

The Arizona Report

MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDIES & RESEARCH CENTER • THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA • FALL 2001 VOL. 5, No. 2

Border Academy Travels to Lower Rio Grande Valley *Medical professionals and students attend diabetes seminar in South Texas*

Diabetes, its effects, and methods of treatment and prevention were closely examined at the 2001 Border Academy that took place last July in McAllen, Texas.

Type II diabetes, also known as Adult Onset and Non-Insulin Dependent diabetes, is most common among Hispanics, Native Americans, and African Americans. The disease is widespread in the border region, and is approaching epidemic status in the United States, said several Border Academy speakers.

The intensive four-day seminar was hosted by Texas A&M University's South Texas Center for Rural Public Health, and sponsored by the Arizona Hispanic Center of Excellence (AHCOE), which is part of the University of Arizona College of Medicine. Physicians from both the U.S. and Mexico spoke on a range of topics related to diabetes, including renal function, vision loss, neonatal health, treatment measures, and prevention strategies.

Dr. Maria Alen, a clinical consultant for the South Texas Center for Rural Public Health and former chair of the Texas Diabetes Council, was instrumental in organizing the 2001 Academy, now in its fourth year.

The sessions were attended by about 30 people, including physicians, health professionals, and medical students from the University of Arizona, the University of Texas Medical Branch at



Blanca Juarez of Colonias Unidas talks to Border Academy participants about issues facing residents of the impoverished colonias in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Colonias Unidas is a grassroots non-profit organization dedicated to serving colonia residents.

Photo by Tom Gelsinon

Galveston, Stanford University, and Temple University.

Type II diabetes can be prevented or delayed by adhering to a diet that is low in fat and refined sugars, and by exercising regularly. Several Academy speakers noted that 80 percent or more of Type II cases are preventable through diet and exercise. Those over age 40, and overweight persons have the highest risk of developing the disease.

The Border Academy included a one-day tour of Mexican and U.S. health care facilities, and several immigrant *colonias* on the U.S. side of the border. Colonia is Spanish for neighborhood, but in the Texas border region "it refers to a residential development

lacking such basics as potable water, wastewater systems, paved streets, adequate drainage, proper

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MAS Graduates Aiming to Serve Latino Community



Ada Wilkinson-Lee

Could you provide a little information on your background?

I'm from Douglas, which is a border town in the Southeast corner of Arizona, and it actually borders Agua Prieta, Sonora. When first started thinking about college, I wanted to stay close to home and I wanted to go to a university that was well-known in the sciences. And so to me the UA was the best place. Initially I came in as a Pre-Med student. I have a bachelor of science in Molecular and Cellular Biology, and I also have a bachelor of arts in Mexican American Studies.

What made you change from Pre-Med?

Dr. (Antonio) Estrada. I took his Latino Health class — I think it was my junior or senior year, and got really interested in what he was doing. I had never even heard of public health. So, I talked to him and I decided that (Public Health) was a better fit for me.

What led you to major in MAS? What strand did you focus on?

I started taking Mexican American Studies classes as a relief, almost, from science classes, just because they interested me and I wanted to learn more about my culture and the history of Mexican

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Earlier this summer, The Arizona Report interviewed two graduates of the Mexican American Studies Master of Science program in Latino Health to find out what led them to enroll in the program, and how they planned to use their degrees. The students, Lisa Lapeyrouse and Ada Wilkinson-Lee, have distinguished themselves as scholars, and each received campus-wide recognition in the Spring 2001 semester.

Wilkinson-Lee won the “Best Master’s Project” award presented by the UA Graduate and Professional Student Council in April, and Lapeyrouse won the “Outstanding Graduate Student Leader” award

presented by the UA Center for Student Involvement and Leadership in March. In the fall, Lapeyrouse will enter the doctoral program in Public Health at the University of Michigan, while Wilkinson-Lee begins work on a doctorate in Family Studies and Human Development here at the University of Arizona.

Wilkinson-Lee was interviewed at the offices of the Mexican American Studies & Research Center. Lapeyrouse sent in her responses via e-mail correspondence.



Lisa Lapeyrouse

Could you provide a little information on your background?

I was born and raised in San Jose, California. I obtained my undergraduate degree from the University of California, Davis. There, I majored in Women and Gender Studies with an emphasis in reproductive health issues of Chicana and Latina women. I also minored in Native American Studies—both of which have been invaluable to me studying here in southern Arizona!

What led you to major in MAS? What strand did you focus on?

During my senior year at UC Davis, I wrote an honors thesis on the untold stories of children born to teen parents. This project really focused my interest in studying more about adolescent pregnancy in my community and, what a great mentor of mine has termed, the “racialization of reproduction.” This area critically examines topics such as teenage pregnancy from health, cultural, feminist, and political perspectives. Coming to Arizona to study in MAS was a logical move. The program concentration in health issues among Latinos was a perfect match for my interests. Also, the fact that it is the only program nationwide to offer a

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Center faculty author book on health issues

MASRC Director Adela de la Torre and Professor Antonio Estrada are the authors of *Mexican Americans and Health: ¡Sana! ¡Sana!*, published by the University of Arizona Press.*

As noted by the Press:

Mexican Americans and Health explains how the health of Mexican-origin people is often related to sociodemographic conditions and genetic factors, while historical and political factors influence how Mexican Americans enter the health care system and how they are treated once they access it. It considers such issues as occupational hazards for Mexican-origin agricultural workers—including pesticide poisoning, heat-related conditions, and musculoskeletal disorders—and women's health concerns, such as prenatal care, preventable cancers, and domestic violence.

The authors clearly discuss the health status of Mexican Americans relative to the rest of the U.S. population, interweaving voices of everyday people to explain how today's most pressing health issues have special relevance to the Mexican American community. . . .

The book also addresses concerns of Mexican Americans regarding the health care system. These include not only access to care and to health insurance but also the shortage of bilingual and bicultural health care professionals. . . .

This timely book gives readers a broad understanding of these complex issues and points the way toward a healthier future for all people of Mexican origin.

Mexican Americans and Health is one of the first volumes in the UA Press series **The Mexican American Experience**, a cluster of modular texts designed to provide greater flexibility in undergraduate education. Each book deals with a single topic concerning the Mexican American population. Instructors can create a semester-length course from any combination of volumes, or may choose to use one or two volumes to complement other texts.

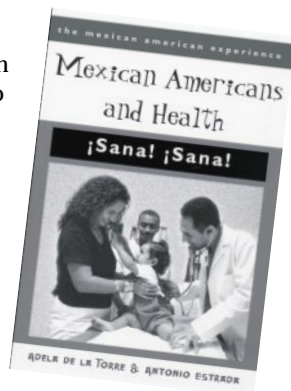
Available through the UA Press
(520) 621-1441
uapress@uapress.arizona.edu
www.uapress.arizona.edu

"The unfortunate fact is that there are relatively few health care professionals of Mexican descent. Thus, it is incumbent on us to pursue a dual strategy of educating all health care professionals in the area of cultural competency while increasing the pool of qualified Hispanic health care professionals. As the Mexican-origin population in the Southwest and other parts of the country continues to grow, bettering its health and access to health care is vital to the overall health of the nation."

— From the Introduction by Adela de la Torre and Antonio Estrada

Mexican Americans and Health: 190 pp./ 2001/ Paper (0-8165-1976-5)/ \$14.95.

* The subtitle refers to the *dicho* "Sana sana/ colita de rana/ si no sanas hoy/ sanarás mañana" (Get well, get well/ Little frog tail/ If today you don't get well/ Tomorrow you will be well) — a traditional saying recited to comfort a child while rubbing the site of a pain or injury.



Carvajal Leads Teen Substance Use Study

MASRC Associate Research Professor Scott Carvajal is heading a new project that will investigate adolescent substance abuse. The project, titled "Determinants of Latino/Euro American Youths' Substance Use," has been approved for funding by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

The aim of the two-year study is to identify factors contributing to substance use by Latino and Euro American youth, two adolescent groups at high risk for using various drugs.

Major objectives of this study are to test a causal model predicting tobacco, marijuana and other substance use, and to test hypotheses linking cultural orientation and other socio-cultural factors to adolescent substance use.

The aims will be accomplished through secondary data analyses of cohorts from two studies—the Middle School Healthy Kids and Tobacco Survey (N=1622), and the Add Health Study (N=12,118). The former was led by Carvajal; the latter is a national study of adolescent health sponsored by NIDA and other federal agencies.

AZR

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Book Review

Tucson's Mexican American Artisans and Folk Art Portrayed in *Hecho a Mano*

by Tom Gelsinon

For more than 30 years, Jim Griffith has been investigating the cultures of the *Pimería Alta*, a large geographic area comprising the northern state of Sonora, Mexico, and Southern Arizona. An anthropologist by training, he has amassed a large amount of information on Mexican, Mexican American, and Native American history and traditions. *Hecho a Mano*, written in a highly readable, non-academic style, documents the arts noted in the title, their history in Tucson, and their relationship to the city's Mexican American community.

Those of us who are interested in Tucson's history and cultures are lucky that Griffith has been busy documenting the unique features of the region's folk arts. Among the interesting things he has found is that all the stores specializing in *paletas* (frozen fruit bars) in Phoenix and Tucson share a connection to the Mexican state of Michoacán. He also points out that the baroque style serves as a model for the low rider aficionados who cruise South Sixth Avenue today just as it did for the builders of San Xavier Mission in the eighteenth century.

Hecho a Mano has three chapters: The Community, The Arts, and Patterns and Processes. In the first, Griffith introduces readers to Tucson's traditional arts, which date back to 1775, when the Spanish *presidio*, or cavalry fort, was established near the current site of city hall. As Tucson heads into the 21st century as a sprawling Sunbelt city on the make, the traditional arts remain, as do the descendents of the original craftsmen and women, who were of Spanish, Mexican, and Native American origin.

One of the first artists we meet is the late Raúl Vásquez, a black-

smith whose work from a half century ago can be seen at San Xavier in the snake-shaped handles on the mission's front door and other wrought iron embellishments at the church. We soon meet famous songwriter and musician Lalo Guerrero, who was born in Tucson's Barrio Viejo in 1916, and Mexican-born Nicolás Segura, founder of the Poblano Hot Sauce Company, who got his start in the 1920s.

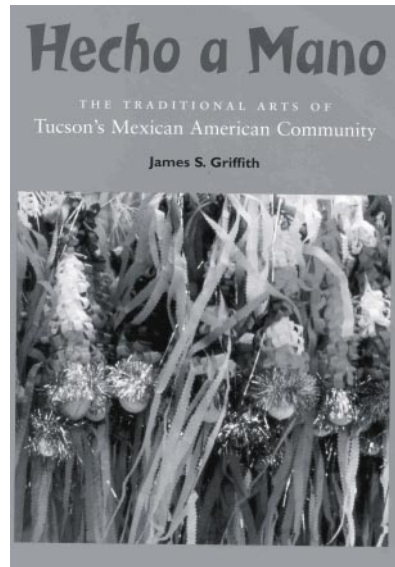
The three sections of the second chapter are titled *el hogar* (the

Hecho a Mano: The Traditional Arts of Tucson's Mexican American Community by James S. Griffith.

The University of Arizona Press, 2000
105 pages; 24 color plates; 27 b & w half tones; Includes bibliographical references and index.

home), *el taller* (the workshop), and *la comunidad* (the community). The objects made in these different locations, from knitted works to neon lights, all contribute to the community in their practical value, as cultural enrichment, or both. In the short final chapter Griffith touches on the themes of religion and ethnic identity, and the cross cultural connections that have made these crafts a "rich and complex body of art."

Hecho a Mano is a result of the exhibition, "*La cadena que no se corta: las artes tradicionales de la*



comunidad méxico-americana de Tucson," which Griffith and folklorist Cynthia Vidaurri presented at the University of Arizona Museum of Art in 1996.

The book is not a buyer's guide. As the author notes, "[it] is intended to serve as a report of what the traditional arts of

Tucson's Mexican American community looked like at a certain time to a specific group of investigators."

The foreword is by Tucson author Patricia Preciado Martin, who aptly sums up the book's subject: "It is an expressed exuberance that arises spontaneously from the wellsprings of heritage, history, culture, and spirituality that is boundless."

Hecho a Mano offers ample evidence of how folk artists create the practical, celebratory, and religious objects that enrich the entire community. In a very few pages, Griffith and noted photographers José Galvez and David Burckhalter acquaint us with a central part of Tucson's Mexican and Chicano cultures. It is a sensitive and instructive presentation of the work and people involved in Tucson's traditional arts.

AZR

This review will appear in Volume 5 of the *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies*, published by the UA Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese.



Border Academy from page 1

house construction and standard mortgage financing,” according to the Las Colonias Project of Southwest Texas State University. The tour was organized by the Texas A&M Center for Housing and Urban Development, Colonias Program, and conducted by Dr. Mario M. Jiménez of the Family Health Center in Rio Grande City, Texas.

The clinical sessions took place at El Milagro Clinic, a community medical center in McAllen that serves the indigent and uninsured patients and educates public health professionals.

The Border Academy featured clinical presentations by:

Dr. V.K. Piziak, Chief of Endocrinology, Scott and White Hospital and Clinic;
 Dr. Salil Mangi of South Texas Kidney Specialists;
 Dr. Luis G. Hernández Zarco, Chief of the Nephrology Department at Reynosa (Mexico) Regional Hospital;
 Dr. Victor H. Gonzalez of the Dept. of Ophthalmology at the University of Texas at San Antonio;
 Dr. Virgilio Morales-Canton of the Mexican Association for the Prevention of Blindness in Mexico City;

Dr. William J. Riley, Vice-President of Medical Education, Driscoll Children’s Hospital;
 Dr. Charles A. Reasner II, Chief of Endocrinology at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio;
 Dr. José de Jesus Gómez Alarcón, Past President and Founder of Mexico’s Northeast

Type II Diabetes

High Risk:

- ✓ Overweight
- ✓ Family history of diabetes
- ✓ Over age 40

Prevention:

- ✓ Early Screening
- ✓ Low-fat, High-fiber Diet
- ✓ Exercise

Association of Gynecology and Obstetrics; and Dr. Cristela Hernández of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Type II diabetes accounts for 90 to 95 percent of diabetes cases nationally, and is an underlying

cause of significantly higher mortality rates in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, according to the Texas Dept. of Health. It is the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S., as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC report, *Chronic Diseases and Their Risk Factors*, also notes that diabetes may be underreported on death certificates, both as a condition and as a cause of death.

Approximately 16 million Americans have diabetes, and as many as five million are unaware that they have it, according to the American Diabetes Association.



From Top: Dr. William Riley of Driscoll Children’s Hospital; Drs. Cristela Hernández and José de Jesús Gómez Alarcón answer questions about gestational diabetes; Dr. Virgilio Morales-Canton (left) and Dr. Victor Gonzalez delivered presentations on the effects diabetes has on vision; Keynote speaker Dr. Charles Reasner; AHCOE Director Adela de la Torre addresses Border Academy participants at reception; El Milagro Clinic in McAllen, where most of the medical presentations took place.

Online Information

Texas Dept. of Health, Texas Diabetes Council
www.tdh.state.tx.us/diabetes/tdc.htm

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
www.cdc.gov/health/diabetes.htm

Las Colonias Project, Southwest Texas State Univ.
www.swt.edu/humanresources/lascalonias

The Diabetes Mall
www.diabetesnet.com

Telemedicine Study Funded by Health Care Financing Administration

MASRC Director Adela de la Torre is the Co-Principal Investigator on a \$249,000 grant from the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) that will fund a study on telemedicine use in Arizona.

Dr. Ana María López, Medical Director of the Arizona Telemedicine Program at the Arizona Health Sciences Center, is heading the project, titled

“Understanding the Role of Culture in the Access and Utilization of Telemedicine Health Services Among Hispanic, Native Americans, and White Non Hispanic Populations.” The project received funding earlier this year.

The aim is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the effect of culture on access and utilization of telemedicine services by evaluating the overall utilization

profile of the different ethnic populations, and the impact these services have on the quality of care. To achieve this end, the researchers will conduct a two-year community-based intervention evaluation study to identify key differences across the three targeted groups, and assess the role of cultural competency in the delivery of telemedicine services. *AZR*

Wilkinson-Lee from page 2

Americans. When I ended up my senior year, it turned out that I had enough credits to get both degrees. But the intention wasn't to get two degrees. I was just taking the MAS classes for enjoyment.

What are the most important things you have learned as a result of following this curriculum?

The interesting thing about the MAS program is that it's interdisciplinary, so you learn a lot in different concentrations. You learn a lot about history. You learn about anthropology. You learn about the (Latino) health component. So you get a well-rounded picture of the Latino community and what's going on out there. Even though my concentration was Latino Health, I realized that the core classes that I took helped me expand my knowledge, so I'm not just focused on Latino Health. I can see the overall picture of the community and I think that's real important when dealing with health issues. You have to look at the overall community to be able to assess it correctly.

Most interesting? Most useful?

The class that I found most interesting was “Multi-Cultural Health Beliefs.” We think we know how to be multicultural, but the class (showed) how people have biases and how hard you

have to work at being multicultural. You come in thinking “Oh I know it all,” and you find out that you have a lot of work ahead of you.

The most useful I would have to say is probably not one of the most interesting classes, but the Research Methods class that I took through the Public Health Dept. (taught by Dr. Eng) shows you how to complete a research proposal and how to do it in a correct manner. He takes you, step by step, through it . . . It's a very systematic way of learning how to write well and how to present your findings.

Where are you headed now?

The Ph.D. program here at the UA in Family Studies and Human Development.

What are your present goals?

Ultimately, I would like to teach, to be a professor at a university. I feel it's really important for Latinos who are getting a higher education to be role models, and to be in those positions as mentors . . . If (my studies) led me to a research position focusing on Latinos, that would be fine as well . . . I tend to focus on Latinas because I feel that there's not a lot of research on the topic.

How will your degrees in MAS help you achieve those goals?

Well, with both degrees what I

realize is that they've given me that strong background of knowing the community — that I have a better overall sense of what the community looks like. And so my goal in the future is to be able to use that knowledge to adequately address important health issues. And I've learned that when you do research in the community it's always good to get input from the community, because you want to work for people, not against them.

Do you have any advice for new or younger students?

Really begin thinking about what you want to do in the future, and start setting goals for yourself. Sometimes when people come to the university as undergrads the only thing they want to do is graduate, and I would say that you need to start looking into graduate schools as soon as you come in — to really start thinking “what do I want to do?” If you want to get an advanced degree then start looking at what it is that you need to do. If that means getting good grades and starting a GRE or LSAT or whatever (preparation) program, do that early on. Think about going beyond a bachelor's or even a master's degree, because we need those numbers, we need more representation in those fields — in every field. I think we can't let perceived or set barriers get in our way. Stay focused on what it is you want to attain. *AZR*

Degrees Awarded by Ethnicity & Gender at the University of Arizona 1999 - 2000

Degree	Black Non-Hispanic		Hispanic		White Non-Hispanic		Amer. Indian / Alaskan Native		Asian or Pacif. Islander	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Bachelors	46	66	267	431	1,588	1,904	34	65	111	138
Masters	11	9	29	46	365	483	12	10	19	23
Doctorate	2	0	9	6	141	114	0	0	4	7
Specialist	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	0
Pharmacy	0	0	3	2	13	23	0	1	3	10
Medicine	1	0	6	7	25	22	2	1	5	6
Law	3	2	14	8	53	58	2	3	7	3
Total by Gender	63	78	328	500	2,186	2,607	50	81	149	187
Total by Ethnicity	141		828		4,793		131		336	

In 1999-2000, a total of 6,906 individuals—3,678 women and 3,228 men—graduated from the University of Arizona. Source: *2000-01 University of Arizona Fact Book* (p. 57) published by the UA Decision and Planning Support Office. Available online at: www.daps.arizona.edu. “Nonresident Alien,” and “Race/Ethnicity Unknown” categories not included in above table.

Lapeyrouse from page 2

Masters in Mexican American Studies in Latino Health, made the choice to apply and come here easy.

What are the most important things you have learned as a result of following this curriculum?

One of the most important skills I have gained from studying in MAS is developing an understanding of community and community-based research.

Learning how language, culture and acculturation, and immigration create communities has been significant to my studies as these are all areas that greatly affect the health status of Chicano and Latino communities.

Most interesting? Most useful?

If I had to select the most interesting and useful information I have learned while studying here, it would have to be the fact that the health literature on Chicano and Latino populations is severely limited. Despite our growing population and our historical and continued residence

in the Southwest and elsewhere, we are under-researched and underserved by the health care system. This means that there is a lot of work out there to be done. So, hopefully I will have many job offers when I am finally through with my studies!

Where are you headed now?

In the Fall of 2001, I will begin a doctoral program in the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan. My new department, Health Behavior and Health Education, offers an interdepartmental concentration on women and reproductive health that will allow me to continue my current work on adolescent pregnancy among Latino populations as well as pursue other interests.

What are your present goals?

My lifelong goal is to make a positive difference in my community, to serve the underserved. My immediate goals are to complete my doctoral degree and obtain a teaching position at a university, either here in Arizona or back home in California. My

heart is loyal to West Coast and the sun.

How will your degree in MAS help you achieve those goals?

My degree in MAS will assist me in achieving my goals, as I wish to teach or at least have an appointment in a Chicana/o Studies department. I plan to continue to serve my community through the work I do as a scholar—something MAS has helped me to realize can be accomplished.

Do you have any advice for new or younger students?

The only advice I have for younger students is to keep their grades up. Too many Chicanos are left at the margins because their grades were not high enough to be admitted into a university, let alone graduate school. Start talking to people now and never be scared to dream. And for all students, I would just suggest that we begin to take better care of ourselves. We need our mind, body, and soul in balance (in order to) serve our communities well and to achieve our goals.

AZR

Civil rights struggles in 1940s Phoenix detailed in latest MASRC publication

LULAC and Veterans Organize for Civil Rights in Tempe and Phoenix, 1940-1947, written by Christine Marin, is the 29th title in the MASRC's Working Paper Series. Marin is the curator and archivist of the Chicano Research Collection in the Department of Archives and Manuscripts at Arizona State University's Hayden Library.



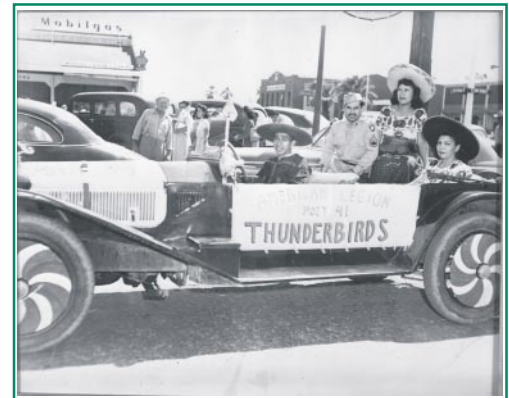
American Legion Post #41 Officers. Phoenix, 1942.
Courtesy Jean Reynolds.

American Citizens (LULAC) Council 110, led by Placida Garcia Smith, and the American Legion Thunderbird Post 41, led by Ray Martinez, were at the front lines in the fight against racism and discrimination in the 1940s. Mexican Americans confronted public elected officials over racist practices and policies of exclusion, and utilized the court system to provide them equal justice under the law. They exercised their right to seek equality after years of segregation, and to secure their civil rights as Americans.”

From *LULAC and Veterans Organize for Civil Rights in Tempe and Phoenix, 1940-1947*
by Christine Marin
Available from the MASRC for \$3.00.

“World War II had a dramatic impact on Americans, including Mexican Americans in Arizona. It challenged families and communities to make sacrifices during wartime. Mexican Americans served in large numbers and with distinction in the war, and after it ended they sought to defend their rights as Americans, and to eliminate the discriminatory behavior and acts that kept them within ethnic boundaries. The segregation at Tempe Beach, the “brilliant star in Tempe’s crown,” and its “No Mexicans Allowed” policy, initiated in 1923, was one of them. Another ethnic boundary was the segregated housing policy for veterans established by the City of Phoenix in 1946.

“In Tempe and Phoenix, the League of United Latin



Post #41. Parade in Phoenix, 1948. McLaughlin Photograph. Arizona Collection, ASU Library.



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