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Herbert Evison's National Park Service Oral History Project, 1952-1999



Luis Arana
November 12, 1973

Interview conducted by S. Herbert Evison
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DRAFT

(Tape# 255)

TYPED BY: Beverley A. Foltz

DATE: October 15, 1984

START OF TAPE

Herbert Evison: This is November 12, 1973. I am Herb Evison and this morning I am in St. Augustine, Florida, in the headquarters building of the Castillo de San Marcos National Monument. I am in the office of Luis Arana. Luis is one of a small company of National Park Service employees who started their careers at the San Juan National Historic Site, and who have in one way or another been induced to make the hop across to the mainland and continue working for the National Park Service. People that I have known including the late ___ Rodriguez, one of the finest little guys I ever knew; Julio Marrero, whom I first knew when the San Juan National Historic Site was very new; Ramon Delgado, who was for many years on the staff of Independence National Historical Park; and I just learned this morning of another one who is Manuel Morales.

Herbert Evison: Now, Luis, your current title is one a little elaborate for me to remember right off the bat, but you can please get it on the record now.

Luis Arana: I am the historical resources coordinator for the Florida Planning Office.

Herbert Evison: Perhaps I should add that the Florida Planning Office is the office of the National Park Service which exercises a sort of supervision over the Park Service areas in Florida and in the Caribbean.

Luis Arana: Right.

Herbert Evison: Now, Luis, I like to start these things off by getting a sort of thumbnail biography on the tape. So let me ask you first when and where were you born. Let's have on the record something about the family you were born into.

Luis Arana: I was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, back in 1921.

Herbert Evison: Let's get the exact date, can we.

Luis Arana: September the 10th. My father was a salesman; my mother was a housewife.

Herbert Evison: Were there others in the family?

Luis Arana: Oh, yes. I have two sisters. One of them lives with her husband in Miami because he works for the Standard Oil Company and he has been transferred there since 1970. The other sister still lives in San Juan, Puerto Rico, with her husband and children.

Herbert Evison: Now, tell me something about your schooling.

Luis Arana: I completed high school in Ponce. Then I went into the service. When I came back from the service I went to college on the GI Bill of Rights. I went specifically to the Inter-American University in Puerto Rico. At that time it was called the Polytechnic Institute. I did attend the University of Puerto Rico for about three-fourths of the year but then quit law which I was studying and came to the conclusion that I did not like it. I then started working for the U.S. Customs Service. One day I was off, it was a weekday, I was not satisfied with that job and –

Herbert Evison: You say with the Postal Service?

Luis Arana: No, Customs. Customs Service. As I say, I was not satisfied with that job. I thought I would keep on looking and on this day off, which was in the middle of the week, I passed by the door of the San Juan National Historic Site. It was the first time I had seen the sign but looking at the title again I said it ____ history there. The people in there must work with history. I had better check it the next time I come by. I couldn't stop. I was on my way to another appointment. Well, the week after that I did pass by and I did go into the office and there was a lady, a girl guide, whom I did not know it at the time was wanting to go away and she was sort of attempting to get someone –

Herbert Evison: Find a substitute.

Luis Arana: That is about it, yes. She did get for me the old form 57. I filled it in, and I brought it in the next day. The first time I talked to three of the officials of the historic site there. One of them was, of course, David Jones the superintendent. I was taken in – he had to take a look at the people who was to be employed. Then I was dealing with Clarence Johnson, the historian and Julio Marrero, the assistant historian. Johnson had an initial test that you had to meet regardless of any other test for you to become – to come into the Park Service. He said, imagine that this room right here, it was the reception center; it was not a visitor center, it was too formal for that. People just go there to sign their names to the register and get literature, all this just before the tours to El Morro started. As I was saying, Johnson said, imagine that this room is full of people, there may be about 60 people here. They are all talking loud; you want to get started on the tour. You have no other way to get their attention except what you have – yourself; your voice, that's all. How would you go about doing it? I started to say, "I would-", he said, "Don't tell me; do it." So I simply said, "Your attention ladies and gentlemen please. Your attention and then when everything subsides I sort of said the tour to El Morro is about to start will

you kindly come with me. Johnson says, "Well that is okay. You passed that one."

Luis Arana: The other test was a test of translating Spanish into English and English into Spanish.

Herbert Evison: Very important there all right.

Herbert Evison: You told me you filled out your form 57. As an employee of U.S. Customs, you already had a Civil Service status so that you could be transferred without taking further examinations.

Luis Arana: Oh, no, no. When I took the job with Customs, I told them that I thought my qualifications could be used more thoroughly to a better advantage than what I was doing as a Customs guard. I told them I deserved the right to look for another job. They did agree to this condition, apparently, they just needed a body. They took me and after 3 months that I had lined up the job with the Park Service, I went and told them, and they sort of asked me that I should resign. I did not transfer. I did not carry anything.

Herbert Evison: Well, what was your status as far as Civil Service was concerned when you started with the Park Service. Did you have – had you taken a Civil Service examination before that.

Luis Arana: Oh, no, no. At that time they called it career-conditional or something – they had a phrase.

Herbert Evison: Well, now could that have been an ____ pending the establishment of the register.

Luis Arana: That's about it right there. Yes.

Herbert Evison: Before you got through did you have to take a Civil Service examination.

Luis Arana: Oh, yes. I took the Civil Service examination right here in the states after I had transferred.

Herbert Evison: Oh, you didn't not before that time.

Luis Arana: Not before that.

Herbert Evison: You had been with the Park Service for four years or so.

Luis Arana: Five actually.

Herbert Evison: Five years.

Luis Arana: Five years. A little over five years.

Herbert Evison: We are getting a little ahead of ourselves here. I am not sure that we got all the dope on your education. Did you end up with a degree?

Luis Arana: Oh, yes. Yes, I did get a BA in Puerto Rico and after I was here, I commuted to the University of Florida in Gainesville, and I did acquire a Master of Arts.

Herbert Evison: Now, was your major history?

Luis Arana: Definitely. I have known nothing else.

Herbert Evison: Well, a man who knows history knows a lot.

Herbert Evison: Before I go on with your career. Did you have a wife?

Luis Arana: Definitely.

Herbert Evison: Yes, now what was her maiden name and when did the two of you get married.

Luis Arana: _____ and I got married in 1948.

Herbert Evison: Oh, yes, 25 years.

Luis Arana: Right.

Herbert Evison: Have you passed the 25th anniversary.

Luis Arana: Yes, we got married on May the 15th.

Herbert Evison: Children?

Luis Arana: I have a step-son. Eugenia was previously married.

Herbert Evison: I am interested in noticing that you pronounced her name in two different ways – the Spanish pronunciation first and then the English.

Herbert Evison: I think we are caught up on that brief biography. You started at San Juan.

Luis Arana: San Juan, that is the way it should be.

Herbert Evison: In what year?

Luis Arana: 1951.

Herbert Evison: In what capacity? Were you a park guide?

Luis Arana: Yes, I think that was the title. Either park guide or tour leader. Something like that.

Herbert Evison: I think tour leader sounds a little more like it to me.

Luis Arana: No, no, no. I just remembered it. Historical aid, that's it. Which was nothing else but a guide. Then the title was changed to tour leader. Then we were made GS-5s and given the title historian.

- Herbert Evison: Oh, yes. Now here you were brand new to the National Park Service. I don't imagine you were even aware that it existed until you saw that sign.
- Luis Arana: No, no, I was aware of the Park Service existed because in 1943 I came to the United States for the first time to go to the Officers Candidate School in Fort Benning, Georgia. After completing the course, on my way back to Puerto Rico, I embarked through New Orleans and while we were waiting in New Orleans, we did get to see the area and I did go to see Chalmette.
- Herbert Evison: Chalmette was your introduction to the National Park Service.
- Luis Arana: Right, right.
- Herbert Evison: That is an interesting an unusual introduction. I can't believe that one experience gave you very much awareness of what the Park Service was all about.
- Luis Arana: No, of course not. In fact, when I did see the sign reading San Juan National Historic Site, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, I had forgotten all about the
- [Note: Based on the jump in conversation from what is discussed above and what comes next, there appears to be a gap in the recording that is not noted in the original transcript. This cannot be verified until a digital copy of the recording becomes available.]
- Luis Arana: Johnson said, "Go with Torres on this tour that he is going to give this morning; watch very closely what he does. That is the way we will start training you."
- Luis Arana: I did go with Torres just as Johnson had said. I watched him closely. I learned his tour route and I did listen to his spiel and the tour was ended. In the afternoon Johnson came out and said, "I have Torres doing something that he should not interrupt; you are going to take the next tour." I said, "Mr. Johnson, please I don't know anything about the fort." He said, "You know why it was built and when it was built; work around that and go right now."
- Herbert Evison: I think that is wonderful.
- Luis Arana: It was a separation of sinking or swimming.
- Herbert Evison: Exactly the metaphor I had in mind. You were thrown in the water and told to swim.
- Herbert Evison: How did it go?

- Luis Arana: Well, the tour was nothing, but a carbon copy of what Torres had said in the morning. Then after a while as you start doing your reading and studying and tying everything together your own style sort of comes through and you sort of mold or fashion your tour as you think it should be.
- Herbert Evison: How about different audiences. Did you find yourself able to adapt to a group that had a lot of youngsters in it as against a group largely adult?
- Luis Arana: Yes. In San Juan you have to adapt or else you had to go out – in the first place you had to work with two languages to begin with. For instance, a tour starts, or it is going to start at, let's just say 9:30 in the morning; you are going to have English speaking people because you've seen them coming in taxis. They are the visitors to the island. They are coming to the historic site. Then, of course, you have local people. The first thing that we did just for experience sake, we would approach the Puerto Rican people and would ask them if they understood the English language. They might say yes or no. If they said yes, we would explain that we were going to conduct the tour in English. It would save us some effort, but if at any time they felt there was something they did not understand to let us know then we would switch into Spanish. If they said no, I don't know English we gave the tour in both languages.
- Herbert Evison: Which slowed it up a little bit.
- Luis Arana: It did except that after a while because of the fact that you have to use the two languages you sort of start hitting up on key phrases that are used time and time again.
- Herbert Evison: Well, did you enjoy doing that kind of thing?
- Luis Arana: Yes, I did. All of us there had an additional view of the work we were doing. We were not simply explaining El Morro to a group of visitors, whether they were local or whether they were from the United States or any other country. We did feel that we were also doing a job of education as far as history went. Not only with the local people but also with the people from abroad.
- Herbert Evison: You were broadening the – speaking of the people from the Continental United States – you were broadening their horizons on American history.
- Luis Arana: You could say that.

- Herbert Evison: I remember having talked with Julio Marrero at various times about some of the things he was doing there. I remember he was greatly interested in getting the people of Puerto Rico itself to understand their own history. Now was that a strong motivation in the work that you were doing?
- Luis Arana: Definitely.
- Herbert Evison: In other words, I would suppose that you might take a little different slant when you were talking with people from the Continental United States on the one hand and your own natives on the other hand.
- Luis Arana: No. I wouldn't say so because besides the fact that we had this additional motivation we also wanted to put over the point that history was a serious business. That history was not only a question of word-of-mouth translation only that it was so but that the man who was talking had a responsibility to be as accurate as the materials that he had available.
- Herbert Evison: Yes. I suppose actually what you would really basically want to get over to both of your native Puerto Ricans and the people from the Continental United States or elsewhere really for both when the understanding that area and of its significance in not only Puerto Rican history but American history regardless of your audience.
- Luis Arana: That is right. The idea was here we have El Morro and El Morro out to be a source of pride for us from the point of view of the local people. To the visitor from abroad we were telling them we are proud of El Morro.
- Herbert Evison: With abundant reason. I think that is one of the most incredible structures in the world.
- Luis Arana: It is. It sure is.
- Herbert Evison: Now, did you continue to do that guide work all the time that you were there at San Juan?
- Luis Arana: No, we had other assignments. For instance I was in charge of keeping up, physically keeping up the library. We could be given assignments. I recall three assignments that I did there during my four years. One of them was a bibliography of the Spanish-American War. Another one was a bibliography of an English attack to San Juan in 1598, and the third piece of work was, oh, I would say a 100-page essay work, report on the British attack on San Juan in 1797.

Herbert Evison: Now that first British attack in 1598, was that Drake?

Luis Arana: No, sir. That was Cumberland but Drake had been in San Juan and defeated 3 years earlier in 1595. Cumberland made it except that an epidemic made him take off.

Herbert Evison: You know, I can't imagine much more interesting assignment than to live with a historic structure that has so darn much history attached to it and on top of that it is such a tremendous engineering accomplishment. Did it ever occur to you that the Spaniards were incredibly fine builders?

Luis Arana: Yes, sir. I think they were. Of course, I may be prejudiced there, not because I am a Spaniard or anything like that just you would say, identification, because of language and customs.

Herbert Evison: Well, now looking back over those 4 years, that would be '51 to '55, do you think of any particular events which you observed or in which you were a participant that we ought to get on this record.

Luis Arana: I can recall – I do recall one. That was when Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay went to the San Juan National Historic Site, I took him on a tour.

Herbert Evison: Did you.

Luis Arana: Yes, sir.

Herbert Evison: What kind of a listener and companion did you find him to be on that tour.

Luis Arana: A very good man. He sort of listened to everything that you were saying. You knew that he was not missing anything and then he would come back with, some of them were difficult, questions.

Herbert Evison: You took him on a tour but not as part of a group.

Luis Arana: No. Personal tour. Perhaps with another person or two.

Herbert Evison: I see. But you found him a very companionable sort of a guy.

Luis Arana: Right.

Herbert Evison: But he asked good questions too.

Luis Arana: I am not sure that is why I am saying that I have doubt because if I did not do it I would not like to take the credit away from anyone else. I think that I did take Mr. Demaray around for a tour, you know one of our directors.

Herbert Evison: Yes. That would have been when you were pretty darn brand new there.

Luis Arana: Right, right.

Herbert Evison: That was the year he was Director.

Luis Arana: That's right.

Herbert Evison: For nine months or whatever.

Luis Arana: Right.

Herbert Evison: So he had a chance to size up a pretty new employee.

Luis Arana: I don't know, I can't recall if, I think I did but I can't recall exactly. So we leave it at that.

Herbert Evison: It was during that 4 years that Davy Jones was transferred elsewhere, I think. He wasn't there all the time you were was he?

Luis Arana: I believe, I can't recall, again but something strikes my mind about Davy Jones leaving about 1 or 2 weeks before I got there and if he had not left, he was on the point of leaving.

Herbert Evison: Well, then, who was your superintendent during this period, that four years?

Luis Arana: Davy Jones, except that the last 1 or 2 weeks I was there for some reason my mind keeps telling me that Harold Hubler had already arrived to replace Jones.

Herbert Evison: Oh, yes. Actually Davy Jones was your superintendent practically all the time that you were there.

Luis Arana: Right, yes.

Herbert Evison: I am a great admirer of Davy and Porky. Good old friends of mine.

Herbert Evison: Now I am curious to know, what induced you to take the hop across to the mainland.

Luis Arana: Bread – money.

Herbert Evison: In other words you got a raise.

Luis Arana: I wanted a promotion. I would not have gotten it in San Juan, so I told the office there that I wanted to be considered for transfer. I did it thinking that the whole procedure would take, oh, easily 6 weeks or 2 months, but I got an offer within 10 days. They told me there was a vacancy in Castillo de San Marcos in St. Augustine,

that I could report right now. I sort of persuaded to give me 15 days to wind up my things in Puerto Rico before coming over. The speed with which this transfer took place was due to the fact that there had been a position created in St. Augustine in December of '54. It had been vacant because the requirements included knowledge of both English and Spanish and apparently Albert Manucy who was the historian here in Castillo at the time did not find anyone qualified or did not find anyone period.

Herbert Evison:

Now you came over here then as what?

Luis Arana:

I was promoted to GS-7. GS-7 an assistant to Manucy and you might say that what I did as a GS-7 is what today we call chief of visitor services. In other words, scheduling tours, keeping up tour records, checking on the performance of the guides all of that. Once in a while, at the beginning, Manucy would give me very few assignments later on he sort of broke me in to the ____ history of Castillo.

Herbert Evison:

Well, now, were you called on at any time to act as a tour leader?

Luis Arana:

Oh, yes. I did take tours especially when you had Spanish speaking groups. At that time we had many more than we have now. At that time Cuban teachers used to travel during the summer. They would come all the way to St. Augustine, and I would have an opportunity to give them a tour in the Spanish language. I would also take tours, any other Spanish speaking visitors, whether they were VIPs or not.

Herbert Evison:

Now I am curious to know whether the Castillo has felt any of the influx of Cubans since Castro took over, and so many of them have come into south Florida. Do any of them get up here in any numbers?

Luis Arana:

I would say, yes, except that the ____ is different because they are living in the United States now they are simply part of the number of visitors that comes into the fort. They are not organized like the Cuban teachers were many years ago. You do know that they are there because you may be walking by and you hear Spanish spoken.

Herbert Evison:

You came over here and you got a promotion from a GS-5 to a GS-7.

Luis Arana:

Right.

Herbert Evison: I am interested if that could have given you general direction of the visitor services here. How long did you stay in that position?

Luis Arana: Oh, about 2 years. Then in '57, Manucy was assigned to region as interpretive planner with station in St. Augustine. Then I was promoted to historian.

Herbert Evison: That put you up to what a nine?

Luis Arana: A nine, right. I was the chief historian from '57 until Manuel Morales came last year.

Herbert Evison: I see. Now that is a long time to be in one place. This is typical of the ____ in recent years of the Park Service where people were switched around from area to area so often.

Luis Arana: But if you allow me to put in this plug for Castillo. There are very few people in the Service that could be historians for Castillo. They could be chief of visitor services. They could be something else. They could not be historians, it's such a job requires they are increasing the quantity of history about Castillo. I say increasing because the sources for the history of Castillo are in Spanish; old Spanish at that. You simply do not have many people doing that type of story whereas most of us from Puerto Rico have the language already. The apprenticeship that we have to do is in the way that the language was written. You learn the style of writing of a certain scribe and you do notice when he's not writing when there is some other handwriting from the manuscripts. This is why I say, acquisition of new knowledge is the thing that makes both English and Spanish a requirement for the Castillo job.

Herbert Evison: Yes. Now I am curious that you refer to these documents, handwritten documents in Spanish, in old Spanish; do I gather from that that your job has entailed some study in Spain.

Luis Arana: No, what I mean to say when I talk about Spanish manuscripts, documents, is that there are available in the United States photocopies of material in Spanish archives and we work from microfilm of the photocopies.

Herbert Evison: What are the principal places in which that stuff is to be found?

Luis Arana: The largest repository is the _____ in Seville, in Spain.

Herbert Evison: I mean here in the United States.

Luis Arana: The North Carolina Department of Archives and History has what they call their Spanish Documents Collection, and the University

of Florida has what it calls the Stetson Collection. As I say, these are simply photocopies of materials in the archives. This material is simply, you may read a letter written by any governor reporting on some matter that should be resolved at a higher level. When you get enough of those for a long stretch of time, you are able to sort of deduce a certain train of what is happening and taking place.

Herbert Evison: Have you made use of the North Carolina Collection?

Luis Arana: Definitely.

Herbert Evison: You have gone up there and spent time at various times.

Luis Arana: No we haven't gone up there, we have the whole collection in microfilm right here.

Herbert Evison: How extensive is the collection that you have here? I am interested in how that was arranged.

Luis Arana: The North Carolina Collections, let me see, I got it right here, the North Carolina Collections consists of approximately 10,000 pieces of correspondence. All of this makes about 15,000 photocopies. We got it here because back in 1939 or '40, I can't recall the exact date, but at that time there was need to know the history of Castillo. Here was the National Park Service operating the national monument since 1935, and it didn't know anything that was reliable about the structure. So Manucy who had been employed because of his ability to read and understand Spanish, Albert was a man of all season. Albert was told to go to North Carolina and microfilm the whole collection. Permission was obtained. I do not know the full details of this transaction, but I think that the condition was that the original of the microfilm would be deposited in the Library of Congress or something like that. Several organizations did acquire the collection. The local historical society, University of Florida in Gainesville has the microfilm, Florida State University, several places.

Herbert Evison: Did this venture of Manucys to getting this stuff did that sort of start this movement for getting copies in various places. Was he a pioneer in that.

Luis Arana: I wouldn't be able to say. It was needed for Castillo because the published literature that was available at that time didn't have anything on Castillo de San Marcos. From the acquisition of this collection and the study of it by Manucy the Service was able in 1942 to bring out the handbook entitled The Building of Castillo

de San Marcos, which to tell you the truth, it is still the only reliable history of the Castillo.

Herbert Evison:

Well, I would like your opinion about this that you said was produced in 1942, 31 years ago.

Luis Arana:

We have revised it, Albert and myself.

Herbert Evison:

I was wondering about that. What you have has been updated.

Luis Arana:

Definitely, definitely, right, definitely. It has been updated in 1970. The revision has not been published.

Herbert Evison:

It hasn't.

Luis Arana:

No. The Division of Publications is not interested.

Herbert Evison:

What's that.

Luis Arana:

The Division of Publications of the National Park Service is not interested.

Herbert Evison:

Well, something should be done about that.

Luis Arana:

We are approaching the association. The Eastern National Park and Monument Association.

Herbert Evison:

Now that surprises me a little bit because the honest truth of it is the Park Service is not pinched for publication funds. They have about 15 times as much as in the days when I was chief of information.

Luis Arana:

I would not like to comment too much on the Division of Publications because, well, I would not be saying anything lovable about them. You have to put up a-

Herbert Evison:

Luis, why don't you put a little flesh on that statement you just made. I think the starting point is the total experience with the building of the Castillo.

Luis Arana:

Well, Mr. Evison, if you want to see me unemployed. I guess there ought to be a historical record of this. It may teach someone something in the future. At any rate, we say we study history to be taught. The building of the Castillo, as you know, as I have said, was published in 1942, and it was reprinted every year by the Government Printing Office. In 1969, the Government Printing Office without any objection whatsoever from the Division of Publications decided not to reprint The Building of Castillo any longer.

Herbert Evison: Now, of course, that's something that surprises me very greatly because it is my impression that the Government Printing Office doesn't decide what the National Park Service shall have. If the Park Service puts up the money their are expected to print their publications. I am interested in that particular phase of this but go on from there.

Luis Arana: I don't know what arrangements they make up there. I do understand it is just like you have said but what I heard was that the Government Printing Office had said that they did not want to print the building any longer because it did not make money. My question at this point is, are we in the business to make money or to provide a service.

Herbert Evison: Are we in business for the Government Printing Office to make money.

Luis Arana: I don't think we should be. Government is not business; government is service. Well, when we found out that the building was going to be out of print, Albert Manucy and I updated the whole thing and we sent it to the Division of Publications which after considering it for about 2 years decided that it would not print the building of the Castillo again. The reasons they gave was that the writing was not peppy enough to attract people, that they thought a big name in history would attract the attention of potential readers, and in other words, they were looking at the thing from the sales point of view exclusively. The point of view of service did not enter into the question. What is so strange about this is that they say we are not going to publish your manuscript for the Castillo but frankly we don't know too much about Castillo. Then they come up with the proposition of the big name. Bringing in a big name, I guess it is justified, but provided the big name knows the story of Castillo. If he is a historian and not up with this here, and it's nothing published books that he can have recourse to it readily, it is all going to come back to the park. I just don't understand the people up there.

Herbert Evison: Well, I think you were telling me you had kind of an argument with them about it.

Luis Arana: They just said that they did not understand Castillo but at the same time that they admitted that they didn't know what they were going to do with us. Then when you hear that from one of the people up there who are supposed to lead and give direction then your

reaction in the field is "let's strike a blow for independence." You know I am talking subversively.

Herbert Evison: No, I feel very happy that you were willing to do that. I am very glad that I know something of the situation here in connection with that. I want to assure you that I won't let you down, but I can't help saying that if the chance presents it I will strike a blow too. I think that what you told me represents a very narrow and very crass kind of viewpoint. Can you tell me anything about approximately how many of those are disposed of right here in the course of the year.

Luis Arana: No, Mr. Evison, I couldn't. I have been away from the actual operations for quite some time, but I would say, well, I am not going to guess, but I am going to say this. Regardless of the number that are sold the fact is that the public is entitled to read in the English language a history of Castillo de San Marcos. They are not doing so now because we don't have a handbook.

Herbert Evison: They won't even reprint the old, former edition for you?

Luis Arana: No.

Herbert Evison: I would be interested in this, would you think it desirable to have that revised edition, if it is ever published also produced in Spanish?

Luis Arana: I have been talking with the idea for quite some time. I never made up my mind completely. I do think that it would have some use. There are many more Spanish speaking Americans now than there used to be. At one time considering the immigration of the Cuban people, I guess it would be useful to send it to Spain. I have never been able to find a Spanish work dealing with the construction and history of Castillo. A work that would be as extensive as our own.

Herbert Evison: I am just delighted that we got into that discussion. Now, that is one event of your period here that I am delighted to have on the record. You have been here a long time and you have served under, who have been your superior officers. Al Manucy was first.

Luis Arana: Al Manucy was the historian then when he left the superintendent Ray Vinten and after Mr. Vinten came Bert Roberts. After Bert Ted Davenport, and finally George Schesventer.

Herbert Evison: Now in my book the guy you served under longest is quite a guy and that is Ray Vinten. He is somebody that I became acquainted with very early in my _____ which was in 1933. Is there anything you can tell me about Ray or any of these other bosses of yours.

Anything that you recollect in the way of events or things you observed during your years here in various capacities. I would love to get on here.

Luis Arana: Well, during Mr. Vinten's tenure things were quiet here. The Park Service hadn't taken off on Mission 66 yet, so we were still sort of in that old caretaker type of operation.

Herbert Evison: Yes, because you just didn't have the funds to do anything else.

Luis Arana: That's it, right. Then the thing that was most remarkable, not remarkable, that is the wrong word –

Herbert Evison: Noteworthy.

Luis Arana: Noteworthy, yes, during Mr. Vinten's tenure was the first road relocation of A1A with the idea eventually of getting the parking area on the east side of the road. At that time the parking area was in the east side, but the size was insufficient and the Park Service was attempting, or had as its plan, to acquire land from the west side of the road and put the road there.

Herbert Evison: Now, where that road relocation that you referred to, you talked about A1A but as I was just saying it is also the business route of U.S. Highway 1 through here.

Luis Arana: That is right. Yes.

Herbert Evison: Now just what happened in connection with that proposal. Did it work out?

Luis Arana: Well, as I said Mr. Vinten was connected with a temporary road relocation that was done in 1958 and '59, see. Then the final road relocation as planned and wanted by the Park Service took place in 1964 – '65 under the tenure of Mr. Roberts.

Herbert Evison: I didn't remember and I am not sure that when I first came down here which was in the '30's sometime that the old gates were a part of the monument. Have they always been a part of the monument?

Luis Arana: Yes sir, as far as I know.

Herbert Evison: I didn't know. Now, of course, sometime during that period this building went up – this was a Mission 66 project.

Luis Arana: Yes, it was a Mission 66 project and the building was built in 1964. We came into this offices in January of '65.

Luis Arana: Let me say, talking about Mission 66 if the program had taken its natural course it would have been finished sometime in 1966,

fiscal year 1966. However, St. Augustine was to celebrate its 400th anniversary in 1965, so in 1962, right on the parking area of Castillo de San Marcos Mr. Wirth, Connie Wirth made the field decision to break – what would be the word – to complete the whole thing ahead of time. Complete it in 1965 as a gesture of cooperation with the local people.

Herbert Evison: Is it appreciated? Do the local people appreciate it.

Luis Arana: Definitely. It was a big year. That was the big item during Mr. Robert's tenure. The acquisition of land for the road relocation and the carrying out of all the Mission 66 projects.

Herbert Evison: What had stood on that land which the road was relocated? Was there some old buildings there?

Luis Arana: There were houses, residences, which the Park Service had purchased.

Herbert Evison: And this, of course, building as part of the Mission 66.

Luis Arana: That is right. We had to building the building because prior to the erection of this building the superintendent's office was in the Post Office Building. In 1964, the Post Office Building was declared in excess by the General Services Administration and given to the local people.

Herbert Evison: Oh, for heaven sakes. Was that when it was renamed Government House?

Luis Arana: That's it, yes. The historian's office was always in the Castillo. Now, since 1972, since Morales came as chief interpreter, he also has had his office up there. He comes over here just when he has to work here.

Herbert Evison: Does he put in much time as an actual tour leader or does he simply –

Luis Arana: I do not know. I do not know about that.

Herbert Evison: There is one specific thing I want to ask you about, and I really want the story, too. It comes about because of my visit over here the other day and my learning just how my old associate Kay Thomas was working with you and something about the project which you were working.

Herbert Evison: As I get it, you are cataloguing and rearranging the entire Castillo library. I think I want on the record first what you can tell me about that library. Who, what person or persons have been

responsible for the fact that there is quite a remarkable accumulation of books and such things. I would like the story of that library first.

Luis Arana: Well, the story of the library is simple. Manucy started it all. You have got to recall that Manucy was employed here from 1938, and with a brief interruption of a year, in 1962 to '63 came back to Castillo and was here until 1966. When I say was here, you must bear in mind that his physical presence. He is actually paid somewhere else. He belongs to someone else, but he is actually here. It is only in 1966, that he really goes away physically. Manucy started it and I continued it. I must say that Manucy was a good teacher. I put in my apprenticeship.

Luis Arana: Talking more about the library. What we are doing there now is something that hadn't been done because there was no time when things really started humming on account of Mission 66. There was no personnel qualified to do it. The historian couldn't do it himself because he was busy doing other things that had priority. So, the library was simply catalogued in the most simple way that existed. There was no catalog order index for instance and that is what Kay is doing. Actually my interest in working with her is to set the library up as it should be so that I can turn it over to someone else.

Herbert Evison: In good working condition.

Luis Arana: That is right. It would be unfair to turn it over in the primitive condition that it is.

Herbert Evison: Well, now, let's have something on there about I take it this a rather distinguished collection of materials. What are the principal – what's its coverage.

Luis Arana: The books that you see on the shelves are general history books that serve to put the Castillo in the context of general history.

Herbert Evison: Yes. In perspective so to speak.

Luis Arana: That's it. Right. The special thing about our library is that most of it is in microfilm. Microfilm of archival material that is located in very few places in the United States. It has got to be that away because Spanish sources is the only place where you find information about the Spanish fortifications. In addition to that, our library consists of microfilm, again, of books on the practice of the military art, the science of fortification on engineering. All the

subjects that will explain Castillo in the perspective of everything that surrounds it.

Herbert Evison: Now, you have referred several times to the building of Castillo but actually there was quite a long period of Spanish history connected with Castillo.

Luis Arana: That is right.

Herbert Evison: I presume that your library in one form or another in many ways refers to the rest of its history after it was built.

Luis Arana: Definitely. Definitely. That's it.

Luis Arana: One thing that I want to throw in they say that historians never throw out papers. Well it is for a very good reason. You should determine the value of a piece of paper first. Value not in the sense of money, but for the information that it may contain. Over here in that library we do have some things that deal in general with the National Park Service. Things that pertain to the '30's prior to the war. During the war and even just after the war, and when I say war, I am thinking of World War II. For instance, you have publications that were started in those days and for one reason or another the war made them disappear. You have the Regional Review which you consider a very worthwhile publication. We have all those position papers of the late '30's about how to fit historical structures within the perspective of the National Park Service. We have reports on the war work of the National Park Service, things of that nature.

Herbert Evison: You have mentioned a lot of things that you happen to have here that really almost every area in the National Park System ought to have.

Luis Arana: Should have because those were standard distributions, I guess, I don't know.

Herbert Evison: Of course, I would say that it is lucky that this historic place has historians in a position to determine what was kept. Because I happen to know in the anxiety to create vacant filing space in filing cabinets over the past 10 or 15 years, a lot of very valuable material has been thrown away or burned up.

Luis Arana: See those files over there in the corner.

Herbert Evison: Yes, they look ancient.

- Luis Arana: They are old. Those two files, we haven't been able to sit down really to sort and collate the material in there, but those two files contain the history, at least, of interpretation in Castillo de San Marcos since 1935. I am getting into trouble with the records people when I say that I am still hanging on to these two files. I am not doing anything to empty those drawers but as I say the park history is there. There hasn't been a chance for a historian to sit down and sort those papers to see what is good and what should be thrown away.
- Luis Arana: Back in '55 when we moved to this building there was a very, very good man, very enterprising Administrative Officer who felt that these old papers here should be thrown out, I guess will talk with the people up there so that they pick it up and I said, "Never mind, I will get rid of them myself. I shall rent a truck and take these two things to the garage in my house and I will keep them there and then I will return them to the Park Service when someone is capable of doing a park history." The man said, "Would you actually do that?" I said, "Of course, I would." It is the park history that is in those two files. Well the man sort of recognized the validity of my claim and he says, "All right, we will sort of spare them."
- Herbert Evison: I think you could be proud of the fact that they are still standing there intact.
- Luis Arana: As I say, someone would have to take care of Castillo and this national monument from the point of view of history.
- Herbert Evison: Do you see any prospect in the next year or two or five or ten years of going through those?
- Luis Arana: Mr. Evison, I wouldn't dare say anything to that question.
- Herbert Evison: Well, I think Kay Thomas is going to be around here for a long time and maybe when you get through with the library job you can enlist her help on some of this.
- Luis Arana: I probably come back as a VIP when I retire.
- Herbert Evison: Now, we haven't mentioned on here yet the fact that while your body is still here you are actually a part of – we did mention it – but said nothing about your job as part of the Park Service's state office.
- Herbert Evison: Now, tell me something. How did it happen that you got that shift of title and responsibility and still able to stay put.

Luis Arana:

I asked myself that part of your question which talks about staying put. The move actually came as a result of Operations Evaluations Team. I am going to say out loud, I was raked over the coals. It is a pity that – I shouldn't mention the name – but the interpreter on this evaluation team was not able in his evaluation of operations to see the increased demand that there is for information. He remarked on his report that Luis Arana spends his time just sitting on his desk and writing all the time. It is true, rather on the other hand I didn't see the need for actually going over to Castillo when I was chief interpreter as frequently as if there had been no man over there. There was a supervisor there and a good one too. But I guess this fellow who was on the evaluation team sort of felt that there should be two bird dogs, _____ rather than just one. Well I differ from his philosophy of supervision. The proposition was mentioned that perhaps I could be transferred. But someone along the line sort of recalled my involvement with the history of Castillo, my reluctance to go away. The fact that because I worked with the history of Castillo and local history I feel – I feel that I am contributing something during my lifetime which will be left when I am gone. Someone must have recalled that and sort of said well it will have to be something in which Luis stays in Castillo. So they came up with the proposition would I accept the position. At that time it was called Florida-Caribbean District Office in Tallahassee but was stationed in St. Augustine. My job would be to advise all the National Park Service areas on historical matters. The realization being had that I would not take up all the time and I would work also with Castillo on historical things like research and writing. So the proposition was made to me and after reading the report, of course, the only honorable thing to do was accept another position, and I did.

Herbert Evison:

I am curious to know to what extent other areas – Fort Caroline is close by, Everglades, Fort Jefferson – I don't know what else there is in Florida but I am interested in knowing to what extent you are and in what way you are in communication with these other areas.

Luis Arana:

I usually – for instance since having this job some of the things that I have done outside of my work for Castillo have been making a report on Fort Zachary Taylor in Key West. I answer historical information correspondence dealing with the Florida frontiers, rivers, parks. I have advised on the acquisition of Spanish-oriented material for the Florida segment of the Gulf Islands National Seashore. I have advised on some sources of information for the fort on Ship Island which is on the Mississippi segment of the Gulf

Islands National Seashore. I have advised on historical literature to Fort Caroline, things like that.

Herbert Evison:

The point I was making, and you have made is that you have a function that is not a manufactured kind of job. You Castillo work and the other fits nicely together. I take it that you feel satisfied that you are doing a job.

Luis Arana:

Some managers nowadays might think that this is a made up job. They do that because they do not understand the nature of the burden of information dealing with Castillo. Castillo is an exceptional area as I say. Well, not Castillo alone, all the areas that did not originate as part of United States history must have in a greater or a lesser degree the same problems of Castillo. The areas that originated as part of Latin American history, I would say that all the parks in the borderlands of such origin must have the same problems that we have. Perhaps I am the most vociferous critic of the whole situation, but I don't think so. The Park Service has a lot of men that realize the same thing for their areas that I realize for Castillo. At any rate I feel – I feel that I have a mission, that I have a job. When I came here in 1955, you talk about historical events and you would talk about Colonel Moore's siege of Castillo in 1702 and I remember asking someone, “And who was the Spanish commander's name that defended the place.” There was no answer. It was known but there was no answer because there was no need to recall that foreign name. Right now when I talk about Moore I mention _____ that was the name of the commander. If I mention a Spanish man, I mention an English man. There must be some kind of equity character, balance.

Herbert Evison:

Well, good enough. Now when we were talking way back in the beginning about these microfilms, I think most of your references were to those microfilms or to Spanish records as the only source of material about the building of the Castillo.

Luis Arana:

For the Spanish part of the history of the Castillo.

Herbert Evison:

Well, that is what I was going to bring up. You went to those records for the whole period of Spanish occupancy.

Luis Arana:

Right. There are manuscripts in English dealing with what the British did to the fort. There are manuscripts in English dealing with what the United States has done with the fort since they took over. It is the Spanish part of the story that presents the problem.

- Herbert Evison: Well, now, I take it there must be special sources, special valuable sources, rich sources of material on the period of the British occupancy and the period since the United States took possession. What are the principal sources of that history?
- Luis Arana: The best repository for material during the British period is the Clemmons Library in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Recently Ricardo Torres, whom I told you is the chief interpreter of New York Group. While he was still assigned to the Division of History Studies, he did two stories for us one on the British garrison of St. Augustine and Castillo and another one on the British attack to St. Augustine in 1740. He found that from the papers available in Ann Arbor the Colonial office records are very important. For military matters there is the correspondence between the British Commander-in-Chief in New York and the several local commanders including the commander in St. Augustine, see.
- Herbert Evison: Now, I can that what you call official correspondence would be important. I have also discovered long ago that very often official correspondence and official reports give a rather one sided version of events. It is no commander of military outfits for instance would ever write anything against himself unless it was absolutely unavoidable. I am wondering what – in connection both with the early history of the Castillo but probably more importantly in this later history if any of that is supplemented by collections of say personal experience. The kind of letters that Civil War soldiers used to write home and that we now find in attics and set great store by.
- Luis Arana: For the Spanish period and to a certain extent for the English period there may not be too much of that supplemental material. You find that information, you wait in comparison to the same type of sources but other correspondence from other individuals at a different time then sort right away so that when you make a written report when you are putting it out for information to the public you can sort of give what your judgment tells you may have been the situation. You may not like what you get out of it, but you can very well substitute imagination or your own criteria. You can't not if you are a historian. You have to take what the source gives you, interpret it as honestly as you can, come to a conclusion that will stand the fire of some other people who might criticize you for that conclusion. That is it. You cannot – only some additional information – source of information comes available you can't get away from what your source is giving you.

- Herbert Evison: At the same as an honest historian you have to be ready to expect your conclusions to be thrown out the window on the basis of new or better evidence.
- Luis Arana: Oh, yes, definitely. The historian thinks that he is writing the final word, or something is a dreamer. Surely something may stand for many years. This is a good example connected with the history of St. Augustine. In 1926, a lady named Conner, Jeanette Thurber Conner, very smart woman wrote an article entitled "The Nine Old Wooden Forts of St. Augustine." This is in 1926, mind you, very little has been added to that ever since that time even though there are some sources that may mollify what she wrote the fact is that no one has decided to study that subject. That is another thing, Mr. Evison, a lot of people say but why must you think you are the only one that can work with Castillo. There must some other people – the universities have lots of students who will be doing that. You would think it would be that way but apparently it is not because no one shows up in writing that shows that some work is being done about it. Another thing is the study of the Castillo is not worthwhile in grant money. By that I mean a student in a department of history is going to study that subject which will enable him to get grant money to visit places. Who is going to talk about an old, gray pile of stone. You never get a grant for that.
- Herbert Evison: You mentions woman's production back in 1926. You said the Nine Wooden Forts of St. Augustine, I didn't realize there were that many that preceded the building of the masonry fort. Well, now she much have had to go to Spain for her sources too didn't she.
- Luis Arana: She could. Her husband was very wealthy.
- Herbert Evison: She had done just that.
- Luis Arana: She did nose in the Spanish archives and she knew the language and could work with it very, very well.
- Herbert Evison: Speaking about women, I am reminded of a very charming and gracious woman whom I met in Puerto Rico when I was down there while Davy Jones was superintendent. He took me around to see her one morning. That was Dona Felicia _____. I wonder if you have anything to tell me about her.
- Luis Arana: No, not much. I don't know her personally. All I know is that she is still alive she has retired from politics. You remember she used to be the mayor of San Juan.

- Herbert Evison: That was _____.
- Luis Arana: _____, yes. That's all I have heard about her, she has retired from politics.
- Herbert Evison: What made me think of her was that I know she was very much interested in uncovering and preserving old records, especially old books. When we visited her, she showed us one book which was just perforated all through with book worm holes.
- Luis Arana: Right. Those were the City Council minutes or records. While I was still in San Juan, I know that the municipality financed the publication of two volumes of those records.
- Luis Arana: There has been a very healthy awakening in Puerto Rico to the value of history, historical records. At one time we were not too keen on that but there has been a complete turnaround.
- Herbert Evison: You may not have any answer to this at all but I would like to know if you have an opinion about the benefit – I am not specifying what kind of benefit – but big benefit to Puerto Rico – lets say the city of San Juan – of the establishment of the national historic site there and the Park Service coming into the picture.
- Luis Arana: Definitely, I believe that the establishment of the San Juan National Historic Site by an agency exclusively dedicated to natural and historic preservation with some, not all, but some of the money to be able to do things was of great benefit to San Juan. It did start an opportunity for people to visit the place, and not visit the place only because that could be done before but the thing was to visit the place and be told some information which was as reliable as the material that was available at the time. It happens to us now, suppose I go through a big city – Washington, D. C. – I see a statue of one of the Civil War generals on horseback or something like that, I may approach the statue and if there is a National Park Service man there that will tell me about the figure, what he did, what he represents in the history; even if it's a 10 minute talk I am going to go away from there with information that I did not have before. I listen to it and I shall know something about the statue, about that city which about which I know nothing. If that fellow, if that National Park Service man had not been there, I would have just looked at the statue and that's it.
- Herbert Evison: Well, I take it what you are saying is that the big thing that Park Service did was to introduce interpretation.

- Luis Arana: That is right, and this is what all our historic sites need. Interpretation that doesn't come out all the time from a tape. You would like a man once in a while in National Park Service uniform to say, "Come over, I am going to tell you something about this." This is the thing. You take today everything is lets look at it on TV; lets hear it over the radio; lets hear it on tape.
- Herbert Evison: Lets see it in picture.
- Luis Arana: Lets see it in the – all these things are good – but they are auxiliary means. They cannot be the whole kit all the time. This is what I mean. You have got to have a combination of both. In a historic place lets face it, history is the staple of interpretation. If you don't increase it, if you don't work with it you are not going to have a product to sell. Oh, sure you have a product, the information that was given to you way back when the monument was established and if you have done nothing else since you will see how stale that information will be. And then there are people who wonder why is interpretation going, or why has interpretation gone to the dogs. There are some people who wonder that. The alarming thing is that some of the people who wonder that used to be interpreters and historians.
- Herbert Evison: Yes, yes.
- Luis Arana: You have my confession in tape. You will get a conviction easily.
- Herbert Evison: This has been a very lively session. I knew it would be a good one, but it has been a far better one than I ever hoped for or dreamed of.
- Luis Arana: By the way, to sort of bring the whole thing to full cycle I have received indications that effective the 23rd of February I shall be assigned to Castillo again. In other words, I shall be paid from here and my position will be staff historian. I shall not have line authority or anything like that. That would be the interpreters job.
- Herbert Evison: I take it that means for one thing you will be the advisor to the superintendent on all matters historically.
- Luis Arana: Dealing with the historical substance I shall be the advisor.
- Herbert Evison: You also will be expected to continue to find out everything you were hinted to on loan about this period.
- Luis Arana: It should be that way. Back in the days when interpretation was strong, we used to say that the objective in the Division of Interpretation in a national monument should be to know more about the place than anyone else. After all it was your bailiwick.

Well this is the feeling that I still have about Castillo. We know very little about it really. We know very little about Castillo. Don't think that this is an open and shut case. We know very, very little about it. And my alarm is that because I am qualified and while I am still strong; while I am still alive, I may do something for it. I may increase the information and leave it behind as a contribution.

Herbert Evison: You know Albert Manucy has done quite a lot of research in Spain.

Luis Arana: He's there now. You know that don't you.

Herbert Evison: Oh, he is there now.

Luis Arana: Yes, sir.

Herbert Evison: The letter I had from him a year and a half or two years ago as I remember, mentioned that he hoped to get back over there for some more research.

Luis Arana: I saw Albert, oh, six weeks ago perhaps two months. He was passing through St. Augustine and his wife is retired from her job with the army in Germany so they were going back to Spain. What he wants to do over there is complete measurements and drawings of what he calls the "poor people's architecture" so that he can complete two notebooks of drawings and pictures about architecture and have them published. His objective in this is that through some of that architecture he will be able to understand the type of houses that were built in St. Augustine. In St. Augustine being exclusively an army post all of its history, you find that there were not palatial houses, there were not mansions you have simply a functional things that were of a lesser degree of ostentation. So that is what he wants to do.

Luis Arana: Another thing that bothers Albert is that he wants to finish – not finish – do because he is already finished things along that line. But do a full-length biography of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, the founder of St. Augustine.

Luis Arana: He was looking very well, young, zestful, so I do hope he accomplishes these things.

Herbert Evison: Do you know how long he expects to be over there?

Luis Arana: He will be there at least a year.

Herbert Evison: Oh, really.

Luis Arana: Perhaps longer.

Herbert Evison: Will that be mostly in Seville?

Luis Arana: No, he will travel all over Spain for the portion of his interest dealing with architecture. For the portion dealing with Pedro Menéndez de Avilés he will probably be going to the archives in Seville.

Herbert Evison: Well, anything more you would like to add on here?

Luis Arana: I have gotten into enough trouble already. I don't know the only thing left for me to say is that in the rush, in the tremendous activity generated by the beginning of Mission 66, way back, and the continuous activity that we have in the Service I wish history should not be side-tracked. It has been in the Service, the fellows who are worthwhile because they are interested and would like to keep on working with this are side-tracked by promotions that entail most of the time management responsibilities. I am not knocking management or anything like that but what I mean to say is that one has become all embracing to the detriment of history which is the thing that we give to the public in the historic areas. The fellows who are good get – maybe young, they may have a wife, they may have children and they cannot be as ornery as some of us old guys are. We say “no.” They never can. They have to support a wife and support the kids, so they take these promotions and the promotions keep coming along and pretty soon they have gone out of the profession. Because of that interpretation suffers. It suffers, definitely. You cannot work in a historic place using the same information time and time and time again. Because things change. Even historical information changes when new sources become available. That would be my “swan-song.”

Herbert Evison: I would interpret that as meaning you want to keep history fresh all the time.

Luis Arana: You have got too. It is one way of keeping your place fresh. It is one way of keeping yourself fresh.

Herbert Evison: Yes, I think that makes sense.

Luis Arana: It makes sense. It's that sensation of by God I found it for that publication. I found what I have been looking for. It's like two years ago, I said, “Aha, I found it.” This fort according to this record and it is in black and white was finished in 1695 not in 1696. I have the record here, see. This is the excitement. This is what keeps everything up to par.

Herbert Evison: That's the analogy. If _____ was a _____ standing on a _____ and there was the Pacific Ocean.

Luis Arana: That's right.

END OF TAPE