AGNES DILL, Tiwa
October 12, 1975
Isleta, New Mexico
Part I

This transcript is one of a series of interviews with American Indian people throughout much of the United States by S. I. Myers of the History Department of St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley, St. Louis, Missouri, 63135.

The purpose of these interviews is to bring the Indian peoples' own comments to students in classrooms, and to foster greater understanding among the peoples of the United States by providing Indians the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions to a wider audience.

This transcript has been edited for clarity and ease of reading, but every effort has been made to preserve the original feeling. Conversations and opinions were encouraged on any subject of interest to interviewees; questions and responses do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the interviewer, the National Endowment for the Humanities, or St. Louis Community College.

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Part 1
Sam Myers:

Today we are just south of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and we're talking to Mrs. Agnes Dill. Mrs. Dill, what is your pueblo?

Agnes Dill:

Isleta Pueblo. However I belong to two tribes. My father was from Laguna Pueblo west of here, and my mother is from this pueblo.

SM: Do you take your mother's tribe as primary?

AD: That's because my father was already living here when he married my mother.

SM: Did he join the Isleta Pueblo then?

AD: Yes.

SM: Were you born here at Isleta Pueblo?

AD: Yes, I was born here.

SM: Would it be correct to say that you are an Isleta Indian?

AD: It's Tiwa [Te-wa] Sometimes historians spell it Tiqua, or Tigua. I've seen it spelled all three ways.

SM: Would it be right to say that you're a Tiwa Indian, a member of the Isleta Pueblo?

AD: Right.

SM: And Tiwa is also a linguistic group?
AD: Of course we're divided really by language groups, and because we speak the Tiwa tongue or dialect, we're classed as Tiwas. So we're called Tiwas. There's also Tewas, Keresan and the Towa.

SM: Those are the major languages, and then the Zunis are a separate language again.

AD: They're all alone, and so is Towa. The Jemez people are the only ones in that linguistic group.

SM: I think you can really help us greatly, because you know these things that are vague, and it's hard to find them in books or doing research.

AD: Well, I've spent almost a lifetime studying my own history, Indian history, as well as Mexican history.

SM: And you've taught it also?

AD: Not exactly. I taught school. I taught elementary grades first, little first and second graders and beginners, fourth and fifth, and then when I was teaching in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, I decided I wanted to take up weaving. They had a wonderful weaving department at Sequoyah Indian School in Tahlequah where I was teaching first and second grade. So I went over to the weaving teacher, Mr. Ames, who was from Buffalo, New York, and asked him if he would teach me how to weave on my spare time, when I wasn't teaching, or week-ends or any time. He said, "Why don't you go ask a number of ladies. If we can get a group of women I can have a class after school or at night." I went out and rounded up everybody, I think I started 20 women, but I was the only one who stayed. When I first started teaching school I said I wasn't gonna teach more than five years in any one school. This was under the Civil Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I had seen so many of the teachers just stay and
stay and stay in one school till they just became dormant. I mean, they just didn't care any more. So it was the end of my fifth year at Tahlequah when I went to Mr. Ames and I told him I was gonna go to summer school, because I wanted to get a transfer, that I was ready to move on to another school. And while I was talking to him, a telegram came to him from the superintendent at Chilocco in northern Oklahoma, north of Ponca City. So he says, "Here's your transfer." And I said, "What is it?" He said Mr. Corral wants an arts and crafts teacher. I said, "I don't know any arts and crafts, I can't teach arts and crafts. I've never had any courses in arts and crafts." He said, "You can do it." It was mostly weaving anyway. And he had always told me, "Why don't you transfer from academic to arts and crafts?" So finally I said I'd love to go to Chilocco, and he said, "Go on up there, go talk to Mr. Corral." I said, "If you think I can do it, Mr. Ames, I'll try. With your help I can try." He said, "You can do it, I know you can. You know enough about it that you can teach it." So I sent a telegram to Mr. Corral at Chilocco, and he wanted me to come up there for an interview. So I went up there, and he told me that there were four or five applications or names sent in by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and he said my name was at the very top, usually that is the one that was recommended the highest. So he interviewed me and took me to the arts and crafts place. He said to go and talk to Mr. Beatty, he was the director of Indian education, the big top one, and he said, "Tell him that you're hired." So I transferred that year, and I taught arts and crafts at Chilocco.

SM: Agnes, I want to go back now and fill in a few things here. You were born in this pueblo here, and did you go to school here as a child?

AD: No. My father worked in the Santa Fe railroad shops in Winslow, Arizona, after I was born, and that's where he and my mother moved to when I was just a baby, and then I lived there till I was of school age right with my parents. We are seven children, and my mother always came home to have the children here, so that they would be
born here on the reservation.

SM: Then that makes them automatically members of the pueblo?

AD: Oh, they would be anyway, but she wanted them born here. So when I became of school age, my grandmother and grandfather wanted me to come to Paguate. That's where my paternal grandparents lived.

SM: Is that near here?

AD: That's seven miles north of Laguna Pueblo. So that's where I went to school in the kindergarten, first and second grades.

SM: Laguna is over toward Gallup?

AD: Forty miles west of Albuquerque. Right on Interstate 40. It's a beautiful little village. Well, there are seven of those Laguna villages. Old Laguna is the mother village that you see off the highway, and there's seven of them. And then Paguate is seven miles north of Laguna, and that's where my father came from, and that's where my grandparents lived. I went to school there then.

SM: Did you speak the Tiwa language?

AD: No, I never learned it. I can speak phrases, sentences, can say lots of words, and know almost everything, but I can't put it together. My mother and father don't speak the same language, so they had to talk English, and so that's what I learned. Being the oldest child, I learned English first.

SM: Then your mother spoke Isleta or Tiwa?

AD: My mother spoke Tiwa, Spanish, English and German. Four languages.
SM: And your father spoke?

AD: English, Spanish and Keresan.

SM: Keresan, which is the language of the Laguna people. Then you didn't go through that struggle of coming face to face with a blank when you spoke one language and went to school with another one.

AD: Right. I don't think I had the difficulty that a lot of children had when they started school, because when I was little, in the first and second grades, I used to get so . . . I guess frustrated is the word now, because I could read and write almost before I went to school, knew all my letters and knew all my numbers, and when I went to school, when we had those charts, flip charts, with pictures, and "I see a cat," something like that, well, I could just read and read in no time, and the other poor little students couldn't read that fast. We had to stand in a line to read the charts--and there was this girl on each side of me, and because they couldn't read, I'd get so frustrated and angry with them that I'd just stand there and pinch their hand.

SM: You were impatient with them?

AD: Very impatient. I'm still impatient with people like that, and I understand now, see, after I went to school and grew up, why I did those things, but it was really terrible. So I didn't have the struggle that a lot of Indian children had when I first went to school. I don't know whether you call that fortunate or not.

SM: Where did you go to school after that?

AD: Then I went to public school in Winslow. At the time the Santa Fe railroad went on a strike, so my father had to go on a strike, and
everybody was laid off the shop, so we came back here to live. Then I went one year down here to the Isleta day school. It was a government school. Then when I finished in the third grade here, I went to the Albuquerque Indian School when I was in the fourth grade.

SM: Did you run into any particular problems in any of these schools because you were an Indian child?

AD: No, because it was all Indians, except the public school in Winslow.

SM: Quite a number of the kids were Indians going there?

AD: Because there were so many Indians working in Winslow.

SM: So if you walked down the street in Winslow today, what would you say . . . 25% of the people are Indian, maybe half?

AD: I imagine so, but there weren't that many in those days, because there was no transportation hardly.

SM: Transportation has changed things a lot?

AD: Right.

SM: Anyway, you went on to the school in Albuquerque. Is that a high school?

AD: It's a grade school and high school. I finished high school there; I went there nine years.

SM: Was that hard to live away from home?

AD: No. I was always away from home, ever since I was little, and I
liked being away from home. Why, I don't know.

SM: So you liked that boarding school?

AD: I think everybody should have a boarding school experience, dormitory life experience. It's one of the greatest things. Nine years I went to school there, and you just become like a family, brothers and sisters, even going to school with the same people for that many years almost.

SM: How many students were there?

AD: A thousand students at the time I was there. Our Indian schools were all under the American military system, until Roosevelt came in, in 1932. I think '33 was the last of the military system in the Indian schools, where we had to wear uniforms, march, drill, just like soldiers. I was captain of Company B when I graduated.

SM: They had both girls and boys at the school, didn't they?

AD: Yes, it was co-educational. In the winter we had blue serge skirts and middies with a red tie, and in the summertime we had the white middies with a red tie.

SM: Could you wear your hair the way you liked?

AD: Yes, any way you wanted.

SM: Did the boys have to have their hair cut if it was long?

AD: Yes. Most of them had short hair.

SM: I have a picture of a group of Apache students as they were being
sent off to Carlyle.

AD: That's where my father went.

SM: And then there's a picture taken about six weeks later, after they had reached Carlyle, had their hair cut, been dressed up in these uniforms. It's really quite a change.

AD: This blanket here went to Carlyle, with my father and my uncle. That's my father up there. I guess they were afraid he might get cold or something, so it went to Carlyle, and they brought it back. It's a wonder they didn't lose it. Then I went nine years, and I graduated from Albuquerque with a high school diploma.

SM: And then?

AD: During our last few months in school they sent somebody from Washington, D.C., to test any of the students wanting to go to college. So I was wanting to go so I went in for a test, and I was the only one at that very time that went to college from my class. 'Cause ever since I was in the first grade or second grade, I wanted to be a teacher. I admired teachers, for some reason I really admired them, and I thought they were the smartest people in the world.

SM: You must have run into some good ones.

AD: I did. These were practically all Indian teachers also, graduates of Haskell, when they had the teaching program there. So that was my lifetime ambition, and I pursued it all the days that I was going to high school, I wanted to be a teacher.

SM: That's unusual.

AD: I know, I know. This is what I wanted to do. So when they asked
me what I wanted to go to college for, this is what I told them. At that time there were no scholarships, no grants, no nothing, until you proved yourself, then you could get a scholarship, a small scholarship. The government loaned us money, the Bureau of Indian Affairs. We could borrow the money, but we had to pay it back upon graduation, or if we quit we had to pay the amount of money we borrowed. So I put in an application for a loan, and got it. If it wasn't for my dad and my mother just staying right in there pushing the Bureau of Indian Affairs to give me the money, I wouldn't have never gotten it, because they take it in there and put it on the shelf and forget. So I was a week late. I got it just a week after school started, in college, so I was a week late in going to school. My father and mother took me up there on the train--my father still had a free pass--up to Las Vegas.

SM: Was he still working for the railroad?

AD: Yes, he was still working, so he got me a pass. It's now New Mexico Highlands University. At that time it was New Mexico Normal University, training teachers, and I was the first full-time Indian that went to school there. And I was the only one there for three years. Then my senior year they had two boys come there, and I think there was a girl that came there for a while my third year, but she left.

SM: That's a regular four-year school. Do they have a master's program?

AD: Uh huh.

SM: A doctorate?

AD: I don't know about a doctorate, but they had master's at that time.

SM: Did you go there then for the four years?
AD: Yes, I went there for the four years, then I went one year to the University of New Mexico.

SM: You majored in education?

AD: Right. Education, English and history.

SM: After Las Vegas, now, the Highlands University, you went to the University of New Mexico?

AD: No, I went in between. I went three years to Las Vegas and then I came over to the university. I wanted to take some courses there, or just try it out or something, so they let me come to the university, but I didn't like it, their education department. I didn't think I was getting what I wanted for teaching here at the university. So I asked if I could go back to Las Vegas and finish, so I went there and finished.

SM: That's where you got your degree then. Did you go on to school?

AD: No, I just went to summer schools. I didn't get any more degrees, that's all I got.

SM: No more degrees, but you've been learning all the rest of your life. Then you went to work teaching right away?

AD: As soon as I graduated from college, I applied and got my teaching in September of that same year, '37. I went to Oklahoma.

SM: And then followed the experience at Tahlequah and your decision not to stay any place too long?

AD: No. I was in other schools before that. Tahlequah was almost to the last. The first school I went to was to Concho, Oklahoma, on the
Cheyenne-Arapaho Reservation. That was my first school. Then I went from there to Fort Sill Indian School, in Lawton, Oklahoma, then from there I taught for a while in Pawnee--the woman had an operation, and so I went over there to work for a month. And then the next school I went to was Tahlequah, Sequoyah Indian School.

SM: So you kind of hit most of the spots of Oklahoma, went all over the state.

AD: The big schools, yes. Then I went from Tahlequah to Chilocco, that's where I met my husband, then I got married and quit teaching school.

SM: Have you ever been back to teach since?

AD: Yes, I substituted here at the day school.

SM: Was your husband teaching also up there at Chilocco?

AD: No, he was working for Continental Oil at Ponca City.

SM: Well, you haven't actually taught steadily except for substituting since you were married?

AD: Right, because we went into business. See my husband came from Tennessee--Huntington, Tennessee--and I guess he was sort of an adventuresome person too, so he left Tennessee as a very, very young man, after he finished business college in Jackson, Tennessee, and went to St. Louis, and he lived and worked in St. Louis for a while. Then he wanted to come to Oklahoma, he had a cousin in Oklahoma, so he just wandered up north, and at that time the Hundred and One Ranch was still in operation, the Fabulous Empire, they call it. He got acquainted there with the Miller brothers.
SM: Have you been out there?

AD: Yes, I've been there many times.

SM: There's nothing left much now. Can you describe it a little bit?

AD: Well, I was there when it was all gone, except the White House. The White House was still there.

SM: The house they lived in, the Miller Brothers. It was a huge ranch, and they had hundreds of people working there?

AD: Oh thousands of them, and they had all that area in fields, you know, they raised hogs, everything.

SM: They called it an empire.

AD: I have the book, *The Fabulous Empire*.

SM: And they also used to have Wild West Shows there, and bring in important visitors from all over the country.

AD: Will Rogers was there many times, because my husband knew Will Rogers, and that was where Tom Mix got his start. They said he wasn't even a cowboy, but that's the reputation he got in the movies. Then he went there and he worked for the Hundred and One Ranch, my husband did, and that's where he learned he's Indian. He's Anglo, he's not Indian, and he had a way with Indian people. Well, he was part Indian, but he found out after we were married, but his folks never told him until after we were married.

SM: What kind of Indian?
AD: Powhatan, from Virginia, and his great, great, great grandmother, whoever it is, what great it is, was taken in by a family in the late 1700's, and then they moved to Tennessee, and that's where the girl married into the Dill family, and that's where the Indian comes from. But he never knew a thing about it until he took me to his people in Tennessee, and they told him, "Well, Clarence, you married one of your own kind." And he said, "What do you mean, what are you talking about?" And they said, "Well, you know you're part Indian, don't you?" And he said, "No, I didn't know anything about it." They said, "Did your dad ever tell you?" And he said, "No, not a word." "Well, we are," he said, "we're quite a bit Indian." So he said, "Well, that explains a lot of things then." So he went to his father. His father still wouldn't admit it, that they were part Indian. And he went to see his cousin in Nashville, who was on the Grand Ole Opry, Danny Dill and Annie Lou, they were called "Sweethearts of the Grand Ole Opry." So Danny finally said, "Well, Clarence, you know we're part Indian, don't you?" And he said, "I found that out today." "Well," he said, "I knew it all the time." So that's how my husband found out he was Indian. Then he studied about Indian people and just became interested in so many things, so he decided, after the war, that he wouldn't go back to Continental, 'cause he went to the Army, and when he came back he decided he would get interested in something like this. He already had a collection of his own when he met me, and I always kid him about it, saying it wasn't him that won me over, it was his collection. So anyway, we got married then, and he started the business before we were married. He was still living in Ponca City.

SM: You had the business in Ponca City?

AD: No. When he knew we were gonna get married, he leased some land down at Edmond, Oklahoma, about 12 miles north of Oklahoma City, and he built a store there. We lived in the back and the store was in
front. So we started off from there.

SM: Was this a grocery store?

AD: No, it was an Indian store, a trading post like, all Indian goods. We had Indians from Ponca City, mostly from Ponca City and Red Rock, working for us, making all our handicrafts. We bought the material, and we just distributed the material—we cut out all the drum heads and everything, and they made the items—little tiny tepees, about three inches tall, to the big ones, and I think that really it was a wonderful thing for those people, because whole families worked at these crafts, and they earned a good deal of money. They had no jobs, they couldn't do anything else, but they did it at home. We never travelled much. We did exhibit in the Inter-tribal Indian Ceremonial in Gallup, and won quite a few things. But one of the things we did was that we always treated the Indian people fairly. If it was their article that won, the money went right to them.

SM: Do you mean some people don't do that?

AD: Oh no, no. They try to get them down to as low as they can, and then put their prices way up.

SM: Then take it to these fairs and displays, and if they win awards, not give...?

AD: I don't know if they give the money or not. There's a lot of dishonest Indian traders, now especially, that take the Indian people for all they have.

SM: Non-Indian people who are traders, or Indian people also?
AD: No, non-Indian people.

SM: And some of the traders take advantage?

AD: They've done that ever since I can remember when we used to come out here to sell. See, what we did, we shipped all over the United States, and then we'd come out here to sell Oklahoma stuff, and then we took things back to Oklahoma. And we'd go to these trading posts—that's when 66 was still pretty much, they had trading posts all along the way, and there were families of them who had trading posts. Say like the Atkinsons, there was a brother here and a brother there and a brother here and a brother there, down several miles apart. And a Navajo woman or some Indian people, usually Navajos, would bring in a blanket or a rug, and maybe one of them would say, "I'm offering you $15.00 for this rug." And the woman, of course, would say, "Oh, no, that's too little. Can you give me $25.00?" "No, I'm sorry, $15.00 is all I can give you." All right, she goes down the road and tries to sell it to this next one, but what happens is this man here phoned down there and said, "O.K., Nesba is coming down with such and such a rug. She wants $25.00, I've offered her $15.00. Stay with the $15.00." So what have you all the way down the line? She can't get what she wants. And I know that one time a lady came in there and she sold a rug, a nice rug. She wanted $25.00 for it, and the man said, "I'll give you $5.00." And he took the rug for $5.00. And she went off and right away he marked this rug and threw it right in the pile, and I think he marked it to about $50.00. Way way up there.

SM: He marked it up ten times.

AD: Ten times. And I told my husband, we were both standing there, and I told my husband, "Walk over there to that rug and look at it." So he looked at it and he just felt terrible, and I did too. 'Cause when an Indian brought anything in to our store, if they asked a
certain price, and if we couldn't give them the price, we just told them, "We're sorry, we can't give it to you, maybe you can get your price somewhere else, but I just can't give it to you right now."
And invariably they'd want to come down a little, and my husband would always say, "No, you take it wherever you can get your money, or maybe I can get it from you another time." But he'd rather have them put the price down if they wanted to, than for us to keep on doing that. But that's very, very prevalent even to this day.

SM: A trader who's been up there since 1903 in northern Navajo country said sometimes those who had learned to work in silver would bring in a coffee can full of rings and bracelets and things they had made, and trade the coffee can full for a sack of flour, coffee and a sack of sugar, and so on, without even evaluating the individual pieces.

AD: That's true. Right.

SM: Now he seemed to be very sympathetic. In fact there's a place up there named after him, and he's written books in complete sympathy with the Navajo people, so I imagine he was one of the better traders.

AD: In the old days there were some very, very good traders, and, of course, some of them have died now. There's a man still living that we used to trade with a lot that lived in Zuni for a long time, Mr. C. G. Wallace. He owns the De Anza Motel in Albuquerque, and also has a little trading post there. And he's tall like you are, slender, a very good friend of ours. He's still there. He doesn't stay there all the time, he comes there periodically, but he's an old time trader, who was very, very honest, and he still is honest to this day. We used to buy a lot of jewelry from him when we had our store.

SM: Then he would supply it to you as a trader and you would sell it as a retailer. Is that still the way most of it is sold?
AD: A lot of it is that way.

SM: The traders collect it from the various silversmiths and supply the stores?

AD: Well, right now it's such a competitive thing that anybody and everybody is doing it. They don't have any more honest dealers like they used to have, where you can go—well, maybe Tobe Turpen is still one of them, in Gallup.

SM: The Kennedys over there too?

AD: Well, I've heard so much about Mr. Kennedy lately. See, I've been working also with Mr. New on the arts and crafts board of the institute. He's the president or chairman of the arts and crafts board, and I went to one of the meetings with him last December, and we discussed this very same thing, about the rip-offs that the Indians were getting, how we could label the Indian crafts and all of this to get this thing. Mr. Kennedy is an old trader too. His father, of course, was, and he is.

SM: It's the youngest, the third generation Kennedy, who is working on this stamping and identifying all the pieces.

AD: He was at this meeting, and he got everything that we wanted to do, but there's complications on how Indian people can identify and put their trademark on real, real small articles, say like a little tiny ring. You have to have a little tiny stamp for that too, and so they say the only way we can try to stop these rip-offs and imitations, is by having some kind of a trademark.

SM: They explained that they were trying to overcome that very thing by identifying the good pieces. A trader had been robbed of $160,000
worth of jewelry, and how could you identify most of it?

AD: There's no way, and that's another thing, for identification and for preventing rip-offs and also imitations and things like that, because this country is full of imitations now; hieshe are being imported, little fetishes are being imported, and so those are the things that we discussed at this meeting.

SM: You're wearing a string of hieshe there, aren't you? Was that hand drilled?

AD: Yes, this was made in Santa Domingo.

SM: Drilled by hand with one of those old rawhide pump drills?

AD: Right.

SM: They really work, don't they? It's surprising how smoothly it does work, and it's probably about as primitive a device as you can think of, but a marvelous tool.

AD: That's all they use over there. Now they're imitating these too.

AD: There's a shop that just opened and they said it's all authentic Indian jewelry. It's right by Old Town, off Central Avenue, and I want to go there and see what they have.

SM: You can pretty well tell if it was authentic, couldn't you? How did you come to return to Isleta?

AD: We were there at Edmond on two big highways, 66 and 77, north and south 77, and 66 east and west, and we were right in the corner. There was talk about the Turner Turnpike being built, and it was just gonna miss us. So my husband was quite a businessman, he says,
"Well, we're gonna have to move, we're going to look for a new location somewhere in the eastern part, because if the turnpike comes in, it's sure going to ruin the business." So things happen to me, things just out of thin air, and with him too. Well, we had just forgotten about selling it, and so he was in Oklahoma City one day, and this man came by and he hung around and he hung around, and finally he came up—we had a cafe by then, and a service station—and he says, "Would you like to sell this place? Is this place up for sale?" And I said, "Not that I know of." And he said, "Would you like to sell it?" I said, "I don't know whether we would or not. My husband isn't here right now, he's the one to talk to." And he says, "When is he coming?" "Sometime this evening," I said. And he says, "O.K., I'll just wait for him." I said, "It's gonna be a long wait." So he said, "O.K., I'll just leave and I'll come back." So he came back and he talked to C. A., and C. A. says, "Do you want a sell?" He asked me. And I said, "I don't know, do you? It's up to you, you're the man." So he says, "We'll talk it over tonight and you come back in the morning." So we talked it over that night, and he says, "I'll ask a certain price and if he gives it to me, then I'll sell it. This might be the best chance that we have here to sell, with somebody really wanting to buy, instead of us going to them." So he came back the next morning and he gave him the price. He says, "O.K., I'll take it." So it just worked out real nice. So we moved into town while we were looking for a place in the east. We just rented a big house to move our wholesale business over there. We had a wholesale and retail.

SM: So you were supplying other dealers around the country?

AD: We sold all over the United States. We moved our wholesale supply up there, everything, and sold the store to these people. Well, they kind of cheapened it, they put in a snake pit and all of that kind of stuff. They were from Texas. Then we finally found this place in
Vinita, east of Vinita, Oklahoma, on the Craig and Delaware County line. Vinita is 75 miles northeast of Tulsa, or 75 miles or 50, something like that northeast of Claremore.

SM: Is that on 66 again?

AD: Yes, 66, 60 and 69. There were three federal highways there.

SM: Did you build a place there?

AD: Uh huh, we built a place all by ourselves. My husband built all the cabinets, everything. By that time we had a huge museum. We had bought a collection in Kingfisher from a man who had been collecting since the day of the run, 1889. And so we bought his huge collection.

SM: Most of this would emphasize Oklahoma Indian people?

AD: Well, Oklahoma Indian people, and not only that, he had some old, old stuff, Pueblo stuff. Any time we heard of a collection we went and bought it. We had pottery from the Hohokam, clear down there, mound builders, Spiro, Oklahoma, and all of that places, and baskets, about 200 baskets from throughout the United States, and I don't know how many sets of clothes, buckskin and those old broadcloth dresses, and beautiful beaded men's suits, I don't know how many war bonnets, cradles, oh it was huge. Smithsonian and the North American Indian Museum, New York, came down and saw our collection, and said, "My, you have a fabulous collection. You have some here that we don't even have in our museums." And so, when we were leaving, Mr. Dach-statter came down from the American Indian Museum in New York City, and bought quite a few things before we left. I was in New York in July. I visited him over there at the museum.

SM: Did the Smithsonian get any of your things?
AD: They wanted us to donate it to them.

SM: But the other one, they would buy it?

AD: Um hm. Then when we moved to Vinita, we built a fort-like thing there, my husband and I, and we named it Fort Cherokee. There was no Fort Cherokee, but we just thought of that name, and tourists would come by there, and they'd say, "Oh, I remember reading about Fort Cherokee in history." I said, "Oh yes, it was a great fort."

SM: So you had a museum there and a shop?

AD: A museum and a shop and a service station and restaurant.

SM: Did you still have your wholesale business going?

AD: Wholesale, um hm.

SM: Busy people.

AD: Right. We worked about 14, 16, 18 hours a day, just the two of us. In the summertime we hired help. We took in students from broken homes, or homes—we had one court case, a girl, and she stayed with us—and they lived with us just like a family, and we sent them to school, sent them to college, and some of them took and some of them didn't take. Some of them quit on the way.

SM: Did you pay their tuition?

AD: No, the government gave them their tuition, I think we paid one her tuition. They earned while they were living with us. We paid them because they worked, so we saw that they saved all that money so they could have something to spend in school, and we bought their
things that they needed, like sheets, and whatever they had to have at school, we bought all of that for them when they went to school. They still keep in touch with me, even to this day. They're married and have families now.

SM: That was in Vinita?

AD: Vinita, um hm. These were students from the schools that I taught in, from Tahlequah and from Chilocco. We didn't exactly know them, but we knew the teachers and the matrons and the superintendents, and we'd ask for certain girls, or certain ones that would like to just come and stay for the summer.

SM: How long did you have the place there?

AD: We went there in '52, and we left there in '63, almost 11 years. My husband became ill. He was real tall and slender. He thought he had asthma, and he said we were just going to have to go to Albuquerque, and he went out to the Loveless Clinic for an examination, and they found out he had emphysema. So the doctor told him he can't go back to live in Oklahoma any more, it was too humid, so we sold out. We packed up our museum and sold our retail goods and everything, and closed up and moved out here, and that's how I got back to Isleta.

SM: Then you moved here to this house?

AD: No, I lived with my sister, that's our family place, and my sister was living in the house and she got married while we were here, so we rented a trailer house, and we lived right over here in the same yard, and then my husband became quite ill. I never did like the trailer house, so he says, "Why don't you build you a house, you don't like the trailer house anyway?" He knew I was gonna do some things, so I did. From '63 on we went back to Oklahoma in the summertime to take care of business, then in the wintertime we went to
Arizona, to a warmer place.

SM: Where did you go there?

AD: We went to Patagonia, down south of Tucson, about 60 miles south of Tucson, and about 20 miles north of Nogales, so that's where we spent most of our time until '67 when he really became so ill that he couldn't travel too much. He was on oxygen for a long time. We hauled that big tank of oxygen in the back of the car, and he had a Byrd machine that he used for this thing. About the fall of '69 he discovered a lump on his side, and I took him to the doctor--he was always going to the doctor anyway--they admitted him to the hospital, and they operated and it was cancer. So he lived a year after that, and then he passed away, December 1st, 1970.

SM: About five years ago. Then, in the meantime, you had built this house?

AD: I was still living in the trailer house when he died. It was being built.

SM: So then here you are in the Isleta Pueblo now. Do you know how the pueblo got its name?

AD: You know that Coronado came through here in 1540. Well, he found all of these pueblos along here. Pueblo is a Spanish word, it means town or village, and he said, "Oh, these are town and village Indians, or pueblo Indians." So that's a generalization. So when they saw Isleta, they saw sort of an islet or isslet, whatever you want to call it, the Rio Grande sort of surrounding it, so they said, "Oh, this is an island or an islet." They named the village Isleta.

SM: So even the name here is a Spanish one. What did the Indians call the pueblos before they took on the Spanish word?
AD: The original name is Shia-whib-ac. I don't know just what the translation is. Charles F. Lummis, who lived here in Isleta for years, and was taken into the clan, says it means a knife-like ridge, or a stick used to play whib. Whib was an Indian game where you put the stick on the ground, and then you ran a race and kicked it. Shia is knife. And you see they said that Isleta used to be on that mesa over there. The highway cut some of it off. I sure hated to do that. And that's how Isleta got its name.

Part II of this interview appears on a separate transcript.