

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES "MARINETTE"

The desert area between Wickenburg and Phoenix came to life in the late 19th Century. Peoria was founded by wealthy Peoria, Illinois ranchers in 1885. By 1896, the Arizona climate began to attract winter vacationers to the state. Vulture Road between Wickenburg and Phoenix was renamed "Grand Avenue" in 1909 and prosperous farmers in the area were experimenting in cultivating cotton.

A pioneer from Marinette, Wisconsin bought and leased thousands of acres between the New River and the Agua Fria. He platted a townsite and named it Marinette. In 1920, he sold his holdings to Southwest Cotton Company, a subsidiary of Goodyear Tire and Rubber company in Litchfield Park. They had built an empire in quality cotton during World War I to replace their European source which had been cut off by German submarines. Marinette soon became nothing more than a Goodyear Company Compound.

Since cotton was handpicked from mid July to May, the laborers, many of whom were Mexican-Americans, formed a relatively stable community. There was always music, dancing and special celebrations in the 'lent cities' clustered around the irrigation wells. One such community became known as "Hollywood" because six beautiful girls lived there with their families who worked the cotton fields. It was located at 107th Avenue and Alabama.

Marinette attracted its share of exploiters and whiskey and women became a thriving business. Trains often stopped to permit passengers and crew to do some 'shopping'. The house of ill repute was located on Grand Avenue at 112th Street. Since Arizona was a dry state, a giant "still" produced unknown quantities of White Mule Whiskey. Federal agents were never able to locate the operation. It was rumored that the still was hidden on vacant land that is now Sunland Memorial Park. Someday a grave-digger's pick could turn over this hidden chapter of Marinette history.

In 1936, Marinette Ranch was sold to the J.G. Boswell Company of Litchfield Park. The Boswells were a reputable old Georgia cotton family. As machines replaced field workers, the population dwindled. Progress had turned Marinette into one of the nation's most prosperous cotton plantations.

Next week — "Webb, A Man of Vision"

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES WEBB — A MAN OF VISION

By 1940, the town of Marinette was nothing more than a sign on the Santa Fe right-of-way. But on the sight a new desert flower — Sun City — had begun to bloom.

Delbert Eugene Webb was a man of vision with a complex personality that was a challenge to determine fact from legend. In California he was a high school dropout determined to become a big league baseball player. Injuries and typhoid fever denied him this role. Encouraged to come to Phoenix for his health, he got his first job in construction on the new WESTWARD HO HOTEL. Webb's energetic pursuit of each new challenge soon left behind him scores of great monuments... skyscrapers, missile silos, military bases (Luke and Williams Field), vet hospitals and multi-million dollar hotels and casinos. The reputation of the Del E. Webb Construction Company and later the Del E. Webb Development Company, (DEVCO), a corporation formed with James G. Boswell II in 1959) won nationwide acclaim and respect. Webb's natural concern and love of people was to manifest itself in the development of Sun City, which he came to consider his greatest accomplishment.

Webb had surrounded himself with men who were aware of the changes taking place in American society and who had the courage to venture into the unknown. L. C. Jacobson was such a man and had achieved a position as working partner with Webb. Against all expert opinions in the 50's, Webb and Jacobson were convinced that the fastest growing segment in America were being relegated to baby-sitters and armchair philosophers. They were determined to create an attractive retirement community embracing three basic concepts: activity, economy and individualism to bring active seniors together on a common ground. Finding enough land for such an ambitious project was solved with Boswell's offer to sell the Marinette Ranch and Santa Fe spread. The stage was set for the birth of a new city.

NEXT WEEK — Naming A City

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES "I LIKE SUN CITY"

Building a whole new city from scratch without a nearby community from which to tap water, sewer and other utilities, was a challenge to be met before a single home could be built. A shopping center, a nine hole golf course and a completed recreational facility had to be planned and built before any home could be sold.

The new golf course (to become known as North Golf Course) was begun in August 1959. It was the only golf course in the Sun Cities to be designed and built by a professional, Milt Coggins, who built Encanto in Phoenix. In five hectic months, five model homes were finished and tastefully furnished and the first nine holes of a championship golf course were completed. The recreation center (known to early residents as the community center and later Oakmont) with a completely equipped crafts building all met with the official deadline.

A contest to name the city was announced in papers around the country with the Reuben Donnelly Company of Chicago in charge. On December 8th, the entries were reviewed by Donnelly and Webb representatives. A dozen or so names were being considered when Del Webb walked in. Examining some of the names, he casually remarked, "I like Sun City." When he left, Jacobson remarked, "Well, that's it!" The Donnelly people objected to not following the rules of the contest. Jacobson said, "If Del Webb says that is the name, that's what it will be." Thus Donnelly finally agreed and Sun City became the official name.

Next Week - GRAND OPENING

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES THE GRAND OPENING

In December 1959, Webb employees held their Christmas party at Del Webb's Hiway House (later known as the King's Inn). They were invited to preview the model homes, the shopping center, the recreation center and the new golf course. What they saw must have pleased them for they went home extolling the praises of Webb's newest project.

Webb's management was not so confident. Knowing their reputations were going to be on the line, they worked frantically until the wee hours New Year's Eve getting everything in place for the grand opening scheduled for the next day. Everyone was wondering the same thing, "Will anyone come tomorrow?"

Webb treasurer, Owen Childress, expressed a tear, "How am I going to get a 30 year mortgage on a guy who is 65 years old?" The rules had been publicized -- homes would only be sold only to those 50 years or older and no children under college age would be permitted.

At last the waiting and wondering were over. When the models finally opened at 8 A.M. on Thursday New Year's Day, the rush was on. Sales were brisk that first day but nothing like the stampede on the following Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Since the required down payment was only \$500, the risk was small. Many people bought within an hour after arriving. A long line of people waited for hours to sign contracts. With only 100 printed contracts and 2 sales people, Childress put in a frantic call to Webb secretaries to come help with the line of people waiting to buy. He sent out for printed receipts to use for contracts. By Sunday afternoon the line of cars extended two miles along U.S. 60-70 and 89, the main Phoenix-Los Angeles highway, to see the new line of homes Webb was building northwest of town.

In the 3-day weekend, 237 homes were sold, representing a cost of \$2 1/2 million. If there had been any doubt about the future of Sun City, there was none now! Before the first month was out, a total of 400 homes had been sold and plans for the second group of 675 homes were underway.

Webb's top quality masonry homes were priced from \$8,500 to \$11,750 including what Webb builders believed was the only \$9,750 home in America bordering a golf course. They had taken home buyers by storm. Pleased with the overwhelming acceptance of their homes, Webb management immediately set about developing the market. Fifty nine days after the grand opening, "Arizona's Fastest Growing City" presented its second tract consisting of 675 homes. The first weekend they were offered, 43 homes were bought around the newly designed second nine holes of the golf course. Construction was stepped up by six months so homes would be ready for mid-summer occupancy. Meanwhile, Sun City and what it was offering to the nation's senior citizens, was making headlines throughout the country in every media.

The foundation was completed; Sun City was now ready for the second stage of its phenomenal growth.

Next Week - PIONEERING

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES THE PIONEERS ARRIVE

Who were they? Why did they come? What were they seeking? What did they find? Those early Sun Citizens had come into uncharted territory. They were dreamers who dared to leave the security of established homes and roots of family and friends.

One couple had been around the country looking for a dream. Many times they were told what they were going to have but in Sun City, "It was all waiting for us!"

Many who came were retirees who were wintering in Phoenix. A newly retired couple in Denver read a magazine ad about Sun City in a doctor's office and decided to take a look.

An Iowa couple who had to vacate their home in three weeks, arrived in Sun City and were told there was only one model that could be ready in three weeks. They saw it and in one hour had signed the contract. Another couple left Chicago in a snow storm. Delayed by two emergency stops because of bad weather, they finally arrived in Phoenix on December 31st. They saw Webb's big ad in the paper and came out on opening day and bought. One couple bought and furnished one of the first apartments entirely by phone. When they arrived and drove down Grand Avenue, they were heartsick. The wife remarked, "I think we should have a guardian appointed for us." But on entering Sun City, their disappointment vanished. The husband observed, "Everything was just as they described and promised, no misrepresentation!"

Not everyone who purchased a home in those early years was looking for retirement. Speculators recognized the great potential here and bought as an investment.

The biggest attraction for many of the early pioneers was playing golf the year round. They remember paying 70 cents for a round of golf and only \$1.25 for guests. One couple bought the last lot on the first nine of North Golf Course. When he died at 93, he was still playing better than many of his younger partners. Another golf story relates that there were no water fountains or rest rooms on the first golf course, but back doors were always unlocked so golfers were welcome in many homes to use the facilities or get a drink of water or a cup of coffee if the pot was on.

Next Week - THE MAKING OF A COMMUNITY

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES THE MAKING OF A COMMUNITY

The first Sun City home to be delivered was to Wendell and Emilie Fraser on April 10, 1960. Mrs. Fraser still occupies this home today, located at 12201 Augusta Drive West. The first out of state residents were the George Baynes of Seattle, Washington. Deeds for these first homes were inscribed "New Life Number One". The first order of business then (as now) was to add to or modify the homes. One couple erected a flagpole in their back yard thus setting a precedent widely followed today.

The first grocery store in Sun City was the Safeway Store in Grand Shopping Center. It was a favorite gathering place for friends to catch up on the latest happenings in town. Some residents made several trips a day. 80% of Safeway's customers were older retired people -- a new kind of market which required adjusting their line of products. They made every effort to stock special items requested by residents from the East or North, often more expensive than regular shelf stock. The Safeway remained in the same location until 1986. Another favorite gathering place was the post office which was located in the Grand Shopping Center. Later Webb built a large building where Menke Funeral Home is now located.

Social life in the new community took off immediately as the new pioneers began to entertain at the Hiway House and in Phoenix, but more often in someone's home or yard. One hostess would stand outside and ring a bell to signal everyone to convene for cocktails. Two families built a picnic table extending across a fence into both yards. If more came to a party than the hostess had chairs, they brought their own. The recreation center was used for larger parties including the first Thanksgiving dinner. It was also an inter-denominational religious center. The pioneers would dance till midnight on Saturday then return for church on Sunday. The following week's activities were announced at each service. The first Sun City club formed on July 4, 1960 was the Needle Arts and Crafts. Then followed 61 Dance Club and the Sun City Bicycle Club. A Coffee Klatch was hosted by the Women's Club as an ice breaker for all newcomers to Sun City. Del Webb attended the first one, gave a short talk and greeted each person like an old friend.

The first Sunrise Easter Service was held on the new patio and Greek Theater at Town Hall. It was terraced to provide every guest a clear view. This service and the Memorial Day service became annual holiday events. They later were moved to the new Sun Bowl which was erected similar to that first Greek Theater. These two services continue today in the original Sun Bowl at 1071th South of Peoria.

Next week - THE FIRST DOCTOR

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES "FIRSTS"

Webb found it difficult to entice a doctor to come to this small but growing community in the desert. Fortunately Dr. Robert Stump was looking for a place where he could slow down. He had spent his life making "House Calls" in lonely little communities scattered in the Arizona back country. He signed a five year contract with Webb Company who agreed to furnish a building for his practice. Ironically, he had a ten year old son which caused many a heated discussion by the Civic Association but they never actually confronted the doctor directly.

The pioneers began to plan for the time when they could no longer care for themselves. This led to the construction of Sun Valley Lodge. Many paid \$100 to insure them a place in the future.

The first church was started by Dr. and Mrs. Walter Witt. It was non denominational, consisting of 41 different denominations. He formed "colonies", neighborhood groups which met twice a month to help new neighbors get acquainted. Some of the Pioneers still attend colony meetings. No church in Sun City was ever built until it was paid for.

In 1960, the first Sun City Agricultural Center was established across Grand Avenue from Hiway House (now King's Inn) for exclusive use of Sun City residents. Devo planted the first crop and invited the residents to help themselves to the bounty. A resident's committee was formed and became known as the Sun City Agricultural Club with members taking a plot in the garden to cultivate and care for. As Sun City crossed Grand, the gardens were moved north, adjacent to Sunland Cemetery where they remain today.

The first Sunshine Service was initiated by Dr. and Mrs. Duane Thistlethwaite, a retired Methodist minister from Indianapolis. Their compassion for people who couldn't afford a nursing home and in need of special equipment to care for themselves in their home, prompted them to gather donated equipment for free use by Sun City residents. When their home could no longer hold the growing line of beds, canes, wheelchairs, etc., Webb built a small building near Menke Funeral Home. Later the Sunshine Service Building was erected on Santa Fe where it remains today.

NEXT WEEK - THE POSSE AND THE PRIDES

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES THE SUN CITY POSSE

From the testimony of the early Pioneers, it's apparent that the "Sun City Lifestyle" is a durable one... one that can be pursued for many years beyond the normal retirement age for most, many years beyond normal life expectancy. An active community with a purpose and compassion for one another, has set standards which are known nationally and patterned by many retirement areas throughout the country. One of the most famous, is the "Sun City Posse".

Because Sun City is an unincorporated community, its closest level of government is Maricopa County. As such, the county must combine traditional county services with some of the tasks usually associated with cities.

The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City was the brainchild of Louis Inwood who proposed a reserve Sheriff's Squadron to the Sun City Civic Association Board of Directors in 1962. Unfortunately, Mr. Inwood died before his idea could be acted upon. It wasn't until March 1973 that the Director of County Emergency Services requested a discussion to formulate an emergency disaster plan for Sun City with the Maricopa County Sheriff, Paul Blubaum. Four groups were set up to cover four emergency groups; police, fire, communication and Red Cross. Andy Wagner, the sheriff's Chief Civilian Aide, unified the groups and founded the "Sheriff's Posse of Sun City" boasting 52 dedicated men and women volunteers who were given legal status as peace officers. By 1974, membership had reached 220 with regulation sheriff uniforms and a C.B. radio base station providing improved mobile communications. By 1973, the Posse began to receive national recognition. By 1977, Jerry Hill was elected County Sheriff and he expressed his confidence in the Posse by issuing a permanent "call to duty" which previously had to be issued each day. He required all Posse members to take formal training. Funds donated by many Sun City Agencies and clubs began to pour in. The Posse was able to purchase its own emergency vehicles much to the relief of the family cars which were used in prior years. The posse has won the hearts of Sun Citizens and the minds of law enforcement agencies everywhere.

Next week THE SUN CITY PRIDES

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES THE PRIDES

In the spring of 1980, DEVCO turned over the responsibility for maintaining Sun City's streets and beautifully landscaped medians to Maricopa county. Sun City now had a population of 45,000 with 210 miles of streets spread over 14 square miles. The county accepted the task, but was limited to six men to handle this vast area. A Sun City resident, "Joe" McIntyre, decided something should be done by the residents to help preserve the city's beauty. Joe wrote a letter to the editor of the News Sun, calling for volunteers to meet the following Saturday and devise a plan to assist the county. Only three volunteers appeared at the first workday, but the number doubled the following week. They adopted the name "PRIDES", Proud Residents Independently Donating Essential services.

By the spring of 1982 the number of volunteers was pushing 400 and the Sun City Prides were ready to incorporate as a non profit organization. Aside from raking and general clean-up work, they took care of weed-spraying, tree trimming and feeding, tree trunk painting and tending the immense 26 mile underground watering system plus 11 miles of drainage canals. They reported any needed street repairs to the county highway department. About the only job the Prides left to the county was the trimming of the 100 plus foot palm trees that soar above many Sun City streets. The county eagerly cooperated, providing supplies, safety vests, traffic control devices and herbicides totaling some \$18,000 a year. For this sum the Prides donated over 62,000 man hours per year amounting to over 100,000.

The motto of the PRIDES, "Keeping Sun City beautiful" sums up the pride and concern that makes Sun City a stand-out retirement communities. Sun City West now enjoys its own PRIDES thanks to the guidance of the Sun City group.

Next week — TRADITIONS - OLD AND NEW

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES TRADITIONS - NEW AND OLD

A new community has the enjoyment and experience of starting traditions. Some of the earlier ones have continued throughout the years in Sun City, while others were replaced with new ones.

For 20 years, from 1961 to 1981, residents looked forward to the annual Grape Festival sponsored by DEVCO and J. G. Boswell Company. The vineyards located on Cactus Lane Ranch on Cotton Lane were opened up to Sun City - Sun City West residents to "glean" the vineyards. Cars were lined up for miles waiting for dawn and entrance to the vineyards with boxes, clippers, gloves and sunhats. Cold drinks were provided for the pickers by Webb. The festival was cancelled in 1982. The communities out-grew the vineyards.

In 1962, Jerry Svendsen, in charge of public relations for DEVCO, soon became known by all the residents. He was the originator of many of the traditions still being enjoyed today. When the Sun Bowl was completed in 1967, DEVCO recognized Mother's Day with an annual Strawberry Festival with live entertainment followed by the serving of fresh Strawberry Sundaes. Father's Day was celebrated with a Root Beer Bust. These events disappeared around 1980.

The Fourth of July Fireworks celebration has also gone by the wayside. Residents would gather in Sun City Stadium off Grand and 111th to enjoy a spectacular ground and air display with a different theme depicted each year with special effects.

As the years passed, Jerry noticed "active retirement" was becoming more active, advancing from shuffleboard to the popular SCSCSC (Sun City Spring Chicken Ski Club). People were getting into physical fitness, so Jerry organized the first "Physical Fitness Festival" in 1977 with a 5,000 meter run added in 1978. There were walking clubs, jogging clubs, exercise and aerobic classes, and other "keep fit" programs all taking part in each recreation center. The Recreation Centers Carnival of Clubs was first held on the Thanksgiving weekend in 1975. Clubs displayed their skills and acquainted people with all the activities available. Craft clubs offered their items for sale. In 1981 the individual fairs were held in the spring and fall on successive weekends with only the crafts clubs holding their sale on Thanksgiving weekend.

Like everything in Sun City, many of the old traditions suffered growing pains and were either dropped or took on another form.

Next Week - OUR LIBERTY BELL

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES "OUR LIBERTY BELL"

Preparations for our nation's bicentennial was a year of excitement in Sun City. The idea for Sun City's own Liberty Bell was born in September 1975. DEVCO offered to underwrite the cost, but the residents wanted to be a part of it, too. By January, 1976, over 7,000 pounds of metal had been contributed, creating a mountain of family treasures, personal mementos, bric-a-brac and even bicycles and old horns.

The metal was processed in Philadelphia, then sent to Arsten, Holland where the bell was cast. It was unveiled on July 8th at the Sun Bowl. The official dedication and sealing of a time capsule in its base took place November 11th. The Recreation Centers are instructed to open the capsule in the year 2026. Thus a new tradition began with the "Ring That Bell" celebration every July 4th at Bell Center where the Bell found its permanent home. Included in this celebration is an annual tribute to Del E. Webb. The Sun City Pioneer Club adopted a 20th Anniversary project in 1980 with a community fund-raiser to erect a statue of Webb to be placed near the Liberty Bell. James O. Farley, Scottsdale sculptor, was selected to design and cast the bronze statue. Metal which was left over from the Liberty Bell was used in the casting.

In 1982 the Sun City and Sun City West Exchange Club created the "Freedoms Shrine" display. Twenty four documents taken from America's early history can be observed under glass on the five sided Kiosk which is in the main entry court at Bell Center.

Next Week - "BOSWELL HOSPITAL STORY"

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES BOSWELL HOSPITAL STORY

Sun City's need for medical professionals grew each year as the population burgeoned from 500 in 1960 to over 45,000 today. From Dr. Stump's office in his home and later in the first medical clinic built by Webb, to over 300 physicians covering every specialized field in medicine, this has been a high priority service.

In the beginning, Glendale had the closest hospital to care for Sun City's ill. But traveling that distance was a burden for many. In 1965 DEVCO president, John Meeker organized a committee to study and plan Sun City's own health care facility. They formed a new corporation, Sun City Community Hospital, Inc. Plans were made for a 61 bed hospital. But bigger things were in sight. Foreseeing the future growth of Sun City, the James G. Boswell Foundation offered to donate \$1,200,000 to the Corporation if they would agree that the hospital would serve the entire Northwest Valley, that it would be named in memory of Walter O. Boswell who originally farmed the land where Sun City stands and that it would have the finest medical facilities possible. DEVCO donated over 10 acres of land and Del Webb Construction Co. offered to build the hospital at cost.

Boswell requested that the hospital be high on a hill so it would be a beacon of mercy for miles around. Ground-breaking took place in January, 1969. Since the land was flat, Webb had to find a way to build up the terrain that would not be prohibitive in cost. Thus thousands of tons of dirt were hauled from an area directly north of the hospital site. As the hill rose on the hospital site, the terrain to the north sank deeper and deeper. It was here that DEVCO decided to use this vast cavity for a fabulous man-made lake with exclusive homesites lining its shore. Thus was born the beautiful Viewpoint Lake.

Next Week - WATER AND FIRE

## TWO (SUN) CITIES "FIRE, WATER AND TAXES"

As early as 1962, Sun City residents, began to question the validity of paying school taxes in a nearly childless retirement community. They had been placed in the Peoria Community School District. Between 1962 and 1974, Sun City overwhelmingly helped to defeat seventeen bond issues so relations were strained to say the least. In 1974, Peoria gathered enough signatures to force them out of the Peoria district into one of their own. A lawsuit ensued and the petition was thrown out because of a lack of valid signatures. A prominent New York lawyer who had moved to Sun City with his invalid wife, played a key role in finding an old law on the books defending any town started as a retirement area, didn't have to support a school district. So Sun City offered to pay 7 mills to the Peoria district and it was accepted.

In 1969, prior to the opening of the "60'S" models on Viewpoint Lake, DEVCO planned a preview party for all key personnel and sales people. The day of the festive event arrived but the water in the lake had nearly disappeared. The lining had not held up. An old retired Wyoming farmer suggested they spray Gunnite into the lake bed. They did and had the lake ready in time for the formal home opening.

During construction of these homes, the Masonry Union went on strike. Webb didn't want to break the union line so they went to frame construction rather than block. The masons finally agreed to work at a lower wage because the construction site was overrun with carpenters building frame homes. Thus the buyer could opt for frame AND block for an additional \$800.

In 1972, a beautiful private club and dining facility was built on Viewpoint Lake. Just a month before opening day, it was consumed by a fire caused by a plumber's torch igniting tarpaper in the ceiling rafters. 30 and 40 mile winds carried sparks out on the desert keeping our one tanker truck busy extinguishing small fires. Luke Air Force came to the rescue with four trucks but too late to save the Lakes Club. Six months later it was rebuilt and dedicated. In 1981, the Lakes Club was sold and membership was opened to anyone regardless of place of residence.

Next Week - The Beloved "SAINTS"

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES "THE BELOVED SAINTS"

Next to golf, softball was a favorite sport with Sun Citizens. Webb responded by building a diamond in the Grand Shopping Center in 1962 dubbed the "Webb Stadium" (with no seats). The first league was formed and games were played on Sunday afternoon.

The motivating force in the development of a new ball park in Sun City came two years later from the Phoenix Ramblers Women's Softball Team. When the team was disbanded in 1965, they were anxious to continue playing. They urged a small band of Sun City fans to approach DEVCO and the Grand Avenue Merchants to construct a park. The Merchants published a questionnaire in the News Sun to test the interest in such a project. The overwhelming response led to a new ball park where the Sunowner Restaurant is now located. Rented bleachers to seat 1,000 spectators, were total sell-outs. Now all that was needed was a catchy name for the women's softball team. A contest was run and "The Saints" was the winner. Ford Hoffman, who had coached the old Phoenix Ramblers took charge. The Grand Avenue Merchants Association were the official sponsors. The first regular season for the Saints began in 1967 and the Saint's Booster Club was organized. In 1970, the park had to be dismantled to make room for the new Sunowner Restaurant and the Saints moved to the Peoria High School field. The third Sun City ballpark became a reality on July 4, 1970. Webb built a beautiful \$300,000 stadium on 111th Avenue and Grand with seating for 3,449. By this time the Saints were making a name for themselves and Sun City by traveling to Tokyo, South Africa and Rhodesia. Booster club membership soared. Gerald Stapley became the coach in 1973 and led the team to many tournament championships plus a National Championship. In 1979, the SUN CITY POM POM GIRLS with an average age of 69, brightened up the field on most evenings. The last season for the Sun City Saints came in 1984 after

## A TALE OF TWO (SUN) CITIES "SUN CITY WEST IS BORN"

Long before Sun City was completed, Del Webb was planning a sister city to be constructed with the same lifestyle that was so overwhelmingly successful in Sun City. Search for ample land led him East and West of Sun City. To the East was the huge Bodine citrus groves. A thorough study was made of the terrain and a strange phenomena was uncovered. A vein of underground water running spasmodically from Jacox Road south to near Thomad Road, was found to come out of the ground at 140 degrees. Homes built over this vein (the equis) would have to be cooled and water heaters would not be needed. This led Webb to the decision to abandon the building of Sun City East in favor of land across the Agua Fria to the west and a future Sun City West.

On January 1st 1978 a new set of model homes and a new rotunda were opened to the public for the first time in Sun City West. The previous year, DEVCO had issued "Letters of Intent" to build in Sun City West to new home buyers from the Sun City model home exhibit with the Heritage models to be the first homes built in the new city. Sun City residents jumped at the opportunity to invest in their sister city, taking out Letters of Intent with no monetary commitment until the lots were officially chosen. These letters also committed Webb to sell at the price of the Sun City models. Meanwhile, a depression was enveloping the nation and money tightened. Holders of these letters began selling them to new buyers since the price of the new models in Sun City West had gone up and DEVCO was obligated to honor the old price. At the same time the Sun City market was glutted with homes for sale by buyers of new homes in Sun City West thus creating a highly competitive market. These combined circumstances caused the new sales and re-sale market to go belly up.

Sun City West was originally designed to have a 50,000 to 60,000 population but after the recession, DEVCO decided to sell off the land south of Grand Avenue. The projected population was now set at 25,000 with completion in the early 1990's.

A TALE OF  
TWO (SUN) CITIES  
"SUN CITY BECOMES OF AGE"

As the 25th birthday of Sun City approached, an unforgettable era was coming to an end and a new foundation was being laid and nurtured to the west. The end of DEVCO's reign became apparent as they began to divest their holding in Sun City. The shopping centers were sold to Prudential Life Insurance Company. The Fountainbell, King's Inn and Motel, the Sunowner and the Lakes Club were sold. Office buildings and the Bell Plaza Professional Building came under new ownership. Finally all vacant land was sold or available for sale to developers.

A cry arose from Sun Citizens, "Del Webb is deserting us!" But time had come to move on to their next project, Sun City West. They vowed to stand ready to assist and advise whenever they were needed. As Del Webb said on opening day, "Concrete, steel and lumber make the buildings, but people make the community."

As Sun City was attaining its freedom, Sun City West was struggling to become more independent of their sister city. The great need in the early years was a grocery store. Webb fought relentlessly to acquire a Safeway store to occupy the first shopping center near Hillcrest. But Safeway refused to open till the population reached 5,000. After many weeks of negotiations they relented at 4,000.

In 1979, Webb attained one of the plums of professional golf. The PGA Golf Tournament was scheduled to play in March 1979 bringing thousands of golf enthusiasts into Sun City West for a week of the finest golf competition on the circuit. In 1978, the Agua Fria River had experienced the worst flood in recent years known as the "hundred year flood". The bridge over the Agua Fria was washed out isolating Sun City West from the East Valley. A new bridge was erected and expected to endure for the next 100 years'. But fate was not to be denied. Just before the opening of the PGA Tournament, another catastrophic flood occurred washing out the new bridge. The county could not get the bridge erected in time for the big tournament, so Del Webb put his construction crew to work and built the road themselves to handle the tremendous traffic load about to converge on the city. It was completed in less than a week and served the city for many months till the new bridge was finally completed.

A TALE OF  
TWO (SUN) CITIES  
PAST — PRESENT — FUTURE

A legacy left by the Pioneers' of Sun City and the "Man", Delbert E. Webb and a few competent leaders of DEVCO, has touched the lives of every Sun Citizen in the past and will endure for many years to come. One such leader was John Meeker, who reversed the policy of being builders only. It was Meeker who inaugurated the policy to involve the company directly with the people of Sun City. He believed in spending money on people instead of expensive national advertising. His creation of many unique opportunities within the city, sold more houses than all the nationwide ads had done in the past. He helped to mold a lifestyle in retirement living that is still being copied around the world.

Sun City, the ninth largest city in Arizona, has many decisions to make which will decide its future destiny in a sunbelt state which is growing at a rate greater than nearly any other state. The pros and cons of incorporation still remain the single most controversial subject in Sun City. The decision must be wrested by the people. As in the past, the future is in the hands of the people. Although Sun City is no longer building single family homes, the selling market is still in a volatile state. The new tax laws have curbed many tax breaks. But it is the contention of many, that people visiting the Sunbelt and particularly the Sun Cities, would do well to buy a home years in advance of their retirement with the new tax breaks allowed for a designated second home. Buyers will find additional write-offs as owners of a future retirement home investment. The greatest gift you can give to your mate is living in the Sun Cities.

Whatever the future has in store for these great Sun Cities, we who are proud to count ourselves as the NEW PIONEERS, will lovingly and charitably nurture these great cities and proudly pass their virtues into the care of future Sun Citizens for decades to come. North, South, East or West, we are all proud to be Sun Citizens, Arizonans and AMERICANS.

A TALE OF  
TWO (SUN) CITIES  
THE ARTS FLOURISH IN THE SUN CITIES

Interest in theater, music and art has a firm cultural foundation in the Sun Cities. A spectrum of talents not naturally found in newly formed communities has been evident since the founding of Sun City in 1960.

First on the scene was the Sun City Players organized in 1961 with about 30 members. The Sun City players have produced every form of dramatic art from vaudeville and opera to musicals and dramas. In 1967 they started two major productions a year. Membership today stands near 700.

A wealth of professional and amateur musical talent has always been abundant. The first dance combo "The Merry Makers" were formed in 1960 and later became known as the "Rhythm Ramblers" and going strong today. The oldest choral group is the Sun City Women's Chorus founded in 1962. That same year the Men's Chorus was started. With the proliferation of a variety of musical groups, the Sun City Musicians Club was established in 1974 and became an umbrella for the many performing groups.

Two groups which have made a name for themselves throughout the valley and the state are the Sun Cities Symphony and the Sun Cities Fine Arts Society which has brought the fine talents of world renowned performers as well as promising young talent to the city. Sun City is the only retirement community in the nation with its own symphony orchestra and has attracted talent from all over the country. It was organized in 1968 by Jennings Butterfield of Cape Cod. The Butterfields moved to Sun City and with the help of DEVCO'S Jerry Svendsen and local patrons, a board was organized and recruiting began from all over the valley as well as Flagstaff. The first concerts were held at Mountain View auditorium and later Sundial auditorium. Many famous guest artists have appeared with the symphony. Concerts are now held in the Sundome in Sun City West boasting the largest symphony audience in the world. Following Butterfield's death in 1980, Dr. Eugene Lombardi took over the baton and added a new dimension, a talented 35 member chorus under Dr. H. Ward Bedford.

Art in all its forms have been available thru classes organized in each recreation center with prominent valley artists as teachers. Newcomers, who had never painted, drawn or sculptured, quickly filled the classes. A dream of a Sun City Art Museum began to take shape with a satellite of the Phoenix Art Museum being established in 1976. It was located on Bell at 98th Avenue. In 1980 it incorporated and became an independent organization. DEVCO offered a building site at Thunderbird Boulevard and Emerald Drive. The land was later exchanged for three acres north of Bell Road between the two Sun Cities. The building was completed and opened in 1985. A second addition was completed and opened in 1987.

DO  
YOU KNOW

What happened to much of the land that had been set aside for a recreation center north of Union Hills? Following the 1977 - 1978 recession, there was a demand for duplexes by new home buyers. Since all the Sun City land to Beardsley Road had been platted and most of it sold, DEVCO decided to take the land north of Union Hills which had been set aside at the beginning for recreation. As the northern residents watched the land being devoured by condos, a big row with DEVCO ensued. The newspaper, the Daily News Sun, hopped on the bandwagon and sided with the residents who had been promised a recreation center for their area. Public opinion grew so hot that DEVCO feared what this conflict would do to future new home sales. They backed down and agreed to build Union Hills Recreation Center (later re-named Marinette). It was much smaller than originally planned because the amount of available land had now shrunk to half of the original plot. But it was enough to satisfy the residents in the northern part of Sun City and end the public furor.

DO  
YOU KNOW

What the gate price was to attend celebrity entertainment in the Sun Bowl?

Residents were admitted free with their recreation card as identification. Out of town guests paid just \$2 per person. This included such well known stars as Lawrence Welk, Fred Waring, Guy Lombardo, Jimmy Durante, Roberta Peters, Roger Williams and Rosemary Clooney. It was difficult at first to get headliners to come to the remote spot in the Arizona desert, but when they discovered they could play to 7,000 people in the amphitheatre, they signed willingly.

DO  
YOU KNOW

Why Sun City streets north of Grand Avenue are in circles?

From 1965 to 1967 there was a rash of break-ins in Sun City with 15 or 20 homes being completely stripped of furniture of residents spending the hot summers in the cool country. Robert Meeker had heard that Circle City had layed out all their streets in circles to discourage strangers from driving in the city. It was easy to get lost driving around in circles. This is how Meeker decided to solve the Sun City problem when they started Phase II across Grand Avenue to protect the residents against burglary and theft.

DO  
YOU KNOW

What happened to the large custom models developed by Devco to reach the exclusive executive home buyers? In the early '80's, Devco hired architects to design custom executive home for the half million dollar plus market. Two of the homes were built and opened to the public. William Boswell walked into the sales office one day after seeing the models and demanded that they be closed immediately. "No one in their right mind will pay that much for a home in the desert. Close them now." Thus the model homes were closed and put on the market for sale. Never did he realize that the value of Sun City West real estate would reach that price. In the six years since that fateful day, a number of exclusive homes have been bought and sold close to that price.

DO  
YOU KNOW

Who pays for the street lights and their upkeep in Sun City and Sun City West?

You do. It is included in your taxes. Special arrangements were made with Arizona Public Service by Del Webb to include the cost of street lighting for the two Sun Cities to be added to the property taxes. So if your street light goes out or is damaged in any way (other than power outages), call APS and they will repair it free of extra charges.

## Waddell & Libby The Men Behind The Names

There has been much in the news about the 'Waddell Ranch' or the 'Waddell prison site'. Where did the name come from? Who was Waddell?

My father, Donald Ware Waddell, came to Arizona in 1924 from New York where he had created a successful municipal bond partnership. His interest was stimulated by Robert Beardsley, who discussed the feasibility of creating a huge agricultural industry on the west side of Maricopa County, by damming the Agua Fria River. My father was immediately captivated by the vision of flourishing farmlands, whose fertile soil would be irrigated by the waters of the Agua Fria River.

At that period, there was a 'wet cycle' and it seemed that the gravity flow would be adequate to furnish water to some of the 37,000 acres under cultivation. This all came to pass. But not without frustration, near bankruptcy, and heart-breaking setbacks. The Waddell Dam was finally completed in 1927, at that time the second largest multiple arch dam in the world. Behind it was created the lovely Lake Pleasant, which today is one of Arizona's favorite recreational areas. However, by 1928, my father was 'land-poor' as he had sunk all of his money into the completion of the dam by paying the interest due the bondholders out of his own pocket and floating a second issue of bonds to insure completion of the project.

Parts of those farmlands (owned by numerous small landowners and several larger companies) are now occupied by great areas of Sun City, the runways of Luke Field, Dysart School, etc. Over the years, the Waddell Ranch Company was compressed into 3700 acres which were extremely productive, due to the expertise of my late husband, Scott L. Libby, Jr. Our cotton production in some years was the highest in the state, averaging over three bales to the acre. We also farmed wheat, grains, soybeans, and feed for our large cattle pens. We also raised lettuce, onions, potatoes, citrus, and melons — you name it and we grew it, or tried to!

Meanwhile, Scott and I lived in the midst of this farming community at Waddell, Arizona, and centered in the cotton camp, where at harvest season we housed as many as 2,000 transient pickers. Christmas Day, for many years, was devoted to dishing up dinner to all these people, an activity in which all Libbys and Waddells and our permanent employees took part. These were the dust bowl days (post-depression) before mechanical cotton pickers were perfected. During our first summer on the ranch, in 1934, we had no electricity, which eliminated even a swamp cooler. We slept wrapped in wet sheets on the front lawn or on the flat roof of our adobe house!

In July, 1962 my father created a foundation which would fund all kinds of educational facilities, health services, and medical research, particularly cancer research. Both my mother and father, and my late husband died of cancer. When my father died, at the age of 83, in 1964, his entire estate was left equally divided to the foundation and to me. I eventually became president of this charitable foundation, which to date has contributed to dozens of Arizona-based organizations in need of funds and support such as The Phoenix Zoo, The Phoenix Art Museum, The Heard Museum, St. Luke's Hospital, Barrow's Medical Center, The Phoenix Symphony, Boys Clubs, etc., etc.

In the beginning, the Foundation had very little cash flow, so in order to meet our obligations to these community services which we wished to fund, we decided to put the Waddell Ranch Company on the market. While waiting for the right buyer to come along, we gave 140 acres of prime farm land in the center of our ranch to The Litchfield Elementary School District for the purpose of building a much needed school in that location. The School Board intended to name the school after my father, but as he already had a dam, a town and post office, and a boulevard named for him, my husband's name, Scott L. Libby, Jr., was suggested. The concept of this gift of land which Scott had developed was his original idea. When the school was completed from the designs of architect Andrew Toth, it won two major national awards for excellence in design of a school building.

In July, 1978, Caterpillar Corporation negotiated an option to buy the Waddell Ranch. Caterpillar told us it wanted to acquire the land to trade it to the State of Arizona in exchange for its proving ground in the White Tank Mountains, which was on State Leased land. It was suggested that if the exchange were approved, the Waddell Ranch land might be used by the Board of Regents for a West-side university, or that the experimental farm near Mesa might be moved to the Waddell Ranch. Some local farmers discussed with the Land Department the possibility of obtaining a farm lease on the land. The Caterpillar Corporation kept extending the option, and finally completed the purchase of the land in June, 1978. There had never been any mention of the land being used for a prison site, and we assumed the land would continue to be used to enhance the agricultural community in which we had dedicated our lifetimes to develop.

The rest, of course, is to me the saddest page of history in my life. My father's and my husband's names have been monotonously used in headlines, without anyone knowing very much about the MEN behind the names. I thought it time I spoke out and filled in the background of two Arizona pioneers, Donald Ware Waddell and Scott L. Libby, Jr., who actually lived and breathed in their adopted state, during the first half of this century. Their contributions to the cultural life, the civic pride, the community endeavors, and the economy of the State of Arizona have been sorely neglected by the press and media. What an ironic, posthumous memorial to two honest men, whose lifetime-reputations were unblemished and respected by all who knew them — a prison for each — as a reward!

*Eleanor Waddell Libby*

Eleanor Waddell Libby  
(Mrs. Scott L. Libby, Jr.)