met at the door of the Pyle residence by Mrs. Pyle's husband, the late Governor Howard Pyle. Mrs. Pyle greeted me graciously, and we chatted together in the family room while the video equipment was set up in the adjoining living room. Although expressing some reservations about whether or not she had anything to offer the oral history project, she was willing to try to describe her early life in Tempe. She remarked several times that she doubted that her recollections would be of interest.

The interview started about 1:45 p.m. on June 12, 1987 and concluded a little after 4:00 p.m. We were seated together on the sofa located across from a large picture window with a northerly view across the front lawn. Her husband remained in another part of the house during most of the taping session but joined us during the short break while the tapes were being changed. His jovial, light-hearted comments and obvious sense of humor provided a relaxed atmosphere during these breaks which I think helped us both to relax and continue refreshed.

Although detailed descriptions of activities and events in her early life were not always easily recalled, Mrs. Pyle was friendly and cordial throughout the interview. She responded to gentle prodding by describing rather vividly particular events surrounding the 1918 flu epidemic, social activities, and a river bottom with water and lush green foliage. I found Mrs. Pyle gracious and eager to contribute in whatever way she could. I was impressed with the openness with which Mrs. Pyle discussed her feelings about politics and the genuineness and candor of her statements.

Jean Stengel  
August, 1987

## CONTENTS

<u>Tape side 1</u>	<u>pages</u>
Activities at the Christian Church	1-2
Family background	2-5
Camping out with father while he helped construct canals	5-9
Myrtle Brechan's Maternity Home	9-11
Childhood games	11-12
Tempe streets	12-13
<u>Tape side 2</u>	<u>13</u>
Descriptions of two photos, the construction camp and a picnic	13-14
Family outings	14-15
Keeping cows in town	15-16
Women's social activities	16-17
Playing piano	17-19
Schooling	19-20
The Lyceum	20
The 1918 flu epidemic	20-22
World War One	22
The 1921 Cotton Bust	22-24
Swimming in the Salt River and Tempe Beach	24-25
Teaching school	25-26
<u>Tape side 3</u>	<u>27</u>
Learning to drive	28
Hanna's blacksmith business	28
Meeting Howard Pyle	28-30

Teaching and social work during the Depression	30-31
Early married life	31-32
Social life during the Depression	32-36
Building a home	36-37
Parents' accident and death	37-38
Relative, Aunt Unabell Decker, who lived with the Niels Petersen family	38-39
<u>Tape side 4</u>	<u>39</u>
Traveling entertainment, the airdome, and movies	39-42
Keeping cool	42-44
Description of the old Salt River	44-46
Young marrieds' social life	46-48
World War Two and growth	48-49
Political life with Howard Pyle	49-51

BEGIN SIDE ONE

[reference to interview]

STENGEL: I'm Jean Stengel, and I'm with the Tempe Oral History Project today. This afternoon I'm going to be spending some time with Lucile Hanna Pyle in her home here in Tempe. Mrs. Pyle was born in Tempe and spent most of her, all of her young life here until she graduated from ASU. And so I'm going to talk with her today little bit about what it was like in early Tempe.

PYLE: There weren't many of us.

STENGEL: There weren't many of you.

PYLE: Well I would say, what, six hundred, maybe a thousand.

STENGEL: That's what you remember as a small child? Were there groups of people like social units of people like, 'course the family, but...

PYLE: To church. Everybody went to church. And that's where they, they go. We went to church two times and three times a day you know.

STENGEL: On Sunday?

PYLE: Yes. And we went a, they, we had prayer meeting, and we went to prayer meeting, and then they'd have church socials and church dinners, and everybody. That's mostly what people used to go to.

STENGEL: What, and what church were you involved in?

PYLE: Christian Church.

STENGEL: The Christian Church. Were there other churches?

PYLE: Oh yes. A million.

STENGEL: A million?

PYLE: There still are quite a few. But the main ones was the Baptist and the Congregational and the Catholic. And a, there were two Methodist churches, one South Methodist and then the other that's Methodist. Now

they've seem to have gone together, and there's just the one Methodist. But that's about all we had then.

STENGEL: Were they located close together in Tempe?

PYLE: Well they were just all [together] 'cause it was not spread out, you know.

STENGEL: When you were here as a, as an early child you lived in Tempe?

PYLE: Um hum.

STENGEL: In what, how \_\_\_\_\_

PYLE: Well a, I, I tried to remember where we had lived. And we lived on a, Van Ness in a house that's--'course it's not there anymore. And a, a, that [reference to photo] was taken in our front yard. It was up a, about a, oh just past the Normal School at that time, about two blocks. And we lived there for awhile, but I can't remember how long.

STENGEL: Now the, one of the main streets that went through was a, what is now...

PYLE: Eighth Street, Eighth Street.

STENGEL: Was Van Ness near Eighth Street?

PYLE: Oh yes, it was off of Eighth Street. And it's, ASU has taken it in now. But, well you still go through there. But it's, it's all through the campus.

STENGEL: One of the malls?

PYLE: Uh huh, just through.

STENGEL: Now this is where your, your mother and father lived, there on Van Ness Street?

PYLE: Yes.

STENGEL: Did your grandparents live there also?

PYLE: No, no, no. My mother and father lived there,



STENGEL: And what about aunts and uncles? Were they near you?

PYLE: Oh they lived all around town. A, some of them were farming, and they lived out on farms.

STENGEL: Where were the farms?

PYLE: Well, just out south here. I couldn't tell you now because it's all a, so built up you don't know where you are half the time when you get out there really.

STENGEL: Now your, your grandparents lived on a farm?

PYLE: Yes they always lived there where you said awhile ago: Kyrene Drive and, and a, a, a, . . .

STENGEL: Baseline?

PYLE: No, a, Southern.

STENGEL: Kyrene and Southern?

PYLE: Uh huh. Um hum.

STENGEL: That's not very far from the Petersen House.

PYLE: No, it isn't. Petersens is just on up the road about, what, two miles, a mile and a half.

STENGEL: Do you remember making trips out to your grandparents farm?

PYLE: Oh yes. We'd go out there and stay all night. Sleep on the floor.

STENGEL: Was it cooler there than in town?

PYLE: A, no I don't think so. It was just hot everywhere. There were no fans, you know. And there were lots of trees and lots of little irrigation ditches that usually had running water in, and you could wade in.

STENGEL: Did you play and try to keep cool?

PYLE: Oh yes, uh huh. And at that time you could. It was not contaminated. You know they, I guess it was, but they didn't think it was.

STENGEL: They didn't worry about that.

PYLE: No, they didn't worry about it.

STENGEL: Your family has been in Tempe a long time. Is that correct?

PYLE: Yes, a, they came here in, what, nineteen . . . my mother was fourteen when she came. And she lived with the Gillins. <sup>Gillilands</sup> And a, I don't know how she, I guess church is where they got together. I, I don't know for sure.

STENGEL: Where your mother and your father got together. And your father had been here?

PYLE: He had been here.

STENGEL: Was he born here?

PYLE: No, no, he was born in Little Rock, Arkansas.

STENGEL: Little Rock Arkansas.

PYLE: And came in a covered wagon train here.

STENGEL: Here directly to Tempe?

PYLE: No, up at a, a, he always said, "We landed at Camp Verde, Middle Verde, on the Middle Verde." And they were there quite a while. And they had a little girl a, which was six months old. And she died with a, a, I don't know what it was. The other one died after they came down here. She was twelve and died of the measles. But the little baby died up there, and it's buried on a, Beaver Creek up there. And some of them went up and put a lot of rock, you know, and made a, put a stake up. And she was just buried out in the wild. Nothing around her.

STENGEL: And then your family, your grandparents came down to Tempe?

PYLE: Um hum, they went to Prescott first...

STENGEL: Uh huh.

PYLE: ...and then they came on down here.

STENGEL: Do you know what caused them to come down to Tempe, settle in

this particular area?

PYLE: Well, I assume it was for the kids to go to school. 'Cause they had very little at that time around through the state to go to school. So I imagine that was it. And some of them, a, were old enough to go to a, normal school. And two of my aunts graduated and taught school. And 'course my father went there because it was high school. You know it went from--I believe it was sixth grade, but I'm not sure--on through, a, and then they graduate from . . . and could teach school.

STENGEL: And your grandfather had, had a farm down on Kyrene and Southern. Did he have...

PYLE: A, just a small one.

STENGEL: A small one.

PYLE: Uh huh, and he raised a, cantaloupe and vegetables. And then he rented a, from, rented land, leased it or whatever you want to call it, and he did some farming that way.

STENGEL: Now did they have the irrigation ditches in by that time?

PYLE: A, not too many, but they did have some.

STENGEL: Uh huh.

PYLE: Yeah. And a, they had just little irrigation ditches. And it was all water that came. They didn't have pumps at that time, you know, to pump water at all. That all came later.

STENGEL: It all came from the, the a, irrigation...

PYLE: ...irrigation, uh huh, um hum.

STENGEL: I read somewhere that your a, father had helped build some of the canals.

PYLE: My father shod the mules that they used to, to a, a, haul all their equipment and all of their a, things that they used to build Roosevelt Dam.

A, he had the contract to, to a, shoe the mules. And he, they had a place called a, Government Wells at the other side of Mesa as you went out to Roosevelt Dam. And a, that's where they, they, mules . . . that's where they stopped and had the mules shod was there. And then...

STENGEL: He was a blacksmith?

PYLE: Yes. Then later he worked for them and was blacksmith, and when they enlarged the Arizona Canal from Granite Reef on down a, way on past, oh, out in the Washington District somewhere out there, when he got a, a, rheumatism and had to quit. Sciatic.

STENGEL: Now when, when he was, now let's see, the Roosevelt Dam was completed in nineteen...

PYLE: A, five, six, seven, I guess. Somewhere along there. I'm not just sure.

STENGEL: Did he take his family with him? Did you go with him?

PYLE: Not up there. No, we stayed here. But when he was doing the, when they were doing the canal, we went with him. And we had two tent houses. They had floors and were up on big a, a, well, they call them sleds. But they were big timbers. And, and they had a floor. And they had screens. Then they had canvas things that let down so it would, you could heat them if you wanted to. And we, we had two of those. One that we slept in and all, and the other was where we ate and lived. And a, as they would get down the canal a ways, they'd hook onto these things and drag them down. 'Cause you know they were on these big a, pieces of a, lumber. And they'd move them on down.

STENGEL: What did they use to drag them, mules?

PYLE: The mules.

STENGEL: The mules would drag them on down...

PYLE: Yes. Uh huh, and of course we weren't the only ones. They, there

were other people that worked and that had the same thing.

STENGEL: Were there kind of villages that...

PYLE: ...and they'd [stake] the whole thing and move. And they'd go beyond where they were, you know, so they could catch up and go away farther, and then they'd move on down away. And...

STENGEL: Were you, was this before schooling for you?

PYLE: Yes...

STENGEL: ...wondering what...

PYLE: I was about a, oh, three or four I guess. 'Cause my brother and I rode horses. We'd get on the horses and go out across the desert. He was seven years older than I was. And he had a B B gun. And we'd go out, and they had a, a, piled brush that they had cut down and all, we'd hunt around for snakes, rattlesnakes.

STENGEL: Did you find any?

PYLE: Sure.

STENGEL: Did you shoot?

PYLE: Oh no. And I couldn't get off the horse. If I, if I would fall off as we galloped along, he'd have to help me back on. I couldn't begin, 'cause I was just...

STENGEL: Little.

PYLE: ...little, uh huh. But we found a lot, hardly ever did we go out that we couldn't find some. And he cut the rattles off, you know, and bring them to the house. And...

STENGEL: Was it mostly rattlesnakes you were looking for or...

PYLE: That's what it was, rattlesnakes. Then they shot, they used to kill the rabbits for food.

STENGEL: Did you have snakes in, as you were growing up it Tempe? Did

you have rattlesnakes...

PYLE: Once in a while.

STENGEL: ...close do you remember...

PYLE: We had scorpions. That was the bad part. But we don't seem to have them anymore. As, as houses would come in and be built, maybe they'd be there a short time, and then for somehow, some way they'd disappear.

STENGEL: What did you do to a, keep the scorpions away?

PYLE: Just watch. You'd kill them.

STENGEL: There was no...

PYLE: Na huh, no. Nothing to a, a, poison or anything that they knew of.

STENGEL: The screens didn't seem to keep them out?

PYLE: Well it, it would, but somehow they'd get in anyway. You'd find, you'd find one around all the time. Every so often you'd find them. And too, when we were going along out a, at the Arizona Canal, we'd have to be careful because when they would stop the, a, and put up the tents to hold, they'd pile dirt up, you know, around to bank up around them. Well, you'd have to be careful especially at the time when snakes were, a, it was their time. To [telephone interruption], to be careful because you'd step out the door and you might find one coiled up right there. And you'd have to watch.

STENGEL: \_\_\_\_\_

PYLE: I, I assume so. Or there'd be hole where they'd come out from under the, the house you know. They'd dig out because they couldn't stand it under there I guess. But you'd have to be very careful or you might step on one.

STENGEL: Being careful helped you not to get bitten.

PYLE: Oh yeah, to my knowledge none of us were ever, ever were snake bitten.

STENGEL: Or scorpion bitten?

PYLE: Oh yeah, uh huh. We've been scorpion bitten.

STENGEL: What do you do with, what did you do with a scorpion bite?

PYLE: Put ice on it. That's about all. Uh huh.

STENGEL: Take it to a doctor?

PYLE: Ah, not at first. But they got so that they did take people to the doctor for it. But they used to put ice on it and, you know, try to keep from getting real hot so that the blood would, would a, circulate and poison

---

STENGEL: I mentioned taking it to the doctor. Did you have doctors and hospitals and things in the area when you were growing up?

PYLE: Didn't have hospitals. But, until later of course. But at first we didn't. They did in Phoenix. And we did have doctors but not very many.

STENGEL: I understand you were born in an interesting place. Can you tell us a little bit about it?

PYLE: Well, I was born in a, a, Mrs. Brechan's Maternity Home. And it was down where the city hall is now. And they used it for many years as a public, as the Tempe Public Library. And when they built the new a, buildings out here, they moved it and tore that down and built this new a, a, city hall that, you know is upside-down that they call it?

STENGEL: A pyramid.

PYLE: Yes.

STENGEL: Well can you, can, do you remember the structure of the building that Mrs. Brechan had?

PYLE: Well, to my knowledge it might have had brick, but as I remember it had white, it was white. I don't know whether it was painted white or whether it was plastered white or what. But it was kind of an old building.

It had, the, these big thick over the windows you know and the doors. But I really don't know too much about it. I went to the library a time or two.

But a, it's a, I forget.

STENGEL: Well you talk about it as a maternity home, and evidently that's...

PYLE: Well that's what, as I understand it that's what they called it, a, Mrs. Brechan's Maternity Home.

STENGEL: And you, and you know that you were born there? But you told me before your brother was not.

PYLE: Well not, no, I don't think so 'cause I don't believe she had it at that time. He was born in nineteen ninety-eight, ninety-eight, or eighteen ninety-eight [1898.] And I think that was before she had it.

STENGEL: Do you know whether or not the maternity home functioned like a hospital?

PYLE: I don't believe it did. I think it was just a maternity home. But I'm not real sure about that.

STENGEL: And was Mrs. Brechan a nurse?

PYLE: Well, I think she was. I think she was a registered nurse. At least anyway she knew an awful lot about it. Her husband was a doctor.

STENGEL: Was he a doctor here in Tempe?

PYLE: Um hum, um hum. But he died at a real early age. She had two children.

STENGEL: So she continued to run the nursing a, maternity home?

PYLE: Yes, and then when a, she, she, then she bought a, the Kingsbury place which was quite a large area where our police, this new building that the police built, it was right in that area. And it was quite a nice place. It had a great, big garden, and...

STENGEL: It continued to be a maternity home?



PYLE: No, she just lived there, and I really don't know what she did after that. She began to be up in years, and a, a, I don't think she, oh she worked. I'm sure she had to because she was that kind of a person. She was very a, a, well, she was with it I guess you might say. And she really would have to be doing something or she wasn't satisfied.

STENGEL: When you were, were a small child you talked a little bit about a, the canal building, your father and with your brother going into the desert. What other kinds of activities did you and your brother a, do together?

PYLE: Well, that's about all. We had, a, he was seven years older than I was. And he always had boys. And I was the only girl. And a, I think a, I'd go out to play with them, and I didn't last long. Until of course I'd have to go in the house crying. So. But I played Shinny. Did you ever play Shinny?

STENGEL: No \_\_\_\_\_ . Is that a game?

PYLE: Yes. You had a club, and you batted a can or a, oh, rock or something. Kind of like a, like a, ice, ice hockey now. Only it was just on the dirt. And then, of course, did you walk on stilts?

STENGEL: Oh yes.

PYLE: Well, I did but I couldn't.

STENGEL: Oh I see.

PYLE: That was, that was why I didn't go over with the boys. They couldn't teach me to walk on them. Not even the low ones. And they tried their best to get me to walk on the high ones. And oh, I'd fall on my face. I couldn't do that at all. And so I just didn't rate.

STENGEL: Uh huh. Did you have, you had trouble getting in with the boys' crowd. What about other girls?

PYLE: Well I always had girlfriends a little later. When we lived, moved back to town after a, and I started to school, why we had lots of friends. We

used to play out in the street, in the vacant lots, and under the street lights at night. And a, we played ball and Hide and Go Seek and...

STENGEL: Were these streets paved?

PYLE: A, not at first. But they were later on. But a...

STENGEL: You mentioned street lights.

PYLE: Oh yes.

STENGEL: Can you tell me what kind of street lights they were?

PYLE: Well they were just a, a, a big pole and went out like this and had a, as I remember it, it had a, a, round a, a, shield I guess you'd call it, and then the light was underneath it. It really wasn't a, excuse me, a shield.

STENGEL: Was it electricity?

PYLE: Yes. Um hum.

STENGEL: When, when you were young you can remember those lights?

PYLE: Yes, um hum. But a, I, I expect I was a, maybe in school before we really had very good lights. And the streets were not paved either you know, downtown streets or anywhere. And they, if it rained, and it would rain for three or four days, you know just straight, and as you went down Mill Avenue they build it up, and the cars would, a, the buggies and everything would just slide off into the bar pit. ["Bar pit" is a shortened form of "borrow pit," the trench dug parallel to a dirt road for borrowing soil to build up the road and to create a drainage trench.]

STENGEL: The bar pit?

PYLE: Well, yeah. A, that's the, you know, here's the sidewalk, and they had kind of an open, a down like that and up, the road was built up aways. So it would drain off in that. A, I guess you could call it, but now they have that under the, under the ground you know.

STENGEL: Like a sewer.

PYLE: Yeah. But at that time it was just...

STENGEL: It's an interesting term, bar pit.

PYLE: Well, we've had bar pits for a long time here.

STENGEL: Just kind of like an old sewer.

PYLE: Uh huh, yes, uh huh. Right. That's right. It was just a dug out place.

It was a little lower, uh huh, yes.

END SIDE ONE

BEGIN SIDE TWO

STENGEL: We a, you described some of the, the houses that you lived in when your father was working on the canal, and you showed me this picture.

Can you talk a little bit about this picture for me?

PYLE: Well this is a tent house. It had a corrugated iron tin roof on it over the canvas one. And we had a, a, canvas that rolled up so that you could get some air...

STENGEL: Now in this picture the canvases are down.

PYLE: Yes. Uh huh, uh huh, yeah.

STENGEL: And then it's corrugated...

PYLE: No, it was tent house here. Kind of built up. Wood. And a, built up, and then this is canvas up here and over there. And...

STENGEL: Looks to me like that's the sled down here or part of it.

PYLE: It is. It is, uh huh.

STENGEL: And that's what they moved...

PYLE: ...that's right...

STENGEL: ...the tent house on.

PYLE: They would hitch on a, a team of a, mules, and drag them down two, three miles. And a, 'course they had already made tracks, made a road down through. A dirt road full of dust. And a, a, they'd just drag them down, and

then put them out in a little huddle, the whole, quite a few of them.

STENGEL: So there would be other families.

PYLE: Oh yes, uh huh.

STENGEL: And children to play with?

PYLE: Yes. Not many. Not too many children to play with. But a, we a, there were one or two. But not too many at that time. It seems like they just didn't have any children.

[unintelligible overlapping speech]

PYLE: And a, these were all a, men that worked under my dad.

STENGEL: Worked under your father? And he was responsible for primarily the shoeing of the...

PYLE: Uh huh. That and anything else that went wrong, you know. A, he was the fix-it man I guess you might call him.

STENGEL: That's an interesting picture. You had showed me one other one here of a picnic. And I know this was taken before you were born. [Photo of a group of adults picnicking in the shade of trees on the desert.]

PYLE: Yes it was.

STENGEL: Were these the kinds of things that you remember as a child doing?

PYLE: A, yes. Every holiday and every weekend and, we went hunting or fishing. My dad was a hunter or, and a fisherman. Or we'd go picnicking. And I got tired of it. I don't want to go fishing or hunting now. And I don't go. I don't like to go up to the mountains. I like the mountains but I, I don't want to go.

STENGEL: Now when you talk about fishing, where would your father fish that was close he could do on weekends?

PYLE: Oh in the rivers.

STENGEL: In the Salt?

PYLE: Well, we had water in the river, you know, at that time.

STENGEL: Did you have any other streams that went down to the Salt River?

PYLE: No, only out a Granite Reef where they all came in together up there.

STENGEL: But when he said, you said he would go fishing, it was to the Salt?

PYLE: Just right here, uh huh, yes. And a mostly picnicking and hunting more than fishing, because hunting was closer. And you know, they had to go horseback or on buggy and a horse. That was the only means of travel.

STENGEL: What kinds of things did he hunt and bring home?

PYLE: Rabbits.

STENGEL: Rabbits.

PYLE: Rabbits and doves and quail.

STENGEL: Birds.

PYLE: Uh huh. I think that's, that's all. Once in a while he'd go deer hunting but not until it got easier to get around and places to go.

STENGEL: So it was all fairly desert kinds of animals...

PYLE: Oh yes, uh huh.

STENGEL: And I think you told me earlier that you used those, you ate the rabbits...

PYLE: Oh sure. We had to. We had to eat rabbits or chicken or whatever.

STENGEL: Did you raise chickens in town?

PYLE: Oh yeah. And had a cow.

STENGEL: In town?

PYLE: Uh huh.

STENGEL: Did all families have their own cow?

PYLE: An awful lot of them did.

STENGEL: I understand there was a creamery.

PYLE: Oh yeah, right out here on a, a, well it's not on, not on University, but it's a, over along the railroad track there where University is. And that, University did not go out like it does now. It stopped. And it would make a curve around and then take this other by the creamery.

STENGEL: Oh, but you still had a cow even though you had a creamery?

PYLE: Oh yeah. Um hum, um hum.

STENGEL: For your own milk?

PYLE: Uh huh. Yes, we did.

STENGEL: What kind of social activities do you remember your mother engaging in as a small child?

PYLE: Church.

STENGEL: That's what you keep, church activities.

PYLE: Uh huh. And as I say we went picnicking and a, and a, a, well that's, that's about, was about it as far as around here was concerned.

STENGEL: You showed me pictures of something called the Ladies Aid Society. Was that a particular group of women?

PYLE: In the, in the a, church.

STENGEL: In the Christian Church.

PYLE: And all the churches had, had them at that time. And they still do. But a, that really was a, the place to go and where they went to do things to help other people you know and...

STENGEL: I was wondering if it was a social gathering or whether...

PYLE: Oh no.

STENGEL: ...it was an outreach program.

PYLE: Both. Both.

STENGEL: And what kinds of outreach kinds of things did they...

PYLE: Oh they'd sew and make things for a, make quilts and things of that sort.

STENGEL: Do you remember quilting bees?

PYLE: Oh yes. My mother, I have some quilts in there now that she quilted. She was a good quilter and good, she was a good seamstress. But I didn't get any of it.

STENGEL: You didn't, you're not a quilter. You're not a sewer.

PYLE: No, no, huh uh. She tried to teach me and my brother to crochet. Well he learned, but I did not. She gave up on me.

STENGEL: What about cooking? Were, do you remember cooking and being involved in the . . . .

PYLE: That's not one of my favorite things either. But she was a good cook, and she cooked a lot. And she made all kinds of pies, and they used to a, I don't know whether you call it cure olive or what, but pick them and, and a, a, they used to make a, sauerkraut and all those things you know.

STENGEL: But you were not really involved in the cooking aspects?

PYLE: No, no, no.

STENGEL: Sounds like you spent a lot of time on the desert with your brother.

PYLE: Well, I just didn't care about cooking. And a, and she liked to do it, and she did it. My father cooked. My brother was a good cook. And so was my father. But I, I didn't get any of it.

STENGEL: Did you get involved in, in other things, other than the cooking or the domestic kinds of things as a young girl?

PYLE: Not if I could help it.

STENGEL: Sports?

PYLE: Sports, uh huh. Well yes.

STENGEL: \_\_\_\_\_ team sports \_\_\_\_\_?

PYLE: Uh huh, oh yes. And I belonged to different organizations. I took music lessons and played, and for years I played for everything, everybody that sang or anything, any gathering they had here in Tempe.

STENGEL: Playing the piano?

PYLE: Piano.

STENGEL: Was that your instrument of choice? Uh huh.

PYLE: I played for church for many years.

STENGEL: Did you have theatres in, in Tempe?

PYLE: Oh yes.

STENGEL: Were you involved?

PYLE: We had airdomes. Yes, by going and sitting and watching. That was the way I was involved. I did not play for them. A, when I got a little bit older they had pipe organs. When I got old enough to a, really a, play for a show. Uh huh.

STENGEL: And you played pipe organ?

PYLE: No, I did not, no. A, I didn't ever play for a show. But a, I played for everything else.

STENGEL: School activities, school plays, and, and...

PYLE: Rotary Club things that people would come to, to perform and things of that sort. Played for funerals, every funeral in town.

STENGEL: In, in the church? Yes?

PYLE: Or mortuary.

STENGEL: Or the mortuary. What mortuary was there?

PYLE: Carr's.

STENGEL: Carr's? That's an old...



PYLE: That's the only one.

STENGEL: That's the one that was up . . . .

PYLE: Yes, up by a \_\_\_\_\_ . Uh huh, uh huh.

STENGEL: Until it was...

PYLE: Yes where the hotel is now.

STENGEL: Uh hum.

PYLE: Yeah.

STENGEL: Now you finished high school here in Tempe.

PYLE: Um hum.

STENGEL: Is that right? Did you go to grade school all the way through in Tempe or...

PYLE: No. I went to first grade in Tempe. And then I went to Baltz School one year, and then we moved to Liberty. And my father was a blacksmith down there. And a, a, we were there about three years then came back up here.

STENGEL: And you finished your schooling here.

PYLE: Uh huh, um hum.

STENGEL: And after high school graduation, then did you go to ASU?

PYLE: Uh huh, only it was Tempe Normal School at that time.

STENGEL: Did most of your classmates go on to...

PYLE: Yes. Yes.

STENGEL: Almost all of them?

PYLE: An awful lot of them did. That just seemed to be the thing to do you know.

STENGEL: Well your school was right close to the college.

PYLE: Oh yes, uh huh, oh yes, uh huh. And it didn't cost you anything to go really. A, it cost five dollars a semester. And you got a ticket to go to

what they called a lyceum out of that and to go to any one of the a, a, athletic, anything they had an campus you got a ticket to go for.

STENGEL: Now is the lyceum the same one that's on campus now that was built?

PYLE: A, I don't think so. It, it was, it came to town. And a, it was a, well, lot of them came in tents, you know. Or, or do you? You probably don't. They probably had a, at that time a, the lyceums would come in tents and perform. And, and...

STENGEL: Where would they put the tents?

PYLE: Well, set them up on the vacant lots. They were big tents. And then we went to camp meeting too.

STENGEL: Oh in tents?

PYLE: Uh huh, uh huh.

STENGEL: Church meetings.

PYLE: Yes.

STENGEL: So the church was the big area of social activities?

PYLE: Oh I think so, yes. Uh huh. That and school. When you got old enough to go to school, especially high school and a, and a, a, the university or college at that time.

STENGEL: Now you were, you were a fairly young girl during the First World War. Do you remember that at all?

PYLE: Yes I do.

STENGEL: What kinds of things do you remember? [The narrator's first memories of that era concern the 1917-18 influenza epidemic.]

PYLE: Well they a, had what they called a, a hospital in the grammar school. They closed the schools. And it was the Eighth, Tenth Street School that a, they tore down to put the university a, a, what do they call the round

building up there? [The ASU music building] Anyway that's where it was. And a, my brother drove an ambulance, so they called it which was just a car to go get people and bring them in there. And a, and he also would take them out when, and help to get them when they were ill when they passed on too. And a, my mother and father a, would make, we had a, the first a, cookers that came out were tall like this [indicates about 20 inches high and 8 to 10 inches in diameter] and about so big around. And my mother had one, and they made that full of soup every day. And would go around to different houses around in the neighborhood and take food to people who were ill. And we never had the flu in my family. And I think maybe in all the time I maybe had it two times in my life. We just didn't, we were not susceptible to it, I guess. 'Cause my brother went in and carried people there in cars, and he went in there and helped them. And he never did take it either.

STENGEL: Did you, do you remember helping at the time?

PYLE: No I didn't. I was too small.

STENGEL: You were a little...

PYLE: Uh huh, I was down in the . . . yes, uh huh.

STENGEL: Did your mother, was your mother...

PYLE: Oh yes.

STENGEL: ...in the hospital...

PYLE: Well, she used to go and help if they needed help. But they, they really, it was sort of divided into neighborhoods. And people in the neighborhood took care of, of a, the neighbors you know.

STENGEL: You're talking about the flu epidemic...

PYLE: Yes, yes, uh huh. Eighteen, eighteen, uh huh. [1918]

STENGEL: Interesting, you said they made the school into a hospital.

Evidently there was no hospital...

PYLE: No, no, no, um um. None.

STENGEL: When the flu was over did that, did that continue as a hospital?

PYLE: Oh no, no. They had school again and went back to school. Everybody went back to school. But they had, they closed all the schools. And a, my brother was eighteen, and he was going to normal school. And all the boys every Saturday would go over to try to enlist. Well all his friends enlisted and got gone but him. And they said he had a heart problem, and he couldn't go. His heart beat too fast. Well when he was drafted, a, the day the armistice was signed, the day before that he was taken in and was to leave that morning. And the armistice was signed, of course, and everybody got out on the street. And the bells all rang and everything. And everybody got up but my brother. And he was mad because, he wouldn't get up. And said, "Well no he wasn't going to get up." And he didn't. But a, he didn't go either.

STENGEL: But he wanted to go.

PYLE: Oh yes, he wanted to go 'cause all of his friends had gone too, you know. And he didn't get to. And so he was sort of upset about it. But anyway he lived through. And he got a discharge because he had been taken in. But a, and then we had the worst a, a, everybody was so poor. We had a real bad a, a, time.

STENGEL: Was this right after nineteen eighteen? Right after the, what was the . . . .?

PYLE: Well lots of people who were raising cotton went broke. It didn't materialize, and they went broke, and they borrowed from the banks, and...

STENGEL: Did the cotton crop not...

PYLE: No it didn't go.

STENGEL: It didn't do well?

PYLE: No. And, oh everybody just, it was really bad. And all the kids at school, we didn't have any clothes hardly or anything. And I was fortunate in that my mother could sew. And all her friends would give them her [would give her their] old clothes, you know, to make over. And she made them over for me. And I had, I had enough. I didn't have a lot. And they were not new or anything. But at least I was covered up. And everybody had a real hard time.

STENGEL: When you say the cotton did not, it didn't grow well in the valley, there was...

PYLE: It just went, didn't, just didn't do.

STENGEL: Did your family have land in cotton?

PYLE: Yes. Yes. And a, lots of people did. And they had borrowed from the bank down here, and...

STENGEL: Now had they had land in cotton before and it had done well and then they had a bad year?

PYLE: Yes, and it had done so well that people were putting it in, see, thinking, well and then it didn't do well. It had a real bad a, oh I don't, I really don't know. I guess, I don't know why they had such a bad year, but it didn't materialize. And everybody went broke.

STENGEL: And this, you remember this as being...

PYLE: ...oh yes...

STENGEL: ...closely related to the flu period?

PYLE: Well yes, all along at that time we had it. And it was real bad. But everybody survived, but it wasn't easy.

STENGEL: Um hum. Did it last for several years?

PYLE: Oh no, not a, it lasted . . . well it did last for, but not I think only

three, four years, and then it began to come back, you know, things did.

STENGEL: You graduated from high school in twenty-three [1923], and were things back by then?

PYLE: A, pretty much, but not, not too much. We still, none of the kids, none of us had any money to do anything with. We just a, existed. And at that time, too, they had a, things at school to do, you know, parties and, and things like that to go to. Dances and whatnot.

STENGEL: So social activities you just kind of had to make do.

PYLE: That's right.

STENGEL: And be creative.

PYLE: That's right. Yes that's what we did.

STENGEL: I remember hearing about the old swimming hole.

PYLE: Oh yes.

STENGEL: Did you go swim there a lot?

PYLE: Yes I did. We a, would go down back of the butte. They had one there. And a, they had a springboard up on the, high up on the rocks. And the a, the river came down around to hit the butte. And then went around like that right across then down the other side. And we used to swim there. And then a little bit later they had a place at Joint Head, which I'm not sure where Joint Head is now, but it's down the river a, about a mile or mile and a half. And what was there I don't know. But they, they a, made a swimming pool. They sort of kind of kept the water there, and people went there to swim an awful lot.

STENGEL: Is that where we get this Tempe Beach?

PYLE: No, no, no. No Tempe Beach is down there now.

STENGEL: Yeah.

PYLE: Oh no, that came later when they built the swimming pool in, and,

and everybody went there to swim. And they came from all over the Valley because it was one of the biggest ones. And I guess one of the nicest ones. They didn't have too many like they do now.

STENGEL: And did they have the Tem--, the swimming pool there when you were a, in college?

PYLE: Oh yes.

STENGEL: Oh they did?

PYLE: Um hum.

STENGEL: The swimming pool?

PYLE: Yes, they had it there . . . . Well, while I was in college I know they had it there. And I think they, I can't remember just when it was built. But I would say early twenties.

STENGEL: And that must have been a, a big social...

PYLE: Oh it was...

STENGEL: ...center.

PYLE: It was. Um hum.

STENGEL: Parties. Activities. I remember hearing about beauty contests there? Were you ever involved in...

PYLE: Well, I never was in one, I can tell you. But we used to all, all a, take part you know and help.

STENGEL: When you finished college where did you go from there?

PYLE: I went to Miami [Arizona].

STENGEL: Miami?

PYLE: Uh huh. And taught school up there for two years.

STENGEL: Would you, was that your choice to go there, or would you like to have stayed in Tempe and...

PYLE: No, that was kind of my choice, and still it wasn't, but it was open

at the time, and they paid real good up there. And that was the main reason for it. Then I came down here, and a, taught at Baltz School for five years.

STENGEL: It was just on the other side of the river?

PYLE: Um hum. Um huh.

STENGEL: Was there quite a bit of difference in the, in the students and in the teaching between \_\_\_\_\_ School and Miami?

PYLE: Yes because I had a, Mexicans that couldn't talk English too well.

STENGEL: Which one?

PYLE: Pre-primary. At, at Miami. And a, so it was quite because when I came back here then I had fifth and sixth grade?

STENGEL: And were they mostly Anglos that you had in fifth and sixth?

PYLE: No they, a lot of them were mostly white, mostly a, white kids. [The narrator did not hear the interviewer's question or perhaps did not hear the word "Anglo."]

STENGEL: When you talked about in Miami you taught preschool...

PYLE: Preschool, uh huh. Uh huh, because they could not speak English. And they had to learn a, some of them were old enough to go to first grade, but they couldn't speak English. So they had to, to go to this...

STENGEL: Was this a special section...

PYLE: Uh huh, yes. Yes.

STENGEL: ...sort of like, was it Eighth Street School...

PYLE: Yes, uh huh, um hum.

STENGEL: ...used for grade one through three?

PYLE: It was, uh huh.

STENGEL: So it was the same kind of thing in Miami.

PYLE: Yes. But...[end of tape]

END SIDE TWO



BEGIN SIDE THREE

[reference to interview]

STENGEL: You were telling me that you learned to drive at the age of twelve.

PYLE: Yes, uh huh, um hum.

STENGEL: Can you tell me a little bit about that?

PYLE: Well, I learned on a canal bank which was just one, one road, no passing unless you sort of got over and fell on the canal or something like that. But that's where I learned. My father was with the Reclamation Service or the, it's, it's a, SRP now, but at that time it was called Reclamation Service. And he was a Zanjero. And I used to go with him. And he'd let me drive. And that's how I learned.

STENGEL: At the age of twelve. Was that sort of an unusual time to learn? Were your, were your...

PYLE: Well I guess it was.

STENGEL: ...friends learning?

PYLE: A, oh, well I don't, I really don't remember. I guess they were too. Because kids used to drive, you know, a lot younger than they do nowadays. And we didn't have anybody on the road like we have now too.

STENGEL: And so it sounds to me like the roads went along the canal.

PYLE: Oh it did.

STENGEL: For you to drive.

PYLE: Right on the canal bank you know.

STENGEL: Once you learned to drive what did you do with this new skill? Did you drive downtown or . . . .?

PYLE: Yes. I did. It wasn't any problem you know. There was no cars hardly and not too many people even on the street because there still weren't too

many people here. And a, so it really was not a, bad at all to drive. And, of course, I learned, and I could reach the pedals and all so . . . .

STENGEL: You just drove as it was needed. Were there a lot of cars in, in Tempe at the time? That must have been . . . .

PYLE: Oh, not too, there was still buggy and horses, buggies and horses. And a, I think the livery stables had gone out by that time. We had two here. But I think they had closed up at that time.

STENGEL: Now your father had a blacksmith's shop. And your grandfather did too. Was it a family business?

PYLE: No, no. My father...

STENGEL: It was your father's blacksmith...

PYLE: Um hum.

STENGEL: Did he continue with blacksmithing after cars came in or did he...

PYLE: No, no, he was with the Reclamation Service then.

STENGEL: And just closed down.

PYLE: Un huh. He wasn't a, in that business at all. A, the blacksmith's shop he had was on the corner of Mill Avenue and Seventh Street.

STENGEL: Um hum. Um hum. There wasn't a need for one to continue...

PYLE: No. A, Spain's a, Spain's a, shop, and Parry's lasted much longer. They stayed right in, in town here for awhile.

STENGEL: Were they blacksmiths also?

PYLE: Yes, uh huh. Um huh, yeah.

STENGEL: We kind of got talking about driving because you said you met your husband in relation to a car. Is that right?

PYLE: Well, I knew him before that. And I really didn't care about him. I didn't care whether I knew him or not. But a, I had a, this car and I was going home and had a flat tire. And at that time the tires were not as easy

to change as they are now. But I was, I stopped, and I got out and was looking around. And he came along and asked me if he could help. And I said, "Sure," you know. So he changed the tire, and I went on home. And we had a, there was a girl living at our house at that time too. And we didn't like Howard at all. And a, so...

STENGEL: Some, I mean he just wasn't a nice person or . . . .?

PYLE: Well we decided he was stuck up so to speak. \_\_\_\_\_

STENGEL: Yeah that helps.

PYLE: That language. And so we laughed about it and kidded about it and whatnot.

STENGEL: But you got together somewhere along the line.

PYLE: Well, yes, quite a while later. He was a, he was managing the Tempe Beach. He's standing over there. [Narrator is referring to Governor Pyle who had just entered the room.] And a, and a, they were having a beauty contest. So he wanted some help so I helped him.

STENGEL: What, what did you do in terms of helping him?

PYLE: I just went along with the girls you know, the bathing beauties.

STENGEL: You were still, were you dating yet or...

PYLE: No, huh uh, no, no, no, huh um. So finally he got around, and I went with him to church. And then we sort of branched out a little bit.

STENGEL: Was he, did he belong to the same church...

PYLE: No. He was hard shell Baptist.

STENGEL: Oh yes, uh huh. Was that, hard shell Baptist.

PYLE: Yes, he was. His father, you know, was a minister.

STENGEL: He came to Tempe as a minister.

PYLE: Yes, uh huh. He did.

STENGEL: So you finally got married in the nineteen thirties, is that right?

And that was right after the Depression. What was that like in, in Tempe?

PYLE: Well, it was bad. Nobody had any money, you know. And I was getting a hundred dollars a month, and he was getting a hundred and thirty-five when we were married.

STENGEL: Now you were teaching here in Tempe at that time?

PYLE: Over at Baltz.

STENGEL: Um hum, um hum.

PYLE: And a, we got married and had no money.

STENGEL: Did you continue teaching?

PYLE: A year.

STENGEL: A year?

PYLE: Because I had a contract and had signed it already. And that was at the time when they wouldn't allow married, married teachers to teach. But I had a contract so I got to teach the next year. And then I substituted and for awhile. And then I worked as a case worker out of Phoenix.

STENGEL: A case worker with . . . .?

PYLE: With a, the a, what they called at that time . . . Maricopa County.

STENGEL: Oh, the county health department?

PYLE: Um hum, um hum.

STENGEL: What, social service?

PYLE: Yes.

STENGEL: Working sort of like a social worker?

PYLE: Uh huh.

STENGEL: Where is your district? Did you go to certain areas...

PYLE: In Phoenix. Yes, uh huh, uh huh.

STENGEL: Phoenix area or Tempe area?

PYLE: Phoenix area.

STENGEL: Phoenix area. Now did you live in Tempe, the two of you, and you traveled in there?

PYLE: Uh hum, yes.

STENGEL: How long were you a case worker?

PYLE: A, two years I guess. Couple of years.

STENGEL: And when you say a case worker, what kinds of things were you involved in?

PYLE: Go out, people didn't have jobs. And they were just out of everything you know. And you went out and took their, their a, where they had lived and what they could do and how much clothes they needed and how much food they needed and whatnot.

STENGEL: And you did this for several years...

PYLE: Couple years.

STENGEL: ...couple years after you were married. Uh huh. Was that unusual for women to work after they were married in those days?

PYLE: Oh I don't think so. A, those who wanted to did. And those who didn't a, they didn't work. And some of them a, they couldn't work you know. They didn't have . . . . But a, I guess maybe it was a little unusual, though, maybe for some of them to work.

STENGEL: You, you're so, your, your friends, of your friends, did most of those women work as wives?

PYLE: Huh uh.

STENGEL: No. But you did?

PYLE: I did, and a couple of them worked, and then the others didn't, and then, then I quit too.

STENGEL: And a, you, you mentioned a little bit about helping your husband in the, in, with KTAR.

PYLE: Well I'd just go with him because I didn't want to stay home, you know. And a, I helped a little bit just to pick up and carry something you know if \_\_\_\_\_ to do it.

STENGEL: Did you meet some interesting people on, on his, involved with his activity in this way?

PYLE: Oh, I, I, think so, yes. We have always really been in public life ever since he was married, really. And I guess you could say the same about living here all the time because I was a, always doing something, you know. And knew what was going on around and so forth. My dad was always interested and into everything in town. And he belonged to the Civic Club at that time. And my mother who always went to church and everything. And, and so we always were, knew what was going on you know.

STENGEL: When you talk about the Civic Club was sort of like a...

PYLE: Like the Rotary Club. [unintelligible speech overlap] It was a men's club.

STENGEL: Was there a women's club, sort of a counterpart to...

PYLE: Well there was a little later...

STENGEL: Oh?

PYLE: ...and my mother belonged to that. And then they started a Junior Woman's Club here, and a, I was one of the charter members of that and all of our friends and my friends and some others. And we worked at that for...

STENGEL: How did you get involved in that, in that a . . . .?

PYLE: Oh, I don't know, just a, I really don't know. I guess they asked us to or something. I don't know.

STENGEL: Was this after you, after you were married...

PYLE: Yes.

STENGEL: ...after you had quit your job...

PYLE: Yes, uh huh, uh huh, yeah.

STENGEL: And there was no club like that in Tempe...

PYLE: There was a woman's club, the, the, the Senior Woman's Club. And they wanted to start a junior woman's club so they got all of us interested and, to start, so we...

STENGEL: What kinds of activities did you do through the Junior Woman's Club?

PYLE: Fought mostly. With the senior club.

STENGEL: With the senior women?

PYLE: Yes.

STENGEL: So it was two groups of women. [unintelligible speech overlap] Did you have any philanthropic...

PYLE: Oh yes, uh huh, we did. And we did work for different, that needed help. We, we had bridge parties and had a, dinners and things like that that we could make money. And then we helped when things were needed to be helped with.

STENGEL: Did you have a particular thing that you helped like a . . . .

PYLE: No, no, we didn't have. Just which ever came about. And a lot of it came through the Senior Woman's Club.

STENGEL: They might tell you what kinds of things might you give to. Like a, would it be family, a particular family that needed . . . would it be money that you would give or...

PYLE: ...or help of some kind.

[Narrator indicates affirmation throughout the previous questions.]

STENGEL: You've been involved in that for a long time then.

PYLE: Yes, I was. And I belonged to the Senior Club for a long time, and then I quit. I don't belong anymore.

STENGEL: You mentioned bridge. Were you a bridge player?

PYLE: Yes.

STENGEL: Back . . . and what, did you have a club that met periodically?

PYLE: Yes. I played in two clubs that I've played in since before my kids were born. And just recently so many of them got, became ill and had to go to the, either to Friendship Village or out here that we had to quit for awhile.

STENGEL: Are you still continuing?

PYLE: We will as soon as fall comes 'cause some go away in the, in the summertime and go up in the mountains and stay. So we will start again in the fall.

STENGEL: Bridge must have been a fairly, a, a game that was played in Tempe for a long time...

PYLE: Oh I think so. It was played, I think it was played all over. Phoenix used to have the same thing as we did. They'd have bridge parties and, and...

STENGEL: How long would you play, well like, or how often, like every other week or . . . .?

PYLE: Yes, uh huh, every other week.

STENGEL: Did you gather in homes or did you have a particular place that you \_\_\_\_\_ and rotate with the...

PYLE: And the night time \_\_\_\_\_. One that I played with for so long a, we played once a week on Tuesday night.

STENGEL: When you talk about bridge are you, you talking about a women's group of bridge or did...

PYLE: Oh yeah, just women, uh huh. Well when the husbands got together we were all so poor we couldn't afford to do anything else. We, we had, we



played canasta. And we'd go on Saturday night to this place and to that. We'd have a potluck. They don't have potlucks anymore you know, but we did. And a, we all had a real good time.

STENGEL: And you, and you rotated from house to house and brought the food and . . . a, were you playing for any stakes or . . .?

PYLE: Oh yes. Who, who, the home that we went to furnished the, the, nothing expensive or anything, but they furnished a little something for the high scorer.

STENGEL: Sounds like that was sort of a nucleus of social activities, the bridge...

PYLE: It was.

STENGEL: ...women.

PYLE: Well, there were some that had older, older women than had a, had a, a, night time bridge, and the husbands played too. But a, we didn't have a...

STENGEL: What did you do with your children when you played bridge?

PYLE: Left them at home.

STENGEL: Left them at home. Did you have somebody there to care for them or...

PYLE: Yes, yes.

STENGEL: Uh huh. What, was it a live-in person or, or a . . .

PYLE: A, no, no, huh.

STENGEL: Just a day person that stayed.

PYLE: Some, a sitter. Lot of the girls would sit, baby-sit you know. And a, a, and in the daytime a, they, you got a sitter or else she, they were in school by the time that we really a, went. And once in a while somebody'd have to bring their kids but not often.

STENGEL: It wasn't something . . . .

PYLE: No, it was not fun when you had to bring your kids.

STENGEL: Now I understand that you built a home in Tempe about a few years after you were married.

PYLE: Yes, down on Ash Avenue.

STENGEL: Now was that on the outskirts of Tempe at the time?

PYLE: Yes.

STENGEL: What, what, nineteen thirty-seven?

PYLE: Nineteen thirty-seven, thirty-eight. Nineteen thirty-eight [1938].

STENGEL: Uh huh. And did you purchase the land and the house and . . .

PYLE: We bought the lot for two hundred and sixty dollars, and we built the house for thirty-five hundred. Brick. Had two bedrooms at that time.

STENGEL: Two story?

PYLE: No. No. Oh my, we couldn't afford two. So. And we lived there for twenty-seven years.

STENGEL: Now when, when you decided to build a house, this was in the late thirties, and it was a, the Depression was kind of getting over so, how did you do that? Did you contract a contractor to do it? Or did you, like we do now, we go out and look at houses and buy one.

PYLE: No. We contracted for it, because that's what you did in those days. They didn't have them built like today. You just had to go and hope that you could get a good deal, you know.

STENGEL: Did you, were you, a, did you go daily and supervise the building of the house or were you . . . .

PYLE: Oh yeah, I worked some, and I was working some, and Howard was. And we'd go by. And a, at that time my mother and father were living, and Mary Lou could stay with them. We had Mary Lou a, in nineteen thirty-seven. And a, she could go and stay with them. And if we needed to

do something. And a, so we would go down nearly every evening. We'd take her, of course, too. And a...

STENGEL: You say your parents were living then. Were they still at the Van Ness home...

PYLE: Uh huh.

STENGEL: ...where you had grown up as a child.

PYLE: Yes, uh huh.

STENGEL: They lived there. Uh huh. Did they, did they continue to live there?

PYLE: A, yes until they, they, my mother and father were both killed in an automobile wreck at the same time up at a, a, a, oh--what was the place--a, Cordes.

STENGEL: Cordes Junction, that area up there.

PYLE: They'd been deer hunting, and they came down and went around a curve, and nobody seems to know, the tracks just went around and went right off and went right down in, in the . . . . So we don't know whether they were run off, evidently not, because there was no, I don't know, sometimes we thought maybe my father might have had a heart attack. But he was a, he'd been deer hunting. But he a, he was the one that was a, still alive when somebody got down. And my mother was not. So I don't know.

STENGEL: Um hum.

PYLE: But, anyway . . . .

STENGEL: My, that comes so sudden.

PYLE: Yes it was, uh huh.

STENGEL: It really was.

PYLE: Yes, but you know, it was rather strange a, they always said, had said for a number of years that they wished they could both go at the same

time. But they knew it couldn't happen you know. You know they say, but it did.

STENGEL: Yeah, Well its . . . .

PYLE: And it was quite a shock but sometimes you know that's better than having them be ill and, for so long.

STENGEL: A loss for the city too, not just...

PYLE: Oh yeah.

STENGEL: ... \_\_\_\_\_ because they were very involved in the city.

PYLE: Yes. My dad was working for the county at that time. So.

STENGEL: Now you talk about your family. You, you I think were related to somebody who lived in the Petersen house. Is that correct?

PYLE: My father's sister, Mrs. Decker.

STENGEL: And her first name?

PYLE: Unabell.

STENGEL: Unabell. Did you call her Aunt Unabell?

PYLE: No. We all called her Aunt Hon. That was her a...

STENGEL: Aunt Hon?

PYLE: Uh huh, and she had been "Hon" to everybody from the time she was, I guess I don't know how long but every, that's what everybody called her. And a, they lived there. Mr. Decker was Mrs. Petersen's nephew. And a, they sort of took a, a liking to him. They had no children. And he, for some reason I guess he was sort of their pet. And a, a, he sort of looked after them too, helped them. And a, so then when Mr. Petersen died, why a, Aunt Sue got him to really help her. And so he ran the ranch and everything.

STENGEL: Aunt Sue was...

PYLE: Mrs. Petersen.

STENGEL: Mrs. Petersen, his aunt.

PYLE: Yes, um hum.

STENGEL: Was that... [reference to interview] Was that Petersen house close to where your grandparents had their farm?

PYLE: Well, by the tracks was where my grandparents were. Kyrene, Kyrene Drive, you know, has the tracks right there?

STENGEL: Yeah.

PYLE: Well they were right on the corner...

STENGEL: So they, so you could go over there as a young child could you just run over there?

PYLE: No, it was about a mile on down, it was on down, a mile or maybe a little farther. But no, huh ah.

END SIDE THREE

BEGIN SIDE FOUR

STENGEL: ...Phoenix for entertainment down to vaudeville.

PYLE: Oh that was when I was a kid. I was just little, and we lived out on the Arizona Canal. That was when my father was going, when they were a, making the Arizona Canal bigger. On Saturday evening everybody went to town.

STENGEL: "To town" was Phoenix.

PYLE: Phoenix. And a, we went to the a, American Kitchen for dinner. And then we went to the show. And it was a vaudeville. It was a tin affair. And a, it was always full. And it was good.

STENGEL: Did you have vaudeville in Tempe at all? \_\_\_\_\_

PYLE: No. I don't, well sometimes it came in the chautauqua when we had, but that's all. We never had it really.

STENGEL: Do you remember chautauqua?

PYLE: Oh sure.

STENGEL: \_\_\_\_\_

PYLE: Yes, ma'am.

STENGEL: Tell me a little bit about it what they...

PYLE: Well they came in these big tents and, and put it and people would go. And, and they moved from Mesa you know, Phoenix and all because it was hard for people to get around. And so they would always set up a tent in a town, a little one. And they stayed three or four nights. And it would a, be filled nearly every night.

STENGEL: What kinds of things did they do?

PYLE: Oh singing and dancing and, and a, jokes you know. And, and a...

STENGEL: Did they do plays?

PYLE: Plays and...

STENGEL: Readings.

PYLE: Uh huh and just most everything. They would come along a, maybe they would have a series that would come at different times you know.

STENGEL: Did they just come at certain times of the year?

PYLE: A, I think so because it was hot in the summertime to sit in the tents you know with no a, air conditioning of any kind.

STENGEL: So they'd have them at night.

PYLE: So they'd have them at night, uh huh, uh huh.

STENGEL: You remember them as a child?

PYLE: Oh sure.

STENGEL: And then, and then how long did they keep returning to Tempe?

PYLE: Well a, they used to come when I was at ASU first, the first year. And shortly after that they didn't come any more.

STENGEL: Into the [19] twenties.

PYLE: Uh huh, yeah.

STENGEL: Twenty-five [1925].

PYLE: Yeah.

STENGEL: Right in that area.

PYLE: They just seemed to, well I don't know, Phoenix got so it had quite a bit of entertainment. And a, a, so most of the people from Chandler and Mesa and here would go into Phoenix to what they had. Except what they had at ASU.

STENGEL: Theatre.

PYLE: Uh huh, yes.

STENGEL: Concerts.

PYLE: Uh huh, yes, uh huh.

STENGEL: You said you played the piano. When Chautauqua came to town and they, did they bring their own...

PYLE: Oh, they brought their own people.

STENGEL: They did not use local people at all.

PYLE: No, no, huh uh, no. No they brought their own people.

STENGEL: What about movies?

PYLE: Well we used to have them here. We had a, an airdome down where, where the a, police, down in the area where the police is,

\_\_\_\_\_ is now. And it was, and then they had the theatre across the street a, just right by the side of the old city hall for many years. And a... [telephone interruption and reference to interview] So anyway, a, a... [telephone interruption] So a, we would go to the show here. And in the summertime they would have the airdome. It was open in the top.

STENGEL: Oh.

PYLE: And a, movies. And you just sat on a bench. But a, it was cool.

STENGEL: Now these were, were these talkies or were these silent?

PYLE: Oh silent.

STENGEL: Silent. Now you said you played the piano. Who played your instrument for the talkies? Or did you have...

PYLE: Oh some, some, a, I didn't play for any of the shows. They always had somebody play.

STENGEL: Somebody came in.

PYLE: Uh huh, yes, from here, Mrs. [Ethyl] Weir used to play an awful lot. And Mrs. Goodwin played. And a, Mrs. a, a, Brooks.

STENGEL: Um hum, um hum.

PYLE: And then there were some others too, and when we got to the organ a, people would have, they would have to get somebody that came in that did nothing but that.

STENGEL: For the talk, I mean for silent movies?

PYLE: Yes, uh huh.

STENGEL: Uh huh, uh huh.

PYLE: So, but . . . .

STENGEL: You, we were talking a few minutes ago about how you kept cool.

PYLE: Well you sat out under a tree. And a, a, had a fan, you know. Or, or you fanned in the house. A, nearly everybody had a screen porch. And you, it was screened because we had so many mosquitos from the river. And a, a, so \_\_\_\_\_ people had to have their porches screened for that reason. And they'd sit out there on those and...

STENGEL: Did you ever sleep on those porches?

PYLE: Oh sure. Everybody did. Well not everybody but most everybody did at certain times of the year.

STENGEL: Or, or did you have out, sleeping buildings out . . . .



PYLE: No. Some people did but a, we didn't. We had the screened porch always, uh huh, yeah. And that's about the way \_\_\_\_\_ until we had electric fans. And, oh, that was great, you know. And when it got so they would oscillate, that was still better. And then we had the, got the cooler, window cooler first. And then got the swamp cooler which cooled your whole house, went through a \_\_\_\_\_. And then now, the ones we have now, 'course are so much better.

STENGEL: You talked about "window coolers" are you talking about a, an evaporative cooler that went in the window, and did...

PYLE: You just used a, one of your house windows. And a, had an electric fan that went in it. And most of them were made yourself. And a, a, you put up, and they had a, a, a, what's the straw stuff, a?

STENGEL: Excelsior?

PYLE: Uh huh. That's what they would put down, and then water would run through that, and the fan would blow through it and cool.

STENGEL: Now was this the way you cooled your, your, the house you built on Ash Street?

PYLE: No, no. We had, by that time, they had coolers that, they were building that kind of coolers. And you still, the water went through, but the fan was connected with it too. And you had the whole, it was a whole unit.

STENGEL: It was central.

PYLE: Yes. You had a whole unit.

STENGEL: Uh huh.

PYLE: And it just came in on one place through the house. It was a hole in the wall up, and it was up there and came through there.

STENGEL: Sort of like central heating, but it was central evaporative cooling [from one outlet].

PYLE: Right.

STENGEL: Did that work well all the time?

PYLE: Not, not in August when it would get so, well, we said it was humid. But of course, not like it is humidity in the East. But it does get humid, and when it gets like that they don't work very well. It gets kind of, a, I don't know, just sort of muggy.

STENGEL: You mentioned screened porches. It was to keep the mosquitoes out. Was that . . . .

PYLE: That was a lot of it. We used to have all up and down--see we had water in the river. And on this side of the river where we go through now where a, railroad goes through and the bridges, the river came down through there, and that was all filled with, with a, willows and little trees all out in. And it was, water came through there, and it was about knee deep. And they had watercress and all that in there. And we used to all go down to the river at that time and get watercress. Well, those places all were good places for mosquitoes to breed. And a, so we had them for an awful long time. Finally they got so they sprayed, and certain times of the year they would really give it a, good. And that would kill them out before they got the...

STENGEL: Were the mosquitos--they're pesky, mosquitoes--but did they, were they worried about malaria?

PYLE: No they weren't that kind, huh ah.

STENGEL: ...not a disease bearing...

PYLE: No they were just maddening.

STENGEL: I'm fascinated with watercress.

PYLE: Oh? Well it would just grow wild down in the river and the water and, and, in the a, a, willow bushes that went up you know. They were not

like little trees, because they were just small, you know, around them they just grew up. They were quite thick. But a...

STENGEL: They were the ones that had pussy willows in the spring?

PYLE: Oh, they did have some? Um hum.

STENGEL: Now the, the watercress, I think it, does it come in the spring? Is that when it comes?

PYLE: Well it, you could go down there and get it almost any time. But I don't know how they raise it. I have no idea.

STENGEL: Did you use it to cook with?

PYLE: Oh yeah, we did.

STENGEL: Primarily...

PYLE: And eat it, uh huh.

STENGEL: What, salads?

PYLE: Eat it, a, yes. And eat it raw, uh hum, um hum. Didn't cook it.

STENGEL: That's quite a delicacy. Anything else you could pick up from the river like that?

PYLE: No. Rocks.

STENGEL: Rocks. Right.

PYLE: That's about all really.

STENGEL: No wild berries that...

PYLE: No.

STENGEL: ...grew along there that...

PYLE: No, not that I ever knew of.

STENGEL: Uh huh.

PYLE: The kids used to go down there hunting all the time. My brother and the family did, and his friends did. But a, they usually just spent time and didn't get anything.

STENGEL: Uh huh.

PYLE: But a . . . .

STENGEL: When you were in Tempe as a young school teacher before you were married, what kinds of things did you do to socialize? Where were the socializing spots in Tempe?

PYLE: A, we went to the dances over at a, a, Riverside Park. We went to the Mezona. And a...

STENGEL: Riverside Park was in . . . .

PYLE: Phoenix. Down by the river. I don't know whether it's still there or not. But it used to be. And they had, also they had all kinds of rides and swimming pool and, and the dance hall and a, picnic grounds. And a, then a, we went to Mesa to the Mezona. And a, to the \_\_\_\_\_ . They had another dance hall there. I can't remember the name of it now.

STENGEL: You were a dancer?

PYLE: Yeah, all the time. Well all, that's all the kids did was...

STENGEL: But \_\_\_\_\_, you're not mentioning anything in Tempe that had...

PYLE: We didn't have anything.

STENGEL: Nothing?

PYLE: No.

STENGEL: Did you have any other place where you a . . . . Was there a drugstore where you might meet or . . . .

PYLE: Oh well, Laird and Dines Drugstore down on the corner where the-- what's the name of that store down on the corner now?

STENGEL: Oh, Circus Circus.

PYLE: Circus Circus. That's where that was. And that was quite a meeting place for everybody in town. If anybody was ever going to come to town to

meet you, that's where they met you.

STENGEL: That was the, the spot.

PYLE: Uh hum, yes, uh huh. It was first a drugstore, and they had a saloon. But that went out, of course, when the time was voted, and so they had a, had drinks and ice cream and whatnot there.

STENGEL: You're talking about Prohibition?

PYLE: Um hum, um hum.

STENGEL: Was there any, do you recall any bootlegging at all in Tempe?

PYLE: Well, there was quite a bit of it. When I was going to high school.

STENGEL: Was there?

PYLE: Um hum, um hum, oh yeah.

STENGEL: You remember that...

PYLE: Oh it was bad. "You should not associate," and all, you know. It was really bad. But they had quite a bit of it here.

STENGEL: Did they make their own here or...

PYLE: Oh sure.

STENGEL: You didn't.

PYLE: Oh no, huh ha.

STENGEL: Really?

PYLE: No, I didn't.

STENGEL: No.

PYLE: And we never had it at my house. My dad had one bottle that sat up, and that was for medicine. And that's all we ever had.

STENGEL: But it was a controversial thing...

PYLE: Oh yes.

STENGEL: ...in Tempe in terms of the Prohibition and, and a . . . .

PYLE: Just like everywhere else you know it was. And the kids in high

school, when I got to high school, there was very little of it went on a, with the kids then. And when it got to normal school there wasn't too much then really even. And a, 'course the dance halls where we went did not sell it at all. It was a, just coke and things like that. But it got to be, 'fore long got to be so that it was everywhere.

STENGEL: Just going to ask you a little bit about, about your, your life after the war, after the Second World War. A, were things changed quite a bit in Tempe from pre World War Two?

PYLE: A, yes. Because a, a lot of these a, boys came out to the airfields here. See we had three, four right around here. We had a, the two out here and Williams. And a, a, a, Luke and Williams. And then we had one in Tucson and one between here and Tucson. And these boys all came out, well they all wanted to come back. And an awful lot of them did come back after the war. And we just began to a, really grow.

STENGEL: You saw that change here...

PYLE: Oh yes.

STENGEL: ...in Tempe. It came here to this area?

PYLE: Here to this area. And at that time you know a, we'd gotten to be kind of like this now, but at that time it was all over the Valley here where everybody came and we, it started to grow everywhere around here.

STENGEL: Fast? Fast growth. And the impact on the schools?

PYLE: Was bad. It was really bad because we had no, really not much a, a, Indian, we had so many Indians, and they don't pay any tax really you know. We don't get anything from them particularly. And so we are handicapped. We have nothing really to a, the a, I guess the visitors is all we have really, uh huh, that a, we get any, really any a, a, money from, really.

STENGEL: Speaking of tourists, do, were there any shops, tourist shops or

curio shops that you remember in, in a, downtown Tempe?

PYLE: Oh, a, we had a few. But not, nothing really to draw trade to.

STENGEL: That was, was that, it wasn't, was that a big kind of . . . .

PYLE: No, no, it wasn't. We just didn't have anything. We just sort of lived as ourselves, you know, as a little, little community really. And then it began to grow after the war. And we still didn't have many. When you came we didn't have many, did we?

STENGEL: No, no.

PYLE: And a, so it was just really, uh huh. A great deal.

STENGEL: Yeah. Yeah. Were you involved in your husband's political activities?

PYLE: Oh, not any more than I could help.

STENGEL: Was that something you preferred not to have been involved in or . . .

PYLE: I don't like politics.

STENGEL: Oh.

PYLE: That's beyond me. It was nice. But a, I, I don't a, I don't like the people that follow around. Let's see, how do I want to say it? I am what I am. And I don't go around and [pat you on the back] you because you're so and so. I'm, I, I just am a person. Well, you know, that's what you get when you get in politics. People come up to you that wouldn't wipe their feet on you ordinarily, but they come up and act like they're your bosom friends. And I can't stand that. And you can tell them as far as you can see them that they're coming and what they're going to do. And I don't like that at all.

STENGEL: It's a different, it's a different life.

PYLE: Oh completely.

STENGEL: And so when, when your husband was involved in that you tended to stay at home as much as you could?

PYLE: No, I went with him.

STENGEL: You went with him?

PYLE: You had to. And, but, and, they didn't speak about my clothes.

STENGEL: Uh huh, you were . . . .

PYLE: You, you read about the clothes last week, didn't you, in the paper?

[In June 1987, Florence Mecham, Governor Evan Mecham's spouse was criticized in an Arizona Republic gossip column for her dress.]

STENGEL: No, I didn't read that.

PYLE: Anyway, everybody was very nice to us. And, very nice. And we knew most everybody. A, just because we'd been here so long. And Howard was in radio and did all these things and was, and we always were, went to everything they had. And so, it was nice. The people were nice.

STENGEL: You left the politicking to him.

PYLE: Oh brother! Yes. I did really. But it was very nice. [Next reference is to the video technician, Scott Pfister: We knew his grandmother in Prescott. And his father was a little boy.]

STENGEL: Oh my goodness. Now you were involved, you, did you live in Prescott?

PYLE: No. No, but, you know, you went all over the state then. Uh huh.

STENGEL: Scott's family goes way back \_\_\_\_\_.

PYLE: Oh yes, uh huh. A long time.

STENGEL: [Reference to the interview: And you got that out. I'm sorry.] Is there anything else that, that . . . . I've really gotten such a good flavor of your life in Tempe and..

PYLE: Well, it was a, I don't, I don't think so. I don't know what it would



be that would be of interest.

STENGEL: Well, I really appreciate your spending time with me. I've, I've thoroughly enjoyed it.

PYLE: Well.

STENGEL: Gotten a whole different glimpse of, of Tempe.

PYLE: Well, Tempe was a good place.

STENGEL: I'll never forget now the watercress. I'll never be able to go down and cross that river without thinking of that watercress.

PYLE: Well, it the river came and went right around the buttes, you know, there, the way, where they park and everything. It came right around the butte. And for a place about a, oh wide as out to the street maybe, was where these a, willows would grow. And all that down underneath was little water, you know.

STENGEL: I bet it was lovely.

PYLE: Oh yes, it was.

STENGEL: It was a river then.

PYLE: Yes, it was.

STENGEL: Must have been beautiful.

PYLE: Yes, it was. And you were not afraid to wade in it. It was a, I don't know why you weren't, but you weren't.

STENGEL: You didn't, you don't remember any quicksand...

PYLE: No, no, no.

STENGEL: ...any difficulty, at least not in that area?

PYLE: No, no, huh uh, no. No. None.

STENGEL: Well thank you very much. I really appreciate...

PYLE: You're welcome. [reference to interview]

END SIDE FOUR