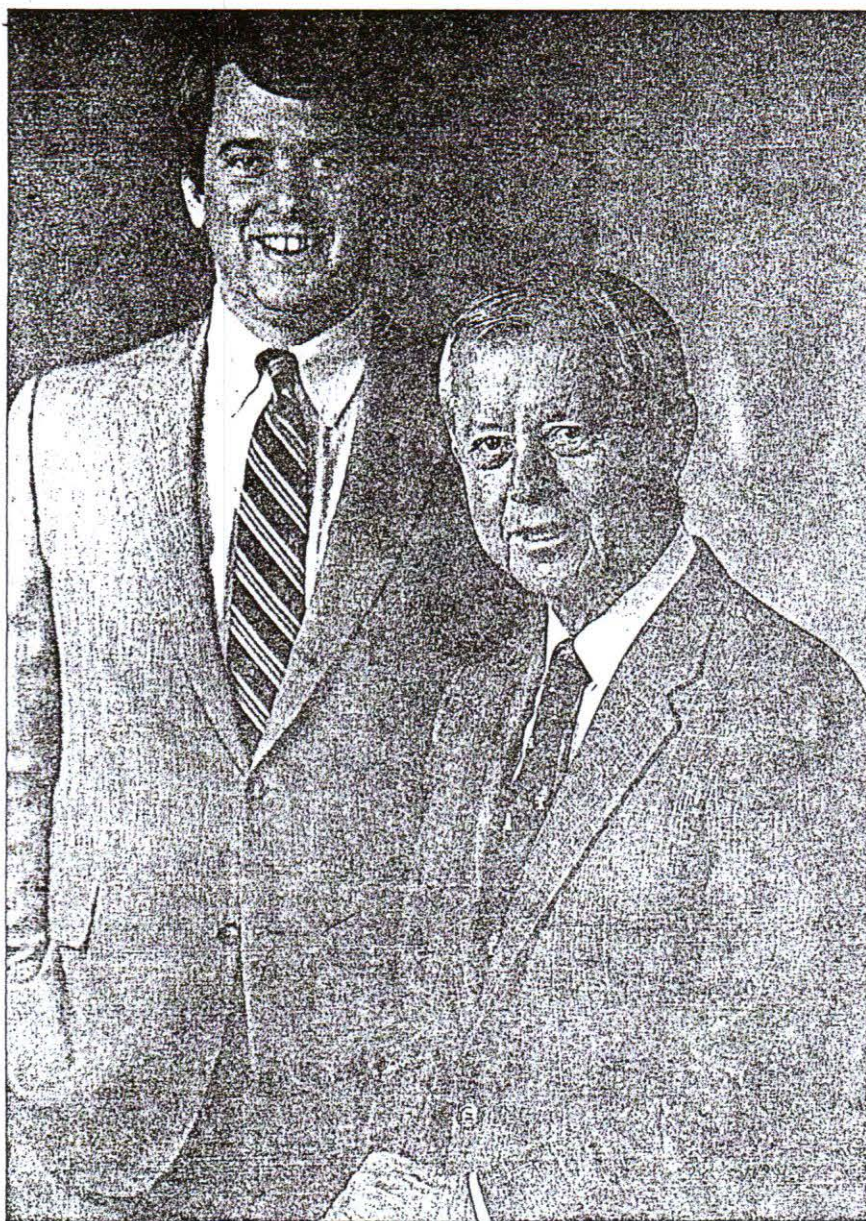


You can't make money in farming? How then did J.G. Boswell II build the biggest, most advanced and most prosperous agriculture operation in the U.S.?

"Let the growth come by itself"



J.G. Boswell Co.'s James W. Boswell with his father, James G. II
The best farmers in America.

By Ralph King Jr.

AT 25, James G. Boswell II was your typical young man adrift, with not the slightest notion of what he wanted to do with his life. He was a Stanford graduate and well off: His father, "Mr. Bill," and uncle, James G. (the Colonel), after whom he was named, had, since going into business together in 1924, established a pretty fair-size farming and cattle feedlot operation around Corcoran, in California's San Joaquin Valley, and in Arizona, outside Phoenix.

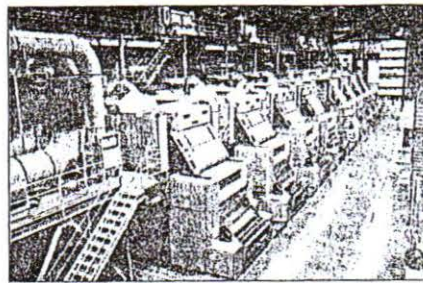
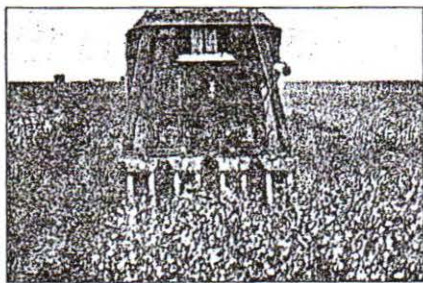
But J.G. II had his family worried. He had no interest in farming or ranching. "I never wanted to work for the company," he says. He was savoring the rougher side of life, working in a south San Francisco meatpacking plant, hauling bloody sides of beef by day and playing the horses in the evening. J.G. II had finished four undistinguished years as an economics major ("I got a lousy education") at Stanford, interrupted by a stint flying reconnaissance planes in the Pacific during World War II.

But then Mr. Bill called one afternoon. "Said he needed me for three months as a favor," as J.G. II recalls, "to straighten out the Arizona feedlot." It was 1948, and though he didn't realize it at the time, James Boswell II had joined the family business for good. He punched cows, lost two fingers on his right hand in a roping accident early one morning, and kept the feedlot humming.

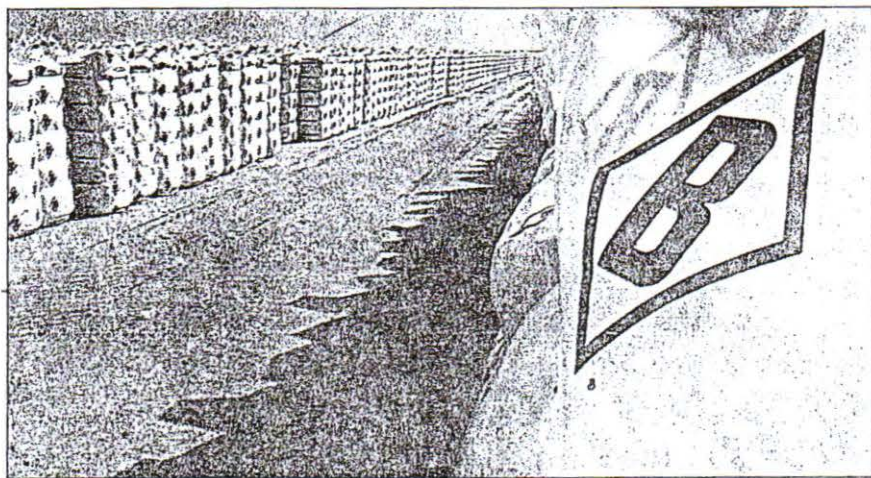
So much so that when the Colonel died suddenly with no natural heirs in 1952, J.G.'s aunt, Ruth, the willful daughter of land baron and *Los Angeles Times* publisher Harry Chandler, called him back to take complete charge of J.G. Boswell Co.

The Boswell company had already amassed 60,000 acres, even though it functioned mainly as a middleman between cotton growers and the market. Starting as a cotton merchant, the firm had moved into cotton ginning, cottonseed oil milling and farm lending. Raising cotton was merely a way to keep the gin and the oil mill employed. But young Boswell quickly realized that the company's return on capital would improve only if it became a self-sustaining integrated cotton producer.

Today, for 160,000 treeless acres—more than 250 square miles, four times the size of the District of Columbia—the J.G. Boswell Co. surrounds the tiny town of Corcoran, Calif. (pop. 7,775) like the sea. It is the largest, most profitable, most technically advanced cotton farm in the



High-speed irrigation pumps, cotton pickers, automated cotton gins and (below) Diamond B bales ready for shipping
"Farming is no different than manufacturing."



Jeffrey MacMillan

world. The soil is leveled by laser-guided scrapers so that it drops no more than a single foot in each mile. Mammoth \$350,000 tractors drag gangs of discs that churn the earth in 40-foot swaths. The land is scientifically irrigated by special high-volume pumps invented by J.G. Boswell engineers and soaked by water that has flowed through more than 1,000 miles of private canals from the Sierra Nevada mountains.

James Boswell II has over the last 40 years built and still controls an enterprise estimated to be worth more than \$500 million. He has also changed the cotton business. "J.G. did more for farming cotton than anyone," says Duke Kimbrell, chairman of Parkdale Mills in Gastonia, N.C. and a customer for Boswell's premium-grade Diamond B long-fiber cotton for more than 20 years. Adds Howard Cooley, president of Jockey International, another prime customer, "Boswell is Star Wars compared to what we see in Mississippi."

Considering that this king of cotton is also the nation's largest grower of wheat, safflower and seed alfalfa, James Boswell II is almost certainly the best farmer in America and, since he has not talked to the media in 20 years, has one of the lowest profiles.

Boswell looks like a cross between Jimmy Carter and Johnny Carson, but

tanned and rugged. He talked to FORBES at his unimposing four-bedroom home in Sun Valley, where he has lived since 1986 with Rosalind, his wife of 41 years. Despite Boswell's considerable wealth, he is relentlessly down-home, driving a beat-up Nissan pickup and dressing generally in worn cords, hiking boots and faded flannel shirts. He chops his own firewood and cross-country skis three hours at a stretch, antidotes to career "burn-out," as he puts it.

At 66, J.G. II is cutting back on his workload. He has left the boards of General Electric and Safeway but still serves on Security Pacific's. He remains chairman of J.G. Boswell Co., but his 36-year-old son, James W., runs the \$200 million (fiscal 1989 revenues) firm. His other children, two daughters, Lorraine and Jody, are not in the family business.

J.G. II serves up homilies: "Mr. Bill used to say, 'Get the water, and the land will come to you.'" In the early days, the Corcoran area actually suffered from too much water—most of the Boswell farmlands are lake beds that used to fill during big floods. Once, after a flood, Mr. Bill agreed to buy a lake and promptly sold the water to another farmer to raise the money for the purchase, but he shrewdly retained the rights to future water that would naturally flow to it.

Five vast parcels, most with similar water rights, were offered to J.G. II within a few years after he took over the company. Protecting those rights, in court and in political campaigns, has cost the company millions of dollars over the years. "Water rights are like democracy," he says. "Once you have them you spend a lifetime defending them." As the big Sierra rivers were gradually dammed, the threat of flooding lessened, the rights became more valuable, and the wondrous effects of irrigation on cotton turned the San Joaquin Valley into cotton heaven.

From the start he showed a finely honed business sense. "Farming's no different than manufacturing," says Boswell. "Since we had no control over price, the U.S. government in effect sets that, all we could do was lower costs or improve yields at the same cost. We had no alternative. We had to be the best at growing cotton and a few complementary crops. We concentrated our efforts."

That single-mindedness spawned a simple strategy: Apply the components of large-scale manufacturing—automation wherever possible, assured raw material supply, extensive research—to crop production.

The Boswell company put up much of the capital to build the first mechanized cotton picker, and bought the first 50 pickers International Harvester made. For years 5,000 migrant laborers arrived in Corcoran at harvest time and lived in a tent city. Today a mere 100 drivers bring in the crop.

More recently, Boswell technicians invented a portable pump, called a "moon buggy," that requires one man-day of labor to irrigate one square mile instead of 30 man-days using conventional equipment.

Field operations resemble a military assault, with up to ten giant machines moving in formation across a field. Scheduling is a Boswell religion. Each field hand and piece of equipment follows a rigorous timetable to stay in constant motion.

The company runs a variety of re-

search programs and has sunk \$10 million into a small genetic engineering firm it owns along with Swiss chemical maker Ciba-Geigy Ltd. The next big potential breakthroughs: cotton plants that are pest-resistant, to eliminate the need for most pesticides, and plants that are not harmed by mild herbicides, to reduce weeding and toxic spraying. Such innovations promise lower costs and higher yields.

The San Joaquin Valley is a world leader in farm productivity largely because of huge state and federal irrigation projects, its fertile soil and predictable climate. Here it costs an average 63 cents to grow one pound of cotton. For Boswell, just 40 cents. Statewide yields average 1,100 pounds per acre. Boswell's average, at 1,250 pounds, is well over twice the national rate.

The company applied itself with similar success to marketing. Boswell cotton is sought by the fussiest of mills. It is spun into such products as Jockey underwear, Fieldcrest towels and L.L. Bean shirts. Its fiber is too fine and long for mere denim. As a result, the Boswell company has built the only true brand name in cotton, like Frank Perdue and chicken. Boswell Diamond B bales are sealed in a heavy clear plastic, while much other cotton is still wrapped in jute. Jute absorbs moisture, which means the bale may gain weight and thus cost more upon delivery.

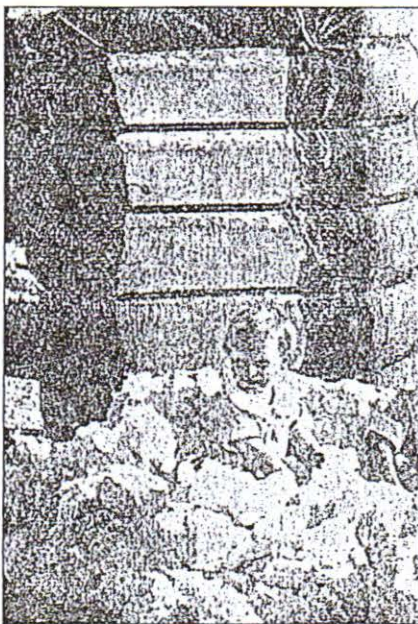
Says Jockey's Howard Cooley, "Boswell delivers even better than what you buy. We don't even have to check it." Big mill owners, such as Jockey, will pay extra for uniform quality in large quantity because there are fewer costly adjustments of equipment. Boswell cotton fetches a penny a pound more than that of rival Calcot Ltd., a giant California marketing cooperative, a dime more than average U.S. cotton.

Boswell has been blessed by the long upward trend in world cotton consumption—currently 83 million bales, more than triple the 1945 level—but for the company, as for most U.S. farmers, the 1980s have been unusually tumultuous. Farmers have struggled grimly against worldwide recession, the once-strong U.S. dollar, volatile commodity prices, and the disruptive effects of easy farm credit and government intervention—not to mention the standard litany of natural disasters. In cotton alone, the number of farms dropped from 32,000 to an estimated 21,000 between 1978 and 1987.

But as the farm crisis raged, Boswell consistently turned a profit, its net

margins typically above 10% and its return on assets double the national farm average, but not without drastic measures. In late 1985 J.G. II cut his payroll sharply by offering all 600 of his salaried employees early retirement. About half accepted. "I hated to do it," he recalls. "I saw nothing but losses."

Government subsidy programs contributed mightily to the crisis, according to Boswell, who has for the most part elected not to participate in them. "We have this huge bunch of captive competitors who shouldn't be in the business at all." The solution? Phase them out entirely, he says. "Look, I'm a Jeffersonian. You have to have a viable rural economy. But there's a limit. You can't entice peo-



J.G. Boswell II at age 2
Farming was in the blood.

ple into a business that is uneconomic for them and expect to keep them on the government dole forever."

Where will J.G. Boswell Co. go from here? Just as the company's future was in J.G. Boswell II's hands four decades ago, it is now in his son's. J.G. II refers our question to his son, James W., who is chief executive and occupies dad's corner office in a downtown Los Angeles high rise. Husky and a head taller than his father, he seems cut from the same character mold. He answers:

"There's a lot of satisfaction in planting seed and watching it grow. Farming is in my blood," he says, noting with pride that he drove equipment in the fields for two years before getting an undergraduate degree in business from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. "I'd much rather hand it on to the

next generation than cash it out, though we've always said that everything is for sale at the right price." He has four children, ages 3 to 12, one of whom may well take over someday.


Last year the right price was offered for the company's 50,000-acre cotton operation in Australia by billionaire Kerry Packer. He paid \$56 million, about twice book value, ending a 25-year chapter during which the company built that nation's cotton industry virtually from scratch.

And the Boswells are well aware that farmland is a lot more valuable when converted for development. The Sun City retirement community, near Phoenix, now stands on what was the firm's 20,000-acre holding. In a 49% partnership with Del Webb Corp. over 25 years, Boswell realized an \$80 million gain and learned the development business. Today 10% of its pretax profits comes from real estate joint ventures, including a 3,000-acre mixed-use project near San Diego. In this case, Boswell provided debt financing and will get 80% of the profits.

J.G. Boswell Co. is a private, closely held firm. Directly and through a charitable foundation, J.G. II's immediate family controls nearly half the 200,000 shares. Only about 20% is in nonfamily hands. The company has never missed a dividend, most recently paying a 5.5% yield. Not long ago it bought back a small number of shares at \$900 apiece.

Is that what it's worth? FORBES estimates that at a current \$2,000 per acre, plus its gins, seed oil mills and other equipment and investments, it could fetch \$500 million—\$2,500 a share. But that's not all. In time Boswell's water rights may be the far larger pearl, given the scarcity of water and the unrelenting growth of southern California cities. Certain municipalities in the West are already paying up to \$3,000 for permanent rights to 1 acre-foot (roughly what a family of five uses in one year). At that rate, Boswell's 300,000 acre-feet are worth in theory more than twice the indicated value of the land.

In our talk with J.G. II, we put a final question: What was the philosophy on which he built his great operation? He thought for a moment and said: "I don't believe in growth for its own sake." Sipping from a glass of Jack Daniels by a cozy fire, he continued: "If that's your policy, pretty soon your people are overreaching and you're forever having to put out brushfires. The best policy is to let growth come by itself." Good advice for some of today's young people in too much of a hurry. ■

 print this page

James Griffin Boswell II

James Griffin Boswell II passed away April 3, 2009, at his home in Indian Wells, Calif. He was born March 10, 1923, in Greensboro, Ga., the son of William Whittier Boswell Sr. and Kate Hail Boswell.

J.G., as he was commonly called, graduated from the Thacher School in Ojai, Calif., in 1941 and received his B.S. in economics from Stanford University in 1946. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II in the South Pacific. It was at Stanford where he met his first wife, Rosalind Murray. They were married in Pasadena in 1948 and started their home in Litchfield Park, Ariz. They moved to Pasadena, Calif., in 1952 where they raised their three children. In 1984, they moved to Sun Valley, Idaho. Rosalind passed away on Aug. 10, 2000.



J.G. was highly instrumental in the growth of the J. G. Boswell Co., which was started by his father, Bill, and Bill's brothers, Col. J. G. Boswell and Col. Walter Boswell. J.G.'s career with the Boswell Co. began in 1948 and continued until his passing. He served as chairman, president and CEO from 1952 until his retirement in 1984. After retirement, he continued to serve on the Boswell Co. board of directors until his passing. He also served on the boards of Safeway, General Electric, Security Pacific Bank, Bank of America and Up With People. He was a trustee of The California Nature Conservancy, Cal Tech, Thacher School, the James G. Boswell Foundation of California, and the Boswell Family Foundation of Idaho.

Through his leadership, the J. G. Boswell Co. continues to enjoy a reputation for success and excellence in agricultural operations in California and New South Wales, Australia, as well as in its successful real estate development projects in Arizona, Colorado and California.

J.G. was preceded in death by his parents; his first wife, Rosalind Murray Boswell; a brother, William Whittier Boswell Jr.; and two sisters, Katherine Lavender and Josephine (Jody) Larsen.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara Wallace Boswell; daughters, Jody Hall of Incline Village, Nev., and Lorraine Wilcox of Sun Valley, Idaho, and his son, James Walter Boswell of La Canada Flintridge, Calif.; and grandchildren, Elizabeth Boswell, Cameron Boswell, Katherine Boswell, Daniel Boswell and Gifford Wilcox.

A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m., Wednesday, April 22, at the Corcoran High School Memorial Stadium in Corcoran, Calif. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Hospice of the Wood River Valley, Box 4320, Ketchum, ID 83340, or St. Luke's Wood River Medical Center, Box 100, Ketchum, ID 83340.

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The Idaho Mountain Express is distributed free to residents and guests throughout the Sun Valley, Idaho resort area community. Subscribers to the Idaho Mountain Express will read these stories and others in this week's issue.

Indian Creek Owners

From: Boswell, James W. [jboswell@jgboswell.com]
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2009 11:24 AM
To: Theresa Williams; Lorraine Wilcox; Barbara Wallace Boswell
Subject: New York Times

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April 10, 2009

James G. Boswell II, 86, Owner of Cotton Empire, Dies at 86

By DENNIS HEVESI

James G. Boswell II, who inherited a huge expanse of farmland in the San Joaquin Valley of California, then quadrupled its acreage to create a cotton-growing empire, died last Friday at his home in Indian Wells, Calif. He was 86.

He died of natural causes, according to a statement from his family.

It was the boll weevil's decimation of the cotton fields of Georgia that sent Mr. Boswell's uncle James Griffin Boswell, for whom he was named, across the country in 1921. Outside Corcoran, a rural town in Central California, Colonel Boswell (as the uncle preferred to be called) bought the first of what gradually became 50,000 acres. In 1952 he bequeathed his cotton fields to his nephew.

James Boswell II eventually expanded the family's holdings to approximately 200,000 acres, including 60,000 in the Australian outback but not including the 20,000 acres in Arizona that he sold in the late 1950s to the Del Webb Development Company. Those 20,000 acres were transformed, with Mr. Boswell as a development partner, into Sun City, one of the nation's first retirement communities.

"It speaks to his incredible business sense that when his Arizona land was no longer good for growing cotton he was savvy enough to grow houses," Rick Wartzman, the director of the Drucker Institute at Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, Calif., said Tuesday in an interview. Mr. Wartzman, a former business editor at The Los Angeles Times, is the author, with Mark Arax, of "The King of California: J. G. Boswell and the Making of a Secret American Empire" (PublicAffairs, 2003).

The J. G. Boswell Company currently owns about 150,000 acres in California and, according to Hoover's Inc., a business analysis company, is the largest producer of cotton in the United States. It supplies textile mills worldwide and has annual sales of more than \$150 million.

4/13/2009

The company's expansion has not been without controversy. Its vast, well-tended lands and network of irrigation canals stretch across the bed of Tulare Lake, which was once the largest freshwater lake west of the Mississippi, four times the size of Lake Tahoe. Early pioneers encroached on the lake to irrigate their farms, a process that Mr. Boswell's uncle accelerated as he bought more property.

Four rivers feed Tulare Lake. The Boswells forcefully and successfully lobbied for the construction of dams that largely diminished the lake, draining its bed for more farmland.

"He re-engineered the landscape, much to the consternation of environmentalists," Mr. Wartzman said of the younger James Boswell. "He was a titan with a lot of power in Sacramento and Washington. He genuinely loved the land, and yet he left an environmental record that was very mixed at best."

Mr. Boswell also introduced techniques that became a model for large-scale farming: lasers that ensured level fields for even water distribution; bioengineering of new and pest-resistant seeds; computerized cotton gins with a capacity to produce 400 bales a day — enough to produce 840,000 pairs of boxer shorts, according to a 2003 article in *The Los Angeles Times*.

"There was an antiseptic cleanliness to the whole operation," Mr. Wartzman said. "He pushed the industry in terms of modernizing, from seed to field to gin."

Born on March 10, 1923, in Greensboro, Ga., Mr. Boswell was the son of William Boswell Sr. and Kate Hall Boswell. When he was a child, the family moved to California to join in his uncle's enterprise.

After serving in the Army in the Pacific during World War II, Mr. Boswell returned to Stanford University in 1946 to complete his bachelor's degree in economics. There he met Rosalind Murray; they married and had three children. She died in 2000. Mr. Boswell is survived by his second wife, the former Barbara Wallace; his son, James, who now runs the business; two daughters, Jody Hall and Lorraine Wilcox; and five grandchildren.

Mr. Boswell was a complicated, reticent man. He saw himself as a cowboy and was proud that he had lost two fingers in a cattle-roping accident. He golfed with Arnold Palmer. He sat on the boards of General Electric, the Security Pacific Bank and the Safeway supermarket chain. He was chairman, president and chief executive of his company from 1952 until he retired in 1984.

Mr. Boswell did not like to talk about himself or his business.

When Mr. Wartzman and Mr. Arax were doing research for "The King of California," Mr. Boswell spurned many requests for an interview.

"We finally decided to appeal to his mortality," they wrote in the book, "a sales pitch he cut short like this: 'You don't seem to understand. It won't bother me in the least if I die and this story is never told.'"

 James W. Boswell
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Pasadena, CA 91103
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FAX: 626-583-3008
Mobile: 626-437-6594
jboswell@jgboswell.com

Sun City benefactor dies

STAFF REPORT

The man who sold 20,000 acres that helped create Sun City has died.

James Griffin Boswell II, former chairman, president and CEO of J.G. Boswell Co., died April 3 at his home in Indian Wells, Calif. He was 86.

Service will take place at 1 p.m. Wednesday at the Corcoran High School Memorial Stadium in Corcoran, Calif.

"We definitely send our condolences to the family and recognize the possibility that Sun City would not exist without the contributions of him and the organization that partnered with Del Webb that made Sun City and Sun City West viable entities," said David Verble, Sun Cities Area Historical Society president.

Historical society volunteer and founder Jane Freeman recognized Boswell's love of Sun City.

"He always had a fond spot in his heart for Sun City," Freeman said. "And he was a great supporter of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society."

Boswell was born March 10, 1923, in Greensboro, Ga., and was the son of William Whittier Boswell Sr. and Kate Hail Boswell.

Boswell's uncle James Griffin Boswell bought 50,000 acres of land outside of Corcoran, Calif., in 1921, which was used for cotton farming. In 1952, he bequeathed the fields to Boswell, who expanded the holdings to 200,000 acres, including 20,000 in Arizona, which stretched from Peoria

to Luke Air Force Base, and 60,000 in the Australian outback.

In the summer of 1959, Boswell checked out

a report that the Webb Company was in the market for tracts of land for development and met, unannounced, with company representatives.

The following morning, the deal for the 20,000 acres was worked out, allowing the Webb Company to purchase the land.

The Del E. Webb Development Corporation was formed, and the plans for a new concept in retirement communities — Sun City — was conceived.

The ground-breaking of the first golf course was in the summer of 1959. Grand opening was Jan. 1, 1960.

Boswell served in the U.S. Army during World War II in the South Pacific.

He is survived by his second wife, the former Barbara Wallace, his son, James, who runs the J.G. Boswell Co., daughters Jody Hall and Lorraine Wilcox, and five grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Hospice of the Wood River Valley, Box 4320, Ketchum, ID 83340, or St. Luke's Wood River Medical Center, Box 100, Ketchum, ID 83340.



James Griffin Boswell II

THE WESTER Nov. 22-28, 1990

Boswell Hospital's Namesake A Military, Business Leader

by Marie Scotti

During 1990 the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital observes its 20th anniversary of providing health care services to the northwest Valley.

The hospital's board of directors, medical staff, employees, volunteers and many other friends also celebrate the life of the hospital's namesake—a distinguished military officer and business executive who made significant contributions to the development and economy of western Maricopa County.

Walter Osgood Boswell was born on Dec. 19, 1878, in Penfield, Ga., as the eldest of ten children of Joseph and Minnie G. Boswell. He attended the University of Georgia and the U. S. Military Academy at West Point prior to receiving his commission in 1902 as a second lieutenant



Walter O. Boswell
1878-1953

enat of infantry in the U. S. army. After his marriage in 1909 to Ann Decker Orr of Pittsburgh, Penn., he served during 1910-1915 Aide de Camp to famed Gen. John J. "Blackjack" Pershing. He returned to the University of Georgia as a professor of military science from 1916-1917 and then served, until the end of World War I as assistant operations officer with the First U. S.

Infantry Division in France.

His military accomplishments included his distinguished graduation from the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College. He served as executive officer in G-2 Intelligence with the War Dept. General Staff and retired as a lieutenant colonel and as executive officer of the 22nd Infantry Regiment at Fort MacPherson, Ga.

Lt. Col. Boswell was in line to become Chief of staff for Gen. Pershing when he was persuaded to take early retirement from the Army in 1931 to assume duties as vice president and general manager of Arizona Operations for the J. G. Boswell Co. It was during this period that Mr. Boswell and two of his brothers expanded the company's farming, cotton ginning, oil milling and cattle-feeding operations in Maricopa, Pinal and

Pima counties through farmland acquisition and cotton-gin construction.

A lease was negotiated for the expansive Marinette Ranch in northwest Maricopa County shortly after Mr. Boswell became general manager of the J. G. Boswell Co.'s operations. Later this property, at the instigation and recommendation of Walter O. Boswell, was bought by the company, bringing the company's total land holdings in western Maricopa County to 20,000 acres. It was on part of this land that Del E. Webb would begin development of Arizona's Sun Cities in the 1960s. Mr. Boswell retired in 1946 from the J. G. Boswell Co. He died in 1953 in Phoenix and is survived by two of his three sons and ten grandchildren.

In 1966, the James G. Boswell Foundation donated \$1.2 million toward the construction of the planned hospital in Sun City. There were three conditions: 1) The hospital would serve not only Sun City but also the entire northwest Valley; 2) that it have the finest medical facilities available at that time; and 3) that it be named in memory of Walter O. Boswell.

Ground was broken for the hospital on Jan. 24, 1969, and the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital was dedicated on Nov. 6, 1970. It opened to serve the community on Nov. 16, 1970.

Celebrating Our Namesake

During 1990, the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital observes its 20th anniversary of providing health care services to the northwest Valley.

The hospital's board of directors, medical staff, employees, volunteers and many other friends also celebrate the life of the hospital's namesake -- a distinguished military officer and business executive who made significant contributions to the development and economy of western Maricopa County.

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After his marriage in 1909 to Ann Decker Orr of Pittsburgh, Penn., he served during 1910-1915 as Aide de Camp to famed Gen. John J. Pershing. He returned to the University of Georgia as a professor of military science from 1916-1917 and then served until the end of World War I as assistant operations officer with the First U.S. Infantry Division in France.

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Mr. Boswell retired in 1946 from the J.G. Boswell Co. He died in 1953 in Phoenix and is survived by two of his three sons and 10 grandchildren. His surviving sons are Brig. Gen. James O. Boswell, U.S.A. Ret., Hillsborough, Calif.; and William O. Boswell, who retired as Deputy Chief, Foreign Service Personnel, Department of State, Washington, D.C.

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Today, after 20 years of service, Boswell Memorial is a 325-bed, non-profit community hospital with an international reputation for excellence in the care of the mature adult.

The Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital:
Celebrating our history!

Distinguished namesake honored during 20th Anniversary celebration

Boswell Memorial Hospital's 20 years of dedicated service reflect the same commitment to excellence as was demonstrated by its namesake.

As part of our celebration, we honor the life of the hospital's namesake -- a distinguished military officer and business executive who made significant contributions to the development and economy of western Maricopa County.

Walter Osgood Boswell, born on December 19, 1878, in Penfield, Georgia, was the eldest of 10 children of Joseph and Minnie G. Boswell. He attended the University of Georgia and graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, receiving his commission in 1902 as a second lieutenant of infantry in the U.S. Army.

After his marriage in 1909 to Ann Decker Orr of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, he served from 1910 - 1915 as Aide de Camp to the famed General John J. Pershing. He returned to the University of Georgia as a professor of military science for one year and then served until the end of World War I as assistant operations officer with the First U.S. Infantry Division in France.

His military accomplishments include his distinguished graduation from the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College. He served as executive officer in G-2 Intelligence with the War Department General Staff and as executive officer of the 22nd Infantry Regiment at Fort MacPherson, Georgia.



Walter O. Boswell

Lt Col. Boswell was in line to become Chief of Staff for Gen. Pershing when, in 1931, he was persuaded to take early retirement from the Army to assume duties as vice president and general manager of Arizona operations for the J.G. Boswell Company. During this period, Mr. Boswell and two of his brothers expanded the company's farming, cotton ginning, oil mining and cattle-feeding operations in Maricopa, Pinal and Pima counties through farmland acquisition and cotton-gin construction.

A lease was negotiated for the expansive Marinette Ranch in northwest Maricopa County shortly after he became general manager of the J.G. Boswell Company's operations. Later, this prop-

erty, at his instigation and recommendation, was bought by the company, bringing its total land holdings in western Maricopa County to 20,000 acres. It was on part of this land that Del E. Webb began developing Arizona's Sun Cities in the early 1960s.

Mr. Boswell retired in 1946 from his position with the company. He died in 1953 in Phoenix and is survived by two of his three sons and 10 grandchildren. His surviving sons are **Brig. General James O. Boswell**, USA Retired, Hillsborough, California; and **William O. Boswell**, who retired as Deputy Chief, Foreign Service Personnel, Department of State, Washington, D.C.

In 1966, the James G. Boswell Foundation donated \$1.2 million toward construction of the planned hospital in Sun City. There were three conditions: 1) The hospital would serve not only Sun City but also the entire northwest Valley, 2) that it would have the finest medical facilities available at that time, and 3) that it be named in memory of Walter O. Boswell.

Ground was broken for the hospital on January 24, 1969, and the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital was dedicated on November 6, 1970. It opened to serve the community 10 days later.

Today, after 20 years of service, Boswell Memorial is a 325-bed, non-profit community hospital with an international reputation for excellence in the care of the mature adult.

Farmer Boswell lauded in national magazine

By GLEN SANBERG
News-Sun columnist

SUN CITY — Who said you can't make money farming?

It wasn't James G. Boswell II, who Forbes Magazine says built the biggest most advanced and prosperous agricultural operation in the U.S.



In its April 17 issue Forbes describes this remarkable man as the king of cotton but he is also the nation's largest grower of wheat, safflower and seed alfalfa.

We met Mr. Boswell in 1984 when we were writing "JUBILEE, The 25th Anniversary of Sun City." He was gracious enough to fly here to tell us first-hand about the early days

Retired in style

of the development of Sun City. He related the exciting events that led up to the sale of some 20,000 acres of Arizona cotton ranch land to the Del Webb Co., on which the Sun Cities was to be built and the partnership that lasted through the years of development.

It was obvious from that first meeting that here was a quiet, unpretentious man whose tanned, rugged profile concealed the fact that he presided over a multimillion-dollar agri-business operation stretching from California to Australia — a business that manages the cultivation of some 160,000 treeless acres, an area Forbes says is four times the size of the District of Columbia.

What we did not know until

the Forbes article was that the modest Jim Boswell didn't mention that he is a graduate of Stanford University, became a Pacific reconnaissance pilot in World War II, and began his career in a south San Francisco meatpacking plant. He had no intention of joining his father's ranching operation until as a favor to the family he helped straighten out a faltering feed lot in Arizona.

The rest of the fascinating story is of a man with a finely-honed business sense grasping an opportunity to modernize an industry that could prosper on its own without the largess of government subsidies but by the application of sound scientific agricultural methods.

Mammoth tractors began to drag gangs of discs churning the Boswell soil in 40-foot swipes. High volume pumps designed by

Boswell engineers irrigate fields yielding more premium-grade cotton per acre than is possible by less productive methods. Now 100 men operating mechanized cotton pickers do the work formerly done by 1,000 migrant laborers.

It is the story of a man whose vision and guidance behind the scenes helped Sun City rise from the desert sands south of Grand Avenue, expand and spread across the tracks to the north where he nudged one of the finest modern hospitals in the country into being with a generous initial Boswell gift.

It is the story of a man who has avoided the media for 20 years and still modestly disclaims any reason to exploit personal success by parading its virtue. He comes back to Sun City once in a while to see old friends and to lend a hand in

keeping its history straight and true.

Thanks to this interest we have a trunk full of maps dating back to the days when original canals dotted the desert landscape where the Sun Cities now rest. Thanks to his interest the story of one of the most important experiments in creative aging is being updated and preserved.

Any true history of Sun City has to place the name of James G. Boswell II prominently alongside that of Del E. Webb.

...

My recent column relating our experience with tough breakfast pancakes encountered in a Liberal, Kansas, restaurant stirred up more local interest than one would suspect. There have been commenting telephone calls, people collaring me in shopping

centers. Now comes a letter from good friend Dr. Don Bouma, the sociology professor whose delightful lecture on "The Superiority of Women" has made Sun City service club history.

He writes, "Did you know that Liberal, Kansas, is the Pancake Capital of America? Coming into town from the north one passes a large monument consisting of a huge pancake made of concrete. Maybe it's the one they served you."

For years it seems, Liberal has prided itself on winning a competition with a sister city in England in a pancake-flipping rivalry in which contestants race across town flipping tender cakes against time.

What a pity not to have known. We would have avoided an international incident. Sorry.

LDS Church buys 3,100 acre Boswell Farm near Sun City

The 3,100-acre J.G. Boswell Farm near Sun City West has been sold for \$20 million in cash to the Corporation of the Presiding Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon).

The transaction was announced Thursday by George Reeve, president of Reeve Enterprises Inc., a Phoenix-based real estate development, commercial brokerage and investment firm specializing in land acquisition for a select group of clients.

Reeve represented J.G. Boswell, one of the largest farming operations in the world, while broker John "Jack" Rhodes, also of George Reeve Enterprises, represented the Mormon Church.

The church views the Boswell property as a quality farming operation. The Waddell Farm replaces the 870-acre East Mesa citrus ranch which the church recently sold.

J.G. Boswell chairman Jim Boswell said the church requested that the current

management team continue managing the farm.

Under manager Ned Palmer and office manager David Westover's supervision, the Waddell Boswell Farm has become well known and respected throughout the United States for its Cactus Lane table grapes and citrus, vegetable and cotton crops.

The acreage includes the Waddell Cotton Gin which has been in operation since 1953.

The entire transaction was completed in 23 working days from contract signing to escrow closing.

"By using our standard contract and by representing both the seller and the buyer in the negotiations, we were able to keep a relatively large transaction fairly simple," Reeve said.

Owen Childress, vice president of First American Title, handled the escrow on the account.

George W. Reeve Enterprises Inc. has closed nearly \$70 million in transactions since its inception in July 1983.

3,100-acre Valley ranch sold to Mormon Church

The 3,100-acre Cactus Lane Ranch in the west Valley has been sold to the Mormon Church for \$20 million in cash, according to Phoenix land broker George W. Reeve.

Table grapes, citrus, vegetables and cotton are grown on the ranch at Cotton Lane and Peoria Avenue. The purchase by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints includes the ranch's cotton gin at Waddell Road and Cotton Lane.

The purchase will replace the 870-acre east Mesa citrus ranch recently sold by the Mormon Church.

Reeve, president of George W.

Reeve Enterprises Inc., handled the transaction for the J.G. Boswell Co., the ranch's former owner. The Mormon Church was represented by broker John "Jack" Rhodes of Reeve's firm.

The sale ends the J.G. Boswell farming operations in Arizona, according to Doris Crane of Reeve's office. The firm has extensive farm holdings in northern California and in Australia and was involved in developing the Sun City area with the Del E. Webb Corp.

The church has asked that the ranch's management team continue overseeing operations there, according to Jim Boswell, chairman of the company.

Az. Republic 5-4-84 Sec. B

SUN CITY SUN CITIZEN

Vol. 9 — No. 29

SUN CITY, ARIZONA

PH. 933-3531

TEN CENTS

October 21, 1970

William Boswell, 77, Dies

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Mr. Boswell, who resided at Corcoran, Calif., was the brother of Walter O. Boswell, for whom Sun City's new hospital was named.

He was member of a pioneer family which developed the Sun City area, as well as the San Joaquin Valley, Calif. With his two brothers, Col. Walter O. Boswell and Col. J.G. Boswell, he pioneered early development of cotton production and cattle feeding in Arizona and California.

Mr. Boswell was associated with the J.G. Boswell Co. from 1923 until his retirement from active employment in 1950. However, up to the time of his death he served on its board of directors and was consultant for many of the company's activities.

For many years he was in charge of cattle feeding at the company's two principal locations, Litchfield Park in Arizona and Corcoran, Calif. and he was widely known among cattlemen throughout the Southwest.

Memorial services were held Tuesday at First Presbyterian Church of Corcoran. Interment will be at Sunland Memorial Park in Sun City Wednesday after

— BOSWELL —

Continued from Page 1
private memorial services at Sunland Chapel for members of the immediate family.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Walter O. Boswell Hospital.

Survivors include his wife, Kate H. Boswell; two sons, William W. Boswell Jr., Corcoran, and James G. Boswell II of Pasadena, Calif.; two daughters, Mrs. Kathryn B. Lavender of San Rafael, Calif., and Mrs. Josephine B. Larsen of Hillsboro, Calif.; two sisters, Mrs. C. R. Smith of Short Hills, N.J., and Mrs. Charles S. McWhorter of Coronado, Calif.; and 10 grandchildren.

The Rev. G. Christie Swain, pastor of United Presbyterian Church here, will conduct the memorial services in Sun City.

Continued on Page 2



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The Rev. G. Christie Swain, pastor of United Presbyterian Church here, will conduct the memorial services in Sun City.

W. W. Boswell, Farm Firm Executive, Dies

Exclusive to The Times from a Staff Writer

10-19-70

CORCORAN, Calif. — Memorial services for William W. Boswell, 77, a founder and former head of a company with vast agricultural land holdings in the West and in Australia, will be conducted at 2 p.m. today in the First Presbyterian Church here. He died Saturday in Memorial Hospital,

San Mateo, after surgery.

Mr. Boswell and a brother, the late James Griffin Boswell, founded the J. G. Boswell Co. in 1924. A third brother, the late Walter Boswell, entered the partnership three years later.

The brothers started their business with a 440-acre farm near here. The firm now has extensive holdings in Kings and Tulare counties, Oregon and Arizona as well as in Australia.

The company raises cotton, grain and other crops and operates a large cattle feeding plant in the San Joaquin Valley. Last year alone the firm received nearly \$4 million in U.S. government subsidies.

Mr. Boswell retired from active management of the company in 1950, although up to the time of his death he served on the board of directors and as a consultant.

He was active in civic and youth organizations and was a past president of the Corcoran Community Foundation.

Mr. Boswell leaves his wife, Kathryn; two sons, W. W. Jr., Corcoran, and James II, Pasadena; two daughters, Mrs. Kathryn Lavender, San Rafael, and Mrs. Josephine Larsen, Hillsborough; two sisters, Mrs. Georgia McWhorter, Coronado, and Mrs. Louise B. Smith, Short Hill, N.J., and 10 grandchildren.

Burial will be in Sunland Memorial Park, Sun City, Ariz. Arrangements are by the Bledsoe Mortuary, Corcoran.

WILLIAM WHITTIER BOSWELL

William Whittier Boswell, pioneer agricultural leader in Arizona and California, and one of the founders of the J. G. Boswell Company, passed away on October 17, 1970, following surgery at San Mateo, California. He was born October 7, 1893, in Pennfield, Georgia.

He is survived by his widow, Kate H. Boswell, four children, W. W. Boswell Jr., of Corcoran, California, Mrs. Kathryn Lavender of San Rafael, Cal., Mrs. Josephine Larsen, of Hillsboro, California, J. G. Boswell II of Pasadena, two sisters, Mrs. C. R. Smith of Short Hills, New Jersey, and Mrs. C. McWhorter of Coronado, Cal., and 10 grandchildren.

With his two brothers, Col. James G. Boswell and Col. Walter O. Boswell, Mr. Boswell pioneered in the early development of cotton production and cattle feeding in the state of Arizona and in the San Joaquin Valley in California. He was associated with the J. G. Boswell Company from 1923 until his retirement from active employment in 1950, although up to the time of his death he served on its board of directors and acted as a consultant for many of the company's activities. For many years he was in charge of cattle feeding at the company's two principal areas of business, Litchfield Park, Arizona, and Corcoran, California, and was widely known among cattle men throughout the southwest.

Memorial services will be held at the First Presbyterian Church in Corcoran, California on Tuesday, October 20th, and private interment services will be held for the immediate family at the Sunland Memorial Chapel in Sun City on Wednesday, October 21st.

Former Boswell land is the present site of Sun City, Arizona, and the Walter O Boswell Memorial Hospital, to be dedicated in November, is in memory of Mr. Boswell's brother.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital, in the name of William W. Boswell.

Walter Osgood Boswell

Born in Penfield, Georgia, on December 19, 1878, eldest of ten children of Joseph and Minnie G. Boswell.

Attended University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, and U. S. Military Academy, West Point, New York.

Commissioned Second Lieutenant of Infantry, U. S. Army, June 1902.

Married to Ann Decker Orr, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, April 1909.

Served as Aide de Camp to General John J. Pershing 1910-1915.
Professor of Military Science, University of Georgia, 1916-1917.
Served with First U. S. Infantry Division in France, 1917-1918,
as Assistant Operations Officer.

Was Distinguished Graduate of the Command and General Staff College,
also Army War College.

Executive Officer, G-2 Intelligence, War Department General Staff.

Retired in grade of Lieutenant Colonel as Executive Officer,
22nd Infantry Regiment, Fort MacPherson, Georgia.

Vice President and General Manager, Arizona Operations of J. G.
Boswell Company, Phoenix, Arizona, 1931-1946.

Retired in 1946 from the J. G. Boswell Company.

Died in Phoenix, Arizona, 1953; survived by three sons and ten grandchildren.

Surviving sons:

Brig. Gen. James O. Boswell, U.S.A. Ret., Hillsborough, California. *retired*

William O. Boswell, Deputy Chief, Foreign Service Personnel, Department
of State, Washington, D.C. *retired*

John P. Boswell, President, Boswell-Shaw Construction Company,
San Francisco, California. *- deceased*

During the period Walter O. Boswell was in charge of the company's operations in Arizona, the company expanded its farming, cotton ginning, oil milling, and cattle feeding operations in Maricopa, Pinal and Pima Counties, through farmland acquisition and cotton gin construction.

Of particular interest is the fact that shortly after Walter O. Boswell became the general manager of the company's operations, a lease was negotiated for the Marinette Ranch. Later this property, at the instigation and on the recommendation of Walter O. Boswell, was bought by the company. A few years ago this same property became Sun City, a part of which is to be the site of the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital. Thus, the relationship between Walter O. Boswell and this property which began over a third of a century ago will continue for all time to come.

Cotton pickin' days of Sun City

Land was field of dreams long before Del E. Webb

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Long before Del E. Webb developed his 600-acre retirement community, Sun City's golf courses and swimming pools were the site of brothels and cotton fields.

In the late 1800s, pioneers began farming land near the west bank of the Agua Fria river.

R.P. Davie, a businessman from Marinette, Wis., was impressed by the growth and potential of the area and bought several thousand acres of land between New River and the Agua Fria.

He named the area after his hometown, but eventually was forced to sell his land in May 1920 to the Southwest Cotton Co. because his sugar beet crops failed.

Southwest dug wells and planted cotton fields on the Marinette site.

Laborers who handpicked the cotton from July to May formed a small community at some remember for its

"house of ill repute."

In 1936, Marinette Ranch was sold to the J.G. Boswell Co., which in turn developed the tract of land into one of the most prosperous cotton plantations in the country.

Residents who occupied the community dwindled as machinery replaced cotton pickers in the fields.

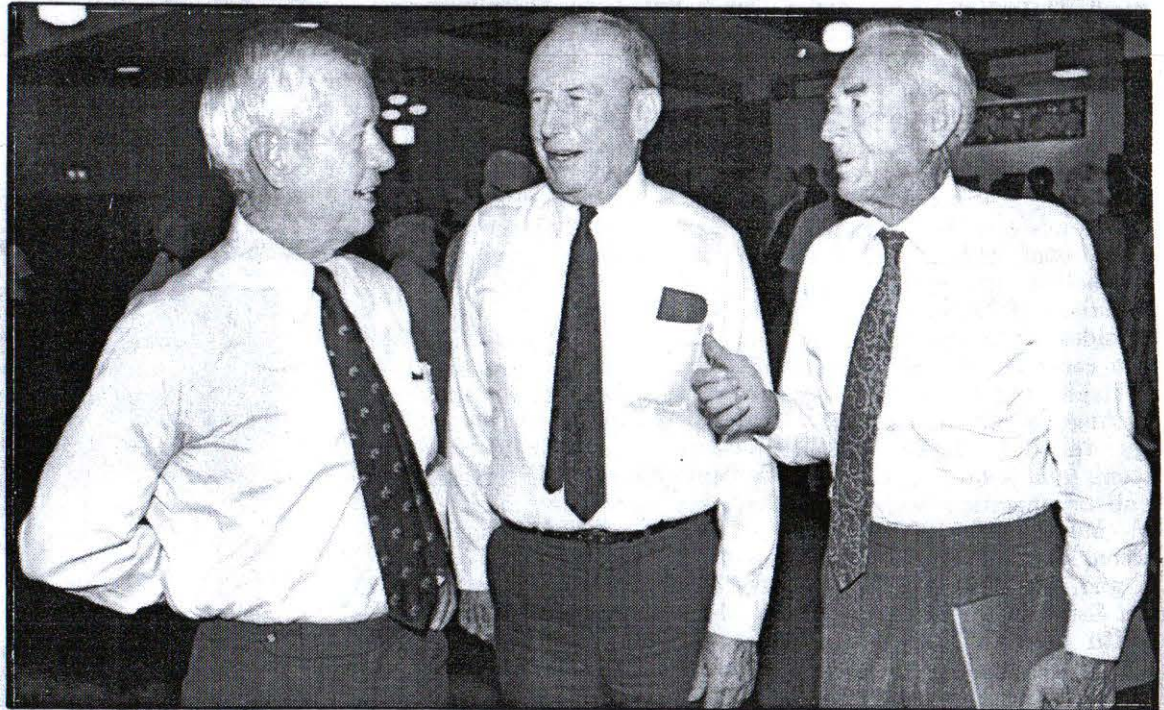
Three men who lived and worked in the area years ago, recently shared their experiences of watching Sun City emerge from the Marinette cotton fields.

They spoke to locals in a forum sponsored by the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

Hank Raymond moved to the area once known as Marinette in 1928.

"Marinette had anything you wanted in it. A general store, a service station, post office, pool hall and barber shop. We lived near where Sun City Country Club now is," Raymond said.

Raymond started working for the Boswell operation in 1944 and retired as vice pres-



Daily News-Sun photo by Stephen Cherek

THEY WERE THERE — James G. Boswell II, left, Hank Raymond, center, and Bob McMicken all lived and worked in the cotton farming community of Marinette before it was developed into the 8,900 acre master planned adult community of Sun City.

ident and general manager of the operation in 1962.

"I remember them talking about building a motel here (Kings Inn) and I thought they were nuts trying to get anyone to come and eat and sleep in Marinette," Raymond said. "A few years later, a friend asked

me to go eat lunch at the King's Inn and we had to stand in line to get in. It was a hard thing for many of us to do — adjust to the progress. It's been a revelation to me to be part of this great achievement."

Bob McMicken, who now

lives in Kansas, moved to Marinette 71 years ago. His father served as the first general manager of Southwest Cotton Co.

McMicken was vice president of the livestock operations for the Boswell ranches. See Fields, Page 27

Incomplete

Boswell firm, agribusiness giant, zeroes in on politics

By WILLIAM C. REMPEL
and ROGER SMITH
Los Angeles Times

CORCORAN — Farming did not spring naturally from the soil outside this dusty little cotton town south of Fresno. It was muscled from the earth, parcel by rich parcel, in a struggle that began a century ago against stubborn geological forces.

Men with mules and shovels first built levees to wrest prime farm land from a primeval lake, then carried shotguns to defend those levees against sabotage in flood times.

It was a struggle that built tough men, vast farms and often huge profits in the Tulare Lake basin. And out of it emerged the J.G. Boswell Co., a California farm empire.

Col. J.G. Boswell, an aristocratic Georgia gentleman, founded the company 55 years ago. J.G. "Jim" Boswell II, a Stanford-educated cowboy, stepped from the cattle pens into the board room to complete what his uncle had started: Creation of one of the most successful and influential farm operations in California history.

Today the Boswell farm is run from the 46th floor of a Los Angeles skyscraper where even swine breeding is controlled by computer. Jim Boswell, 55, a trim and distinguished-looking businessman — missing two fingers he lost in a cattle roping accident — presides over the farm empire that stretches from Corcoran to Australia.

Its critics call the J.G. Boswell Co. "the epitome of the California agri-giant."

The company traditionally has kept a low public profile — no small task for one of the state's largest property owners and the world's leading cotton grower.

Jim Boswell generally avoids reporters and agreed to talk to The Times only if he were not quoted.

"Being big is unpopular, it's as

simple as that," explained a Boswell executive.

But there is an important by-product of corporate size, in addition to efficient large-scale farming methods — political clout. The company that got its start parting the waters of Tulare Lake has discovered it also can change the course of political events.

It took on an incumbent congressman in Fresno last year by underwriting the campaign of his little-

Water rights . . . are as dear to a California farmer as liberty and democracy.

known rival, leading to an election upset that got the attention of politicians all over the state.

It opposed the Peripheral Canal project, a favorite of the Brown Administration and most legislators from populous Southern California, which needs the water the canal would deliver. The company is generally credited with stalling its approval.

The Boswell Co. came late to politics — and reluctantly. Jim Boswell so dislikes politicians generally that he refused for a long time even to meet a company lobbyist — former California Lt. Gov. John Harmer. Most letters from politicians go directly into Boswell's "File 13," a waste can.

But politics and politicians apparently became unavoidable about three years ago when the company lost a historic court battle over reclamation law. Without an act of Congress, its executives feared, the company faced two troubling choices:

— Stop using vital irrigation water stored behind four federally built

dams, including Pine Flat Dam on the Kings River.

— Or, sell off most of about 90,000 acres of choice cotton and barley land irrigated by that ater.

The J.G. Boswell Co. went to Washington instead. It swallowed some old animosities and allied itself with the 65,000-acre Salyer Land Co., a longtime rival in the Tulare Lake basin. It hired \$10,000-a-month lobbyists. It pumped more than \$150,000 into federal and state campaign coffers.

And it got the first half of an act of Congress last September when the U.S. Senate effectively exempted the company from reclamation law and the wholesale dismemberment of its San Joaquin Valley farm holdings.

(The exemption, which also applies to other big California farmers, still faces a tough fight in the House as part of Senate Bill 14.)

"They don't believe there's anything that money can't get for them," grouses John Krebs, the former Fresno congressman who lost to a Boswell-backed candidate last year.

Indeed, the company is so big it made a serious bid, jointly with Salyer Land Co., to buy Pine Flat Dam from the United States.

It also is a company enmeshed in a cotton industry uproar that stems from the company getting lucrative, confidential export tips after quietly hiring the head of a national cotton marketing organization.

Yet it is a company about which

little is known. The J.G. Boswell Co. adheres rigidly to a corporate strategy that eschews publicity — even favorable publicity.

However, its success in the political arena — affecting not only the vast Boswell interests but millions of Californians as well — has cost the company its cherished anonymity.

It took something as important as the fight over water for the company to risk such exposure. But to the heirs of Col. Boswell, issues of water

The era of wild floods was about to end, but the age of politics and litigation was born.

are issues of survival.

Water rights, as an old Berkeley professor once advised Jim Boswell, are as dear to a California farmer as liberty and democracy.

As recently as the Gold rush era, Tulare Lake occupied an area three times the size of Lake Tahoe. Indians caught bass and trout from tule rafts afloat over shallow muddy lake beds now white with cotton. For a time ferry boats steamed between Bakersfield and Lemoore on a sprawling inland sea fed by Sierra rivers.

Over the centuries rich silt deposits collected in the lake bottom, creating a potential agricultural Mother Lode of fertile soil. Then the drought

of 1898 left the lake completely dry for the first time and farmers came in.

The yield was spectacular. Cotton acreage, protected by a spreading labyrinth of levees, produced twice as much per acre as in the Cotton Belt states.

The bonanza attracted James G. Boswell, a retired Army colonel whose military career was cut short when he stepped from a Washington, D.C., streetcar with heavy luggage and broke his back.

He moved to Arizona after World War I and established a modest reputation as a gentleman cotton merchant. He did not smoke, drink or swear — but he knew how to turn cotton into gold.

The J.G. Boswell Co. started in 1924 when the colonel and his younger brother, W.W. Boswell, bought a cotton gin and 440 acres of rich bottom land.

Even more significantly, the new company offered loans to other farmers — a practice that not only enriched the company but contributed to rapid expansion of California's cotton industry.

By the mid-1930s the J.G. Boswell Co. was the third largest lender to farms in California and had built a cotton ginning and marketing operation second to none.

The colonel arrived in Corcoran during a series of dry years when flooding was minimal and farmers were busy seeing who could build the

tallest levees. But the floods of the late 1930s were a disaster throughout the lake bed, the natural sump for the Kings and other Sierra rivers.

Boswell and his neighbors made the fateful decision to seek federal construction of a dam on the Kings River, and Congress approved Pine Flat Dam in 1944. The dam soon removed the lake from the map. The era of wild floods was about to end, but the age of politics and litigation was born.

The Pine Flat project provided a double benefit — flood control and storage of irrigation water for the dry months of summer. Federal lawyers argued that farmers using the irrigation water should be limited to 160 acres, the size prescribed in the 1902 reclamation law.

Without such a limit, they contended, U.S. taxpayers would be subsidizing a water system for the benefit of large farming interests. The argument generated a feud between Washington and the J.G. Boswell Co. that has spanned eight administrations.

It remains unresolved today, although the Carter Administration supports a more liberal acreage limitation.

The J.G. Boswell Co. has long held, however, that the continuing threat of floods and the need for great amounts of irrigation water make farming in the Tulare Lake bed financially risky — too risky for small farmers.

The colonel died in 1952 before
See Boswell, page E2

Boswell: Giant in the field getting some political clout

Continued from page E1

Pine Flat Dam was completed. He was survived by his widow, the former Ruth Chandler Williamson of The Los Angeles Times' Chandler family, but he left no children.

Succeeding him was his 28-year-old nephew and namesake, J.G. Boswell II, called from the company's Arizona cattle yards when his uncle was ricken.

This was a Boswell who could drink, smoke and swear as well as any other cowboy he rode with in Arizona.

But like his uncle, he proved to be a shrewd businessman. He immediately launched the most aggressive farmland acquisition drive in modern California history — even while debate continued over farm size limits.

The company owned about 20,000 acres around Corcoran when Jim Boswell took over. Today it owns 143,170 acres of California farmland, (90,000 acres in the Tulare Lake basin), as well as 75,000 acres of Oregon rangeland and a 1,200-acre vineyard in Arizona. It will add Kern Lake Farms (acreage unknown) near Bakersfield to its holdings next month.

Boswell also is big in Australia,

where it is the continent's largest cotton grower. In the 1960s, before Boswell, Australia imported cotton. Now it is a major exporter.

Outside agriculture the company owns 49 percent of a Sun City, Ariz., development in partnership with Del Webb Co.

The company is extraordinarily profitable. After-tax profits in 1976 were \$21.8 million on sales of \$115.1 million. Those three-year-old figures, the latest publicly disclosed financial information, also showed a company net worth of nearly \$130 million.

J.G. Boswell Co. stock, which is not publicly traded, sells for about \$500 a share — if a rare seller can be found among its 250 stockholders.

Still, the Boswell empire is not secure. Floods are a recurring threat and the legal and political challenges are formidable.

It was a cold and soggy night in 1969, and Tulare Lake, like a dreaded ghost, had returned to its old haunt. Rain and melting snow were rapidly filling the basin. The heroic dirt levees were all that stood between crops and catastrophe for cotton and grain fields not already flooded.

In the darkness Jim Boswell and his executive vice president, Jim Fisher — heir apparent to Boswell and endowed with a streak of his boss' scrappiness — were inspecting some of the Boswell levees.

Their vehicle's headlights found a tractor belonging to Salyer Land Co. The history of Tulare Lake is replete with tales of levee sabotage by tractor — and dynamite — so Fisher jumped from the car and mounted the rig without hesitation.

He was prepared to drive it into the lake when a shotgun barrel obscured his view. A Salyer guard, unseen in the darkness, had appeared.

It is a sign of changing times, perhaps, to note that no shots were fired on this night, no blood was shed. The confrontation ended with the arrival of angry Salyer executives in the company of lawyers and a nose-to-nose standoff of blue language referred by the local sheriff.

Out of the confusion it was later determined that the Salyers actually owned a small interest in the levee and were there legally.

Another levee was saved when Boswell lined it with 6,900 junked

cars — all jammed along the water line where wind-whipped waves threatened to smash the dirt barrier. For a time, the company cornered most of the junk car market in California.

"There are times you just do what you have to do," shrugged a Boswell official.

The Boswell and Salyer farm interests — recognized today as powerful special interests — actually bungled their way into Washington two years ago with an ill-fated, back-door maneuver.

Eager to offset the earlier court setback by gaining quick congressional relief from the acreage-limiting effects of reclamation law, the two farm giants hired former Lt. Gov. Harmer as a lobbyist.

He persuaded a Wyoming Republican senator, Malcolm Wallop, to submit a Tulare Lake exemption amendment to a bill dealing with locks and dams on the Mississippi River.

The Harmer-written "Wallop Amendment" slipped through one Senate committee before it was discovered by critics and blasted as a "back-door deal." Immediately, Sen.

Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) stepped in to kill it.

"They thought could come to Washington and handle the United States Senate like they handle the Sacramento Legislature," fumed a congressional aide.

The hard feelings seemed largely forgotten last September, however, when the Senate convened to debate an amendment to exempt the Boswell empire from dismemberment under existing reclamation law.

In the intervening months Boswell had contributed more than \$30,000 to 19 senators. Rep. Krebs (D-Fresno), a loud critic of the Wallop Amendment, had been defeated by Republican Charles Pashayan, a political unknown heavily financed by Boswell and Salyer.

Cranston took the Senate floor to lead the fight to exempt the big Tulare Lake farmers. A bill, S-14, already exempted farms in the Imperial Valley, and Cranston said he wanted the same for the Tulare Lake farms — if the Central Valley interests paid more for water stored behind dams.

"We had to be realistic," says a Cranston aide. "Otherwise, the big

Tulare Lake farmers could still avoid reclamation law by not storing their water at Pine Flat Dam. That could ruin a recreational lake and possibly disrupt the water flow to smaller farmers as well."

While the senator debated the issue, his aide conferred in the Senate gallery with Boswell lobbyists who in the preceding days had all but camped outside his office.

When the vote came, 15 of the 19 Boswell-supported senators lined up with Cranston (the other four senators were not present), and S-14 was passed with a Tulare Lake exemption amendment.

"Cranston came riding out of the West to save them," observed a frustrated Boswell critic in the House. "But they won't have a Cranston when this bill gets to the House. Here they've got trouble."

In Sacramento, the Peripheral Canal issue is another Boswell-Salyer success. Their lobby efforts played a key role in killing the Northern California project, a multibillion dollar plan to channel water around the Sacramento Delta en route to South-

See Boswell, page E6

Boswell: Agribusiness giant aims to protect land, water interests

Continued from page E2

ern California and the San Joaquin Valley.

The Metropolitan Water District engaged in a lobbying duel with the big farm interests over the vote of state Sen. William Campbell, the Senate GOP leader from Whittier.

Boswell and Salyer were more persuasive — they contributed nearly \$4,000 to Campbell last year, includ-

“... But they won't have a Cranston when this bill gets to the House. Here they've got trouble.”

ing complimentary travel in the Salyer corporate jet — and Campbell became a key figure stalling the canal bill in committee.

“They have damn few votes, but money seems to talk,” complained Lyle Martin, past president of the Kings River Water Association, who says the San Joaquin Valley badly needs the canal.

Boswell officials condemn the canal as a Brown Administration “boondoggle” that is neither the cheapest nor the quickest way to increase water deliveries to the south.

On the other hand, there are strong suggestions that the J.G. Boswell Co. hopes that anticanal congressmen from Northern California will return their support when S-14 moves into the House, probably this spring.

While many give the Tulare Lake exemption little chance of survival in the House, there are others who caution: “Never bet against the Boswells.”

“They run a kingdom that produces money and political influence,” asserted an aide to a California con-

gressman. “They are tied in with the people who run the state — the banks, developers and the Los Angeles Times.”

The common perception in Washington and Sacramento is that the family ties between the Boswells and Times Publisher Otis Chandler constitute an alliance between the farm giant and the newspaper giant.

Col. Boswell's second wife — Ruth Chandler Williamson Boswell Crocker — Chandler's aunt. Warren Williamson, her son by her first marriage and a cousin of Otis Chandler, is on the board of directors of Times Mirror Co., parent company of The Times.

In editorials, The Times has agreed at times with Boswell, generally opposing strict acreage limitations on big California farms. However Times editorials have strongly backed the Boswell-opposed Peripheral Canal.

“All I know is that my aunt married a Boswell,” Chandler says. “I don't know a thing about the Boswell Co., and suggestions that they might influence our editorial policy are absolutely off base.

“Ruth Crocker has never tried to influence me regarding either the agribusiness or Boswell interests. And Warren Williamson has never even talked to me about either the agribusiness or Boswell interests,” Chandler says.

The traditional low profile of the J.G. Boswell Co. figures to rise significantly as the date nears for a House vote on S-14, a vote that will force the company to intensify its lobbying efforts. Company executives fear the delicate effort could be jeopardized by any adverse publicity.

Indeed, some congressional critics have seized on a controversy involving the Boswell Co. and Cotton Inc., a

marketing organization loosely supervised by the Department of Agriculture.

Cotton Inc. President J. Dukes Wooters was forced by Congress to take a \$60,000-a-year pay cut in 1976 to keep his salary below the secretary of agriculture's. The Boswell Co. then hired him in 1977 as a \$60,000-a-year consultant.

Wooters subsequently referred

The traditional low profile . . . figures to rise significantly as the date nears for a House vote on S-14. . .

about \$8 million in export business to the Boswell Co., according to Department of Agriculture documents. Today the U.S. Justice Department is probing the Wooters-Boswell relationship for possible civil violations. A federal grand jury in Los Angeles declined to issue indictments.

“It looks like a scandal,” said Rep. Paul Findley (R-Ill.), who charged that the consulting arrangements was “a clear violation” of the intent of Congress.

Jim Boswell shrugs off the criticism, saying everything was approved by fellow cotton growers, but the harsh criticism from people like Findley can only trouble the political tranquility Boswell seeks in the months ahead.

Corcoran is the capital of Boswell Country.

In the isolated little town of about 6,000, at least 1 out of 4 working adults draws a J.G. Boswell paycheck. The Boswell and Salyer companies together own majority interest in the local newspaper.

a medical team from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) came to the area one day last year with a sophisticated mobile laboratory. Farm workers exposed to a cotton defoliation used by the Boswell Co. were to be tested for possible neurological problems. But the company refused to cooperate, and after two weeks the team of doctors and technicians had to abandon Corcoran and a \$77,000 research project.

“That was the tightest little company town I've ever been in,” said a federal health official after closing the agency's temporary rented office in the YMCA that Boswell built.

Everyone from shopkeepers to government officials agree that Corcoran is “a company town” in the best, and the worst, sense. Even the mildest: “Don't quote me; I have to live here.”

The Corcoran Journal, the only newspaper in town, has ignored the Cotton Inc. controversy although Boswell's involvement is front-page news in Fresno and in Hanford, the county seat.

While the Boswell Co. is a dominant force in the community, it also is a nurturing force. There are no statues of the colonel in the city park, but there is a Boswell science wing at the high school, a Boswell-built hospital and the YMCA.

And through the J.G. Boswell Foundation, more than \$2 million a year goes to charitable causes in Corcoran and around the country, particularly youth-oriented programs.

Planned for Corcoran in the near future are a Boswell industrial park and a Boswell condominium project.

“Without their investment in this community I don't know what we

would do,” said City Manager Tom Smith.

But the company's critics point to another side of the J.G. Boswell Co.

In the spring of 1978, Tulare Lake, fed by rain-swollen streams and a massive Sierra snowpack, made a brief comeback. About 55,000 acres, most of it Boswell's, was under water.

Ignoring orders from the state Reclamation Board and the complaints of some small neighboring farmers, the company installed a series of large, semi-permanent pumping stations and began draining some of the flood waters into dry canals.

Boswell officials justified the hasty action, saying it was an emergency. Others saw it as a classic confrontation between the corporate giant and the small farmers who feared Boswell drainage would add damaging seepage to their already rain-soaked fields.

One night a Boswell pump station guard was chased off by rifle shots and the pumps destroyed by fire and gunshots.

The pump controversy is one of the latest to fan the charges of “corporate arrogance” leveled by Boswell critics.

One of the company's most persistent critics is George Ballis, a land reform advocate who has spent nearly 20 years fighting to break up the farm giants. He runs National Land for People out of a musty, sagging shed on a small Fresno farm.

Annually he leads bus tours of the vast holdings of Tulare Lake farmers — tours he calls “visits to the scene of the crime.”

“Size breeds arrogance,” Ballis says. “Small farmers aren't any better people than Jim Boswell, they just aren't big enough to be arrogant.”

The future of J.G. Boswell Co. is very much wrapped up in the future of California water.

Environmentalists are battling to keep dams out of Northern California rivers, Southern California wants a greater share of the water than is available and state bureaucrats are arguing for regulation of groundwater pumping in farm regions.

In days past Boswell won its battles with shovels and muscles. Today it is battling with political contacts and contributions. By whatever methods, it intends to keep winning. /

The James G. Boswell Foundation

101 WEST WALNUT STREET
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91103
(626) 583-3000 • FACSIMILE (626) 583-3090

January 7, 2000

Ms. Phyllis Street
President, Board of Trustees
Sun Cities Area Historical Society
10801 West Oakmont Drive
Sun City, AZ 85351

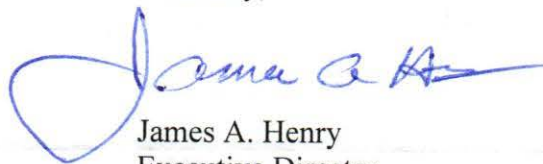
Dear Ms. Street:

On behalf of Mr. and Mrs. James G. Boswell II, and the other trustees of
The James G. Boswell Foundation, I am pleased to enclose our check in the amount of
Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000).

This grant is made largely in recognition of Jane Freeman and her work with the
Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

Jim and Roz would like this grant to be classified as unrestricted so that it may be used to
satisfy the most pressing needs of your organization.

Sincerely,



James A. Henry
Executive Director

Enclosure

cc: Mr. & Mrs. James G. Boswell II



SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Copy

January 12, 2000

Mr. James A. Henry
Executive Director
The James G. Boswell Foundation
101 West Walnut Street
Pasadena, California 91103

Dear Mr. Henry,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society I want to express our gratitude for the very generous gift which your Foundation has granted to our organization, in recognition of Jane Freeman and her work with the historical society.

Your grant of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) will enable us to meet many of the pressing needs which we have and we will make every effort to use the money wisely. Your trust in us is appreciated and we want to continue preserving the history of the Sun Cities in a manner in which Jane Freeman will be pleased. Jane does give us good advice!

It was a pleasure to have Mr. and Mrs. Boswell at our celebration yesterday. Their many friends were delighted to see them and we were honored to have them with us.

Thank you again for your generous grant.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Street
President, Board of Trustees



SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

copy

January 12, 2000

Mr. and Mrs. James G. Boswell II
Tucson, AZ

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Boswell,

It was indeed an honor to have you at our celebration yesterday. We share in recognizing the work which Jane Freeman has done for the Sun Cities Area Historical Society and to receive such a generous gift from your Foundation in her honor makes us aware of our responsibility to use it wisely.

On behalf of our Board of Trustees I want to express our gratitude for this grant of Fifty Thousand dollars (\$50,000), and assure you that it will be used to meet the most pressing needs of our organization. We appreciate the interest you have shown in the efforts we are making to preserve the history of the Sun Cities and we trust that with the help which you have given us we can achieve a greater standard of excellence.

Thanks to both of you for sharing your time with us. It truly made our day!

Sincerely,

Phyllis Street
President, Board of Trustees

THE JAMES G. BOSWELL FOUNDATION

1396

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

1/7/00

CK - 50,000.00

Bank Checking Acco Unrestricted Grant

50,000.00

JAMES G. BOSWELL
POST OFFICE BOX 413
KETCHUM, IDAHO 83340

July 13, 2007

Jane Freeman
Sun Cities Area Historical Society
10801 Oakmont Drive
Sun City, AZ 85351-3317

Dear Jane:

It was sure great to hear from you!

I haven't been to Arizona in many years and am very glad to hear that you're well. Your squib on the history of Sun City is reasonably accurate so I won't take any license to change it.

I'm living in Sun Valley, Idaho and all is well with me.

Once again, thanks for your note.

Much love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JG' or 'JB', written in a cursive style.