

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Case # 204

Interview with William Chapman

September 13, 1991

Date of Birth: June 18, 1901

Place of Birth: Omaha, Nebraska

William was involved from the beginning in supplying stoves and refrigerators to Sun City; consultant to Del Webb Company; helped work out agreements between the Recreation Centers; helped found the Boswell Hospital in Sun City.

Synopsis:

- Mother very involved in community; father traveled a great deal
- Two sisters, both deceased
- Moved to L.A. when about age 15
- Went to Washington University in St. Louis; took law courses
- Navy recruiter; moved to Arizona in 1942 to set up recruiting
- Recruited also in Indiana; did commercials on radio and t.v.
- Wrote sales contracts for General Motors; worked at Frigidaire
- In 1958 Del Webb wanted to talk with Frigidaire about his new housing projects; I worked out the pricing and contract and put new Frigidaire appliances in his projects in CA, then in AZ
- Wife and I moved to Sun City in 1964
- Was V.P. of Recreation Center and DEVCO asked to develop agreement to help work out differences between centers

13 September 1991

Release Form

This interview agreement is made and entered into this 13 day of September, 1991, by and between William "Bill" Chapman (herein after called "Interviewee") and Melanie I. Sturgeon (herein after called "Interviewer".)

I agree to participate in a tape-recorded interview with Interviewer in association with her research on Sun City, this research being done under the supervision of the Arizona State University Graduate Program in Public History.

This agreement relates to any and all materials originating from this interview or subsequent interviews by the Interviewer, namely the tape recordings and the indexes and abstracts of the interview, and any other written materials, including but not limited to notes, transcripts, or any other materials prepared from the tapes.

In consideration of the mutual covenants, conditions, and terms set forth below, the parties hereby agree as follows:

1. Interviewee irrevocably assigns to the Sun City Area Historical Society and the Arizona Historical Foundation, co-owners, all his/her copyright, title, literary property rights, and interest in and to the Interview.
2. By virtue of this assignment, Interviewer and the Sun City Area Historical Society and the Arizona Historical Foundation will have the right to use the interview for research, educational, and other purposes, including possible publication.
3. All materials from the Interview, including but not limited to transcriptions or other finding aids prepared from the tapes, may be copied, reproduced and/or published.
4. Interviewee acknowledges that he/she will receive no remuneration or compensation for either his/her participation in the Interview or for the rights assigned hereunder.
5. Interviewer and the Sun City Area Historical Society and the Arizona Historical Foundation agree to honor any and all reasonable restrictions on the use of the Interview, if any, for the time specified below as follows:

Signed William A. Chapman Jr. Date 13 September 1991

Interviewee: William A. Chapman (name)
13840 N. Desert Harbor (address)
Sun City, Az

Signed Melanie I. Sturgeon Date 13 September 1991

Interviewer 1535 E. Hampton Circle (name)
Mesa, Az 85204 (address)
(Melanie I. Sturgeon)

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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

William A. Chapman

Interviewer: Melanie Sturgeon
13 September 1991

Transcribed by Belva McIntosh 27 August 2007

This is Melanie Sturgeon, and on behalf of the Sun Cities Area Historical Association and the Arizona Historical Foundation, I am interviewing William Chapman in his home in Peoria, Arizona. He was a consultant to Del Webb and the President of the Recreation Centers and had a great deal to do with the founding of the hospital in Sun City.

STURGEON: Mr. Chapman, can you tell me the names and the dates of your parent's birth.

CHAPMAN: My father, of course I am a junior, so my father was William A. Chapman and he was born in the 1870's and was a pioneer and he was born in a log house, not in a log house but in a sod house in Nebraska because it got down to 40 below zero and that was the only way to keep warm. My mother was a pioneer. Her family from Indiana moved out there when I think she was about three years old. She was six years younger than my father. They lived there and I was born in Omaha, Nebraska.

STURGEON: What did your father do for a living?

CHAPMAN: My father farmed and taught school while he was farming because he was about six foot four, a very brilliant man, a very fine speaker, in fact he taught elocution. My mother went to school too. My father, that was his first job at school. I think he was going to Nebraska University. Then he taught school for a while because some of the big boys in school run the teachers out all the time. So they brought my father in and from then on they didn't have any more problems. After he finished that he got in business and he got in the implement business in Omaha, Nebraska. I think my mother said they were making forty five or fifty dollars a month when they got married, as a result he did pretty well and became manager there. When I was about eight or nine years old he was offered the Southwest management of the Rock Island Plow Company. The Rock Island

Plow Company was owned primarily by the Weyhouser people and the Datmuns, who were in-laws. We moved to Oklahoma City at a time when it was still pretty wild down there. Big adobe muds and all the Indians with blankets on which made a very big impression on me when I was a kid. I went up to one year of high school there and then my father was given a job as assistant manager for the Dork Motor Car Company. I went to school for a semester in Omaha, Nebraska and ended up in California because he moved out there to take care of the cleanup of a mess out there that was between a whole bunch of the distributorships they had. So I graduated from ----- High School in Los Angeles. From there I went back Washington University in St. Louis because that was academically a school that I could take – that was close to my father's manufacturing plant when he became head of an automobile manufacturing company. I could take engineering and the other subjects that would fit me for going into that kind of a business. So I took mechanical engineering, but my father, at his suggestion, I took four courses of law, contracts or civil procedures, business law. I ended up writing millions of dollars worth of contracts for General Motors Frigidaire Division. And as he said that became more important in business than all the mechanical engineering I learned although it helped me very much in the early start of the business. But from then I went with Frigidaire and during the war I was one of twenty sales executives of General Motors who was invited to come in to head of recruiting for the Navy by Secretary Knox who felt they were going to have a big selling job to do and they didn't know how to do it. So they got twenty men from General Motors and they went out and got twenty sales executives from Ford, seven from Chrysler and a few others and we headed up all the recruiting for the Navy and put millions of people in. After some training I came here in the early - or forty two and set up the State of Arizona for recruiting and then I went on to Indianapolis where I spent the rest of the years, which is one of the leading in the country all the time. But at that point I – because of my experience having to travel so much all over the country and being gone so much I said to my wife that things I wanted out of life you couldn't buy with money and I turned down some very top positions with Frigidaire and ended up taking leave of absence and went to California and speculated in real estate and did right well. Then they got in some problems in Los Angeles and they asked me if I would come back and work and that is where I ended up. Later on we took over the state of Arizona and my association with – west of Sun Cities and this part of the country, started from there.

STURGEON: Before you talk about Sun City, you told me you were born in Omaha but you didn't tell me what year you were born.

CHAPMAN: I was born June 19, 1901. I just celebrated my 90th birthday and my 66th wedding anniversary. My wife, fortunately, is still with me.

STURGEON: You told me that your father was at University, did he graduate from the University?

CHAPMAN: I am not sure. I know this, that he taught and my mother graduated from high school under him, which is a country school. And she said he was one of the finest – well, he was the finest elocution teacher and the finest speaker. I heard him speak at some important meetings – automobile – national automobile associations. As far as I was concerned he was one of the greatest speakers I ever heard. He was a brilliant man.

STURGEON: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

CHAPMAN: I had two sisters, both are dead now. My wife and I have no children. We had some problems, couldn't have anymore.

STURGEON: You talked about some of the communities you grew up in. When you were born had you moved away from Omaha when you were about how old?

CHAPMAN: I think I was about eight or nine years old.

STURGEON: Do you remember what Omaha was like when you were a little boy?

CHAPMAN: When I was a little boy we lived on Druid Hill. It was one of the longest hills in town at that time, of course it was probably close down town as these towns are built up. As a little kid I can remember everybody and their brother it seemed like would come out to coast down that hill in the winter time. You couldn't get up that hill with anything – horse and buggies or nothing could get up there, or automobiles. We had a time walking up – even on the sidewalks. I can remember that when they would get ice – how people kept from being killed I don't know. I remember I went through grammar school, kindergarten and certain portions of grammar school.

STURGEON: What was your neighborhood like?

CHAPMAN: Well, it was kind of out at the edge of town and it was a kind of a neighborhood where you knew your people even on the blocks behind you. I remember the conductor on the

Burlington train that went on up to Sioux City and on up to where my Grandma and Aunt and Uncle lived up at the Caymon Lyons, Nebraska. Why they would put me on the train, and he knew me and would take care of me. Let me pull the chains and the whistles and put me off up there at my grandparents. My aunt and uncle would meet us in the winter time with a sleigh or something like that.

Thrilled me as a kid you know. I went up there to Oklahoma City and I worked up there. I hoed corn and I did a lot of things; I pulled peanuts and pulled cotton and a lot of things in my life. The most of that was down in Oklahoma though.

STURGEON: Was Omaha an industrial city when you lived there?

CHAPMAN: Omaha was, in those days, primarily an agriculture center. Some of the finest crops in the world was grown there. I remember as a kid seeing them pick corn out of a wagon because the corn was so tall. Of course they call it the corn huskers you know. It was a very big agriculture town in those days and a distribution center for that west part. When you get out there two hundred miles north, or west of Omaha you are out in the wild west back in those days.

STURGEON: Well did you or were your neighbors all of the same ethnic origin?

CHAPMAN: The neighbors were all pretty much, they got together, and I know there were some colored people, but they were just a part of the neighborhood as much as anybody else. Here is a funny thing, and I tell you – you talk about ethnic – how things have changed. We didn't think any thing about it when I was a kid. Of course this was back 1908 – 1909 – 1910, along in there. We moved in Oklahoma City. And when we moved there I was eight or nine or ten years old. My mother was pregnant and had my youngest sister I think the year after we moved there. So we advertised for some help. A couple maybe to come and help. This colored couple came and applied and they were both born in slavery. They were probably in their early 50's at the most. They practically raised us kids. We just called them aunt and uncle. As far as we were concerned they were just as much a part of the family as anybody could be. We couldn't understand – when I moved to California and run into some problems out there and I couldn't understand why – because they were just as much a part of our family as you could imagine.

STURGEON: In Omaha did you have any Swedes or Norwegians or people from those countries or were they just mostly –

CHAPMAN: I wouldn't think so because most of them – Nebraska – some of those farming areas were pretty well settled and the homesteading after the Civil War and the old folks – all those things were all a part and built around the ethnic farms and all those things and that kind of work. As I said my father was in the farm implement business, working for a company. At that age you didn't even think of anything of origin or species.

STURGEON: Well, did your mom or dad get involved in the community?

CHAPMAN: Very much, my mother very much. My father was traveling and was very busy, but he was a very good father. Mother was very much involved the school. I can remember as a little kid she would have our teacher for dinner or the principal. The little school went from kindergarten to eighth grade. I can remember in church, she would take me to church and she sang in the choir, and Ladies Aid and they all those things. My mother was always a person that was always helping somebody.

STURGEON: What about when you moved to Oklahoma, was that a lot different?

CHAPMAN: Well, the country was wild. It was a new country down there. As I said, the Indians were still walking the streets with blankets on them and of course as a little kid they would intimidate me like nobody's business. I expected them to bring out a hatchet or something. The streets weren't paved or anything, they were all full of gumbo mud when it rained. It too was agriculture, primarily and of course with all the –they had the run at the turn of the century you know and a lot of people homesteaded down there. But then they were just starting to get into the oil business. There were copper mines and there were zinc mines and there were, they found silica sand and started a glass business. There are a lot on industries in Oklahoma that people didn't know about. They didn't realize what Oklahoma had; a lot of resources in the area. They did a lot of ranching out there. I know the Miller Brothers – that is the 101 Ranch, you probably read about or heard about where Buffalo Bill Cody used to carry the 101 ranch circus around. My father used to sell them all their implements and I went up there one summer when I was about eleven or twelve years old. They invited me up there for a month. My father gave me a .22 rifle when I was a kid. I learned to shoot that thing and I could outshoot anybody on the ranch. I remember going up one Christmas, up at my

grandfather's at Caymen, Nebraska. They had one of these turkey shoots. It may have been thanksgiving. So we went around and we said let's try this. We went into a shoot for a turkey. To make a long story short, he shot and I told him----I shot and put three bullets right in the nose, I won the turkey. Grandpa hauled me all over that town of 12 or 1500 people; everywhere in town to show off his grandson who won the turkey. I didn't tell him I had a little rifle range and I had been practicing with that rifle all that time. But I get a kick out of it.

STURGEON: How old were you when you moved to Los Angeles? Did you tell me you were in your twenties?

CHAPMAN: I think I was about fifteen.

STURGEON: Was that a lot different from the other towns you lived in?

CHAPMAN: Los Angeles was a growing town. You take in 1916 or 17, along in there, why Figueroa was almost the city limits. Like in Sun City you talk about Camelback being the city limits or something like that. Well, Los Angeles, I can remember in 1919 we bought a house out on what we called ---- Drive, it was later Wilshire Boulevard. It was still gravel then. The back end of our lot was the city limits. We were in the county. I guess we probably we had a half or maybe an acre; beautiful lawn. Across the street were the people--they and their in-laws owned Catalina Island. They sold it to Wrigley. So I used to get jobs over there, driving buses and doing all kinds of things in the summertime. Next door was a director then a big vacant lot, he had a three story house, well we had a two story house, but he had a finished off the attic. He used to run films. He would bring home cuts and a lot of stuff and they would invite us over and there would be portions all spliced together so he could see portions of this and portions of that. It was quite an experience. Right down on 9th street, right behind us, a lot of Max Sennet and those comedies. The street car line came down there and ended up down there. We would go down there and there was a camera man and a director and maybe one other person. They get down there and they would do all kinds of things. The guys would drive the street cars back and forth so they could take pictures like they were going to run over someone. And they probably give them a dollar apiece, the motorman or conductor. They had a big day and that was how the movies were made back in those days. We used to watch them. I remember I was in school, high school, they come out there and they were putting on a war film about the war, 1917 I think it was. They come out and got all the kids from ROTC and got them to play soldiers in this thing, down in the trenches. Over where the coliseum is there used to be a whole bunch of little creeks and so forth in

there, so they used these creeks for trenches. That was the way movies were made in those days.

STURGEON: Were you in a rural part of town then?

CHAPMAN: Well, you can imagine -----we were in the county. It was the city limits. Well that is about where million dollar row is now. Wilshire is probably way in town now.

STURGEON: But when you were there it was just a residential area there then.

CHAPMAN: Well, it was residential and my lord it was just down the road from where they were great big fields and the Jap gardeners out there. They were cleaning off the land and making Jap gardens. Of course when I came back there after school later on it was all made into a development.

STURGEON: Did your Mom get involved in the community when you lived there?

CHAPMAN: My mother was very much involved. She felt very bad about a lot of these poor kids. We just didn't have any like that in Omaha or even Oklahoma City. Or I didn't know about it - I didn't know about it. The reason I knew there, I used to ride with her to help when I was a kid on Saturday's. She started the milk program for the poor there. She would go down to the dairies and get all this milk and go around and deliver it to all these areas. I used to go with her. Of course I was 16 or 17 then and I could strong arm - carry all that stuff too. But I remember that was just as regular as clock work, to make sure that these kids got their milk and got whatever else she could get from these dairies and from these other places. I think she took butter. I remember we used to lug a lot of stuff in there. I remember one time she had a bunch of bread she got from the bakeries - day old bread and things like that too. But she was very much involved in things like that. She was the kind of mother, all the kids would come to the house, and they would rather be at our house than any place. They kept on coming - some of these boys who were my buddies, they kept on coming to see my mother and stop by. When I came back after the war, out to California, about 1950, I called out to the race track at Arcadia, some of our -----coming out of the factory wanted to see some of the races. I talked to the manager, I said this is (I said my name - from Frigidaire and General Motors), he said, are you Bill Chapman? I said, yes. He said did you used to live in Los Angeles? I said, yes. He said your mother -----? I said yes. He said this is Dick Amus. He was my closest buddy. He said did you know that

until your mother moved away here a couple of years ago that I still would go over to see her. Mom always had something to eat for me and would invite me over for dinner. My wife and I used to go over and still see her. That must have been 30 years later. But that was the kind of woman she was.

STURGEON: You are lucky to have a Mother like that. Were you ever involved in the community as you grew older? Did you get involved in things?

CHAPMAN: Not too much. I got a little involved in school. I was in athletics, but-----

STURGEON: What about after you were married? Did you get involved then?

CHAPMAN: Well, we did what we could in certain things, but remember this that I was gone an awful lot. It so happened that after I developed a certain technique and a certain knowledge, at one time they said that I had engineered and developed more applications for refrigeration and air conditioning than anybody in the corporation. When I went to the factory I was in charge of application and engineering, or sales and engineering at the factory. In 1936, from St. Louis, I was district engineer at St. Louis. But it was because you were that there was more of it to be done. I worked out and developed some things to take a lot of the mathematics out by making some tables, so they could do a lot more. I always had an inquiring mind to find out what made things tick.

STURGEON: Do you remember what it was like during the depression?

CHAPMAN: My wife and I, we certainly do. We were in Oklahoma City and I had a percentage override. I was sales manager of a commercial air conditioning. Of course air conditioning was brand new. Frigidaire developed the freon and with it you could develop high speed equipment because with the old refrigerants you couldn't. You could use fin coils and a lot of other things. So we were leaders in the business. I was working very hard and I had an override on the whole, everything that was sold in the state, there was a certain base. I can remember I went to a meeting at the factory and I come back one time and we had to take back more stuff from the factory and from the dealers, because they couldn't pay for it. -----I mean you had to take it -- we would go on line and take back something because they didn't have enough money to pay for it. But we made out and fortunately because of my background experience, in 1933 -----asked me to go up to Omaha. I was with a distributor in Oklahoma City, but I had done some things here that were pretty good in sales. Right in the heart of the

depression I sold a whole chain of laundries. I think there were about seven or eight of them, and refrigeration for all the water coolers and all that. There was a very -----that it took about a months supply of production of the factory, so I made a little name in doing it. They asked me and we went up to Omaha, Nebraska, and arrived in Omaha, Nebraska on Thanksgiving Day 1933, right in the heart of the depression. I got \$250 a month as manager and an override or what have you that probably amounted to about \$250 and that was a lot of money. We knew bank presidents and people that didn't have anything. Cards were, I don't know if it was particularly great, but cards were a game you played because it didn't cost you anything to do it. You could have ice cream, or watermelons were cheap in those days. You could have cold watermelon.

STURGEON: Did you see the working conditions of other people around you? What were they like?

CHAPMAN: Oh lord yes. Heavens, everybody was in the same boat. Like I said you got together and did things together. You made things for your own amusement that didn't cost you anything. It is an amazing thing. In Oklahoma everybody realized- I can remember coming back and seeing the banks close and tie up all the money we had. We had some savings and loan, that was shut off and we ended up - I think eventually through the years we maybe got twenty five cents on the dollar out of that. But you survived and it taught you you did things together and you found out ---- and I think it probably cemented my wife and I closer than anything in the world; because we depended on each other. I was a hard worker and she watched things.

STURGEON: Did your father retire?

CHAPMAN: My father retired about, right in the 30's I think it was.

STURGEON: What did he do?

CHAPMAN: For the last part or more, of course you understand I was still trying to recruit for the Navy in Indiana, which ended up being a very interesting job because I had a separate assignment. Purdue University was selected to evaluate the Navy radar courses, which is a very highly technical course on radar operations. So with that I went to work with Bill Eddy who was head of the navy radar schools, Captain Eddy. These executives and professors and department heads to the schools which was a very confidential thing and had them evaluate the schools for college credit, after you graduate school you get so many college

credits, which I did and I got very well acquainted with Chancellor Elliot who was head of Purdue, and department heads. I learned a lot about radio. Bill Eddy had been retired from the navy because of his hearing. He was submarine commander and lost his hearing as a young fellow. He was an inventor and he had built the NBC radio stations in New York and then radio Chicago he built that. He was very much in there and he had all kinds of patents on things. He was just getting into television. I was up there one time and he said Bill, you are giving commercials on the radio all the time, I know they hook you up to all the state radios, some of these commercials on the navy, and he said I think you could give a little talk on the Navy on television. I said television? What is that? I hadn't the slightest idea what he was talking about. To make a long story short, he took me into this studio and he set it up one day, went in there and here was a whole wall – all it was was a solid wall of lights; these big bull's eye lights. So apparently they had to have all these lights and they set there and it was winter time and they had to have their blues on and sweat, they mopped their faces. I made a television appearance and I think it was 1945 in Chicago. People with sets, maybe 3500 or 5000 or whatever it was, they sent out cards, they sent out reports, if they heard the report. There were reports come in on my commercial on the Navy. So as I said I had the experience of giving a television program a little bit early. Of course they gave 32 credits, which is better than two years. They said they couldn't even teach it because it was so highly advanced. Well they didn't have the equipment. The Mark 14's radar sets cost probably hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars.

STURGEON: Were you working for Frigidaire when you were doing this or for the United States Government?

CHAPMAN: Back in 1941, before the war, Secretary Knox came to Charlie Wilson who was then president of General Motors and I said this always makes you wonder. He said that they knew that they were going to have to eventually recruit a peace time Navy every month. They had no back ground experience – they would enlist a guy then they would send him to school and train him. But they had to get people already trained – they had to set up an organization. They didn't know how to do it so they set up certain specifications and said it was all voluntary and see if GM could do it. They would go through their list and talk to these people and see if they could get them interested. It so happened none of us knew anything about it so they started in and when it came to Frigidaire it was one of the divisions. And I ended up as one of the two people that they asked to come and do these things because we could bring the experience. Now we did not report to any Naval district, we were direct to Washington. We set up our own programs because they said they didn't know what to do and they asked us. We would get a

good program and every body would try to follow us or something like that. It was very interesting work and I might say this that we started right here in Arizona before we left we had all the American Legion posts as civilian recruiters., They had civilian recruiting badges and Arizona was leading the country in a lot of the areas. They had more Waves, recruits etc. per population. I had the experience in helping recruit for the Marines, because we did all the physicals. The three hundred Indians they put in this special communication set up – won honors and were highly decorated and had the only unwritten code the Japs couldn't break. That was quite an experience because our senior medical officer came in to me one day and he said, Bill, we got trouble. We got several of them in here and they can't pass the physical; they got flat feet. So I went back and talked to them and they told me they walked 75 miles to enlist. Anyway we called Washington and Washington set up waivers because this was a characteristic of the Navajo people and so I can remember that. They did that. They even set up a recruiter trainer so they could take physicals, type up the things. They would tour all over the state during that time. So we went to Indianapolis and we set up this ---- the same recruiting set up there and Indiana led about a third of the time of the whole nation. You wonder all these mid-western people joined the Navy, but you forget they are all on the lake up there. There is an awful lot of people working docks and ships and everything else.

STURGEON: In the depression, to go back to the depression, do you remember when they passed the Social Security Act?

CHAPMAN: I will be honest with you I don't have any cognizance at all. I think the most I remember that is the acts they had in connection with that is putting these kids up in the forest and cleaning out the forests. Another thing was the thing that when I went up to Omaha I was nailed into as far as prices and a lot of other things that we had to abide by because, it was the first time I had had the experience where I had to know all that and I belong to some organization, NRA or some group like that or with the government on them. But that's a long time ago.

STURGEON: Let's start talking about Del Webb and Sun City. You told me before we started the interview how you got involved, could you tell me that again?

CHAPMAN: Very simply. In 1958 our distributor out of El Paso decided to retire, he was a multi-millionaire and so on. He decided to retire and so the factory took over Arizona and I presume some of the others but not Los Angeles. Los Angeles took it over as a factory zone office, so we had the responsibility of

Arizona. It was supposed to be effective as of January 1, 1960, but in the middle of the summer, the manager here, who happened to be a good friend of mine, called me and said that Del Webb was going to figure on a whole bunch of housing projects and they wanted to talk to us because they didn't want to get involved in anything that was going to have to be carried on after he left. So I came over here. I met with this man and we went up to the Del Webb Company on an appointment and they talked primarily about a big housing project they were going to start in San Diego, if I remember correctly, I think it was the Fairmont section. So we figured out – they showed us the design and we figured out the equipment, the Frigidaire equipment and all the buildings and everything and I worked out pricing and a contract set up and I believe I came back one or two times because I had to contact the factory on this. I did and we agreed on a contract and we put in Frigidaire in all the houses, and primary buildings and such other projects that they furnished in those houses. While we were doing that he said now, in addition to this project in San Diego, he said, we are going to build a little retirement community northwest of town here and he said we are going to use the same model houses so you better figure about 200 a year on that. Can you do it at the same price level – because we were shipping carload lots? So I said I think we can handle it because -----so my whole theory was it was going to be a small project and I got the idea that they were just comparing it primarily to Youngtown, from which I gathered from Jim Boswell and some of the others told me later that they got the idea in the first place from this kind of a retirement set up. Well, of course the experience was one of the big contractors in San Diego, I think it was Convair lost the big contract with the government, laid off 18 – 20,000 employees; in about two months, of course involved all the sub-contracts, a lot more people. So that thing just about went a bust over there you know. I think they ended up selling about 200 instead of a couple of thousand in two years. And Webb sold 1301 houses that first year in Sun City. Of course it really caused a lot of havoc with our company as far as trying to meet production, colors and all the designs and models and everything else because they didn't know any more than we did about what their needs were. And I always said – and Bill Boswell, who was Jim Boswell's, the second or third. His father was the last of the three brother's, Walter Boswell, James Boswell and Bill Boswell were the three brothers that started the Boswell Company. Bill Boswell was alive in '68 and he told me they had, Boswell's who owned Marinette Ranch, this 9.000 acres where, as they said one time was the best damn cotton in the world grown right here, this Egyptian Pima cotton. Youngtown wanted some additional land, which is about the other half I guess of Youngtown and the Boswell's worked out a deal – because they didn't have much money for them to buy so much and subdivide so much at a time. Then as they sold the houses they would pay it off in escrow. So that they had a

lot of experience and from that I understand that one of the decisions they made from finding out what all the gripes of the people were and all that, was that they would put all the things that they contemplated in advance, so that they would be here rather than promises which created a lot of problems I guess, other places. So they built this golf course, they built the recreation center, and the shuffle boards and the swimming pool. The main building in that area they used as sales offices or whatever for quite some time until they got enough housing. Now the original part of Sun City was what they called New Life, which is a section up close to Grand Avenue and it was primarily lower priced housing. There were a number of condominiums, little apartments that sold for about 8950 and were primarily designed for people who were school teachers or people who were employed and had comparatively low pensions and social security and that they could afford. They paid additional for air conditioning and additional for this or that. But much to their surprise a lot of other people – the golf course -----they wanted to come here too and they wanted some better housing. So then they built unit 1 and that comprised the first increment of Sun City and the first recreations centers were built around to serve those two units. Well, they figured there was no room to expand so when they got into Unit 2 and 3 and so forth and started going. We started going pretty good and they had to think in terms of new recreation centers and new areas to serve these additional people. Well they figured, at that time, which they later found out -----Sun City, just what I have been telling you.

STURGEON: Well, how long did you keep working for Frigidaire after that first

CHAPMAN: Well, I kept coming over here, we had a branch manager, and we had to call on our dealers about other projects you know. So I came over here, maybe every month or every couple of months for several years. I drove, and my wife would come with me and we would drive over here. So in 1963 I was getting very allergic to that smog over there and it was getting terrible, we lived in Downey and those freeways all around there were terrible. The people, they would just run all over you. It was just so difficult to get around, so I decided, my wife and I, we talked about it, and anyplace you go, even Santa Barbara where we went after the war and spent a year and a half and enjoyed it so much. They didn't have a stop sign then they had a stop light on every corner. It become so loaded people it was no more a joy to go up there. So I decided that the pressure was getting awfully terrific over there because we had the largest ----- in the country. Of course that means, when you are doing a high volume of a national business they are always putting the pressure on you to pick up the loses some where else. So I

had some ulcers and some other things, so I made arrangements, my wife and I decided I would retire as soon as I was eligible. (End of tape, side A)

Side B

STURGEON: I was wondering if you could tell me how the Boswell's got involved with Del Webb in the first place.

CHAPMAN: I asked that question of Jim Boswell who was then president and head of the J. G. Boswell Company. Jim Boswell was the 2nd. He told me, well, the way it got started we had a lot of land out here and we figured we were going to have to dispose of some of it because of the water, irrigation takes about 5 1/2 times as much water as a community or development does, or a city. So it becomes more and more of a problem and gets more costly and so forth. So I heard and so I went and contacted the President of Del Webb who was then a partner of Mr. Webb's, L. C. Jacobson. So I sold them 10,000 acres of land. From that they got pretty well acquainted and became very good friends, L. C. Jacobson and Jim Boswell. They got involved and they had properties that were adjacent and it became more and more apparent to the Boswell's that they were going to have to start disposing of a lot of this land because of the extreme amount of water used for irrigation as compared to city developments. And the expense of the water and the ground was getting more valuable and so forth. So it is my feeling from what both he and his father, Will Boswell, told me that Webb was interested and they were starting what they called community developments, not only here, but they had started one over in Bakersfield, California and some other places, little small ventures. From this joint friendship that developed between Jacobsen and Boswell, and from the experience of Youngtown for which Bill Boswell told me they had sold Youngtown some additional land, and got very well acquainted with that project. They felt that this was the ideal place to put a retirement community in and follow that pattern and all. At about the same time there was a lot of politics going on with the starting of the development of the Leisure Worlds and so that evolved the idea to go ahead and try out and the first sections, were as I said were commonly known as New Life, which had so many hundred acres that Boswell released and they formed a corporation of equal partnership. They had a certain set up there and later on by law they had to change it to a 59-41 basis but Boswell still had certain authorities that required their final decisions to make in connection with certain things. As a result they not only started out with the resources of the community development experiences and organization of the Webb Company, but they had the land which was released as a part - a certain

number of acres at a time – by Boswell which didn't require a huge capitol investment outlay. So the partnership did very well. The only thing in my opinion with a pioneer, not having any background experience they certainly missed the boat in projecting what the ----. But I think the primary development of Sun City can rest on the fact that a lot of the people that came in here were some pretty smart enterprising people who weren't afraid to speak and who weren't afraid to help make it a community. They also had DEVCO people who would listen and so they developed the kind of housing people wanted and they developed and involved the people in a lot of the recreation centers, and the golfing and various other things. And all the way through that, we had the town at the right time, we had people who could pull the talent together and utilize it and we had a developer who would listen. I might point out that in the first few years of the development they had a very fine construction project manager, Tony Kohl, I think was his name, who was primarily a contractor or primarily a builder, but they thought they needed more and I think they were told this too by a lot of the people that they needed more – somebody as a project manager out here who had more of a business – more of a promotional – more aspects to develop a way of life and the housing would take care of itself as the needs came about. So Owen Childress was brought out here as project manager and Owen sold some of the first houses out here and he had been associated downtown and Owen was a person who would listen and would bring people together and work with them. John Meeker who was from the early beginning was manager of the committee development section of the Del Webb Company.

STURGEON: What about Tom Breen?

CHAPMAN: We'll talk about that a little later. Tom Breen was Vice President sales manager and so forth. But I personally, after I met Meeker over here, in developing and getting the stuff together, because the displays, he told us how he wanted the displays. I came over and brought a crew over, home economists and all that, showed all the products and put on a meeting. Showed them how to demonstrate their products and all that and he wanted to cut these sections to show all these advantages of Frigidaire, Meeker did, and we did. We put in displays and I got very well acquainted with John that way. Then when they put in Sun City California, before they ever started, I met him out there on the project. We would sit down and discuss the whole project, some of the ways to do things like that. John knew that I knew a lot, I was in touch with a lot of the big housing developments, -----was a good friend of mine, I had originally contracted with him. Ross-Moore Frigidaire, which was a very deluxe contract I might say. He put in the two door refrigerators and the finest equipment. So I knew a lot of

things that were going on in the housing development so I used to get with him quite frequently and we discussed these things. This is my way – there are a lot of people in the organizations – they come in and make their mark in the organizations. In other words they are smart enough to take advantage of situations, but again I think the very fact that right from the start after the second year the recreations centers, the people would get together, even though Webb at this time was running them. They would get together and come with ideas and they would volunteer and do a lot of things. That carried on through and I think that was the thing that made the hospital when we got involved in that.

STURGEON: You said you moved here in 1963 or 64. How did you get involved with the recreation centers then?

CHAPMAN: Well, I'll tell you. Town Hall Center was the center of a lot of the activity. When unit 6, which was the last unit they were going to build up to that point. We moved in about the first of October in '64, although we retired as of the 30th of June. We come over and rented a place and then went to Europe for two months and were gone because the house was supposed to have been ready. They were way behind. It was ready about four or five days after we got back. We rented an apartment up at King's Inn then for a week and moved in to it. I think the biggest thing about this was the fact that there was a time when I could name probably 25 of the most outstanding persons that you can imagine that came and lived here in Sun City and yet were members of the board of directors and the home owners or all those things. People were outstanding I can remember one for example who was Jerry McCarty who was secretary and treasurer of Boeing Wichita. He was on the national board of certified public accountants. The National Board of U.S.O appointed by the President. He was voted the most outstanding citizen in the state of Kansas. He later became treasurer of the recreation center and 1968 we got him involved in the hospital and he became one of the first treasurers of the Boswell Hospital. He was just typical of many others, contractors who contracted bases all over America including the big air base in Alaska. They helped with us with a lot of things and worked with us – electrical engineers, business people with all kinds of business experiences. They came together and they found out they had been working on a busy street and in retirement they wanted something to do and wanted to make this a better place to live. Now we had the benefit of all that pioneering that happened during the constructive development days of Sun City. I don't know any where else in the world who could have done – and of course there were a couple of catalysts and I don't want to get ahead of myself. But I can tell you this a very good friend of mine, an old friend of mine, we go back to college days, moved to California and

we were good friends. So he told us he was going to retired. And he looked at the Sun City in California. He went down there and he ended up buying two houses and he ended up living in one and he sold and made a profit on the other. A number of years later I went over there to visit and he had a date that afternoon. He said I got a date, he said we are trying our best to get some doctors out here, and see if we can't get a hospital. About that time I was pretty much involved in the hospital. We were doing all right. When we were all through I said to him, what's the trouble, why can't you get a hospital here and why can't you get doctors. He said well we can't get doctors until we get a hospital. He said you know why we can't get a hospital? I said, no. He said we don't have a Jim Boswell. Course Jim Boswell put up the main million two hundred thousand and he was the main catalyst to help us get the first bank loan and everything else.

STURGEON: Well, how did you get involved with the hospital in the first place?

CHAPMAN: Well, the first board of directors queried Webb about – there was such a shortage of doctors and you couldn't get them and they were about an hour away before you could get anybody because there wasn't any hospital here. So the people were trying to work out some way of getting a hospital here and so Webb took this and they said let's form a little board and put it together. Well Burr Welch was president of the rec center. He represented the highest amount of people. My boss was president of the home owners – he represented all the home owners per se and lot of the other phases of things. Lou Lessee was one of the first people to move in and she was a reporter for the newspaper. So the two representatives from Webb and those three people, I think Tom Austin, I am not sure if it was Tom Austin who was then running the rec centers for Webb. I don't know whether he was on that first board but I don't think so. So those people representing with DEVCO and another couple of persons, I don't remember who were the first ones, but anyway it was Meeker and Childress when I went. They got together and it ended up by forming a little corporation which was the Sun City Community Hospital Corporation. I believe that was in 1966, about September along in there. They started out to find out what they could do. Well Sun Valley Lodge was being built under the auspices of the United Church, which was almost the only church at that time. They thought if possible they could build a little hospital that could be close and convenient. So they picked out a site, I think it was on 101st right behind – and Coggins I think it was, right behind the Sun Valley Lodge. DEVCO said they would put up the land, a few acres there as necessary to build a hospital. They planned a one story wooden hospital that would have 50-60 beds, I have forgotten just how many. Now that was the plan. That would have sufficed at that time to take care of the number people that represented Sun City. It

would have sufficed to bring in some doctors. But then that progressed and in 1967 DEVCO decided that this thing was way bigger than they had anticipated and they were building clear on down to Olive which would take in all the rest of the ranch below Grand Avenue and which involved about 1700 units. That is when I got involved when they started negotiating for those last 1700. Burr--- was President of the rec center and I was vice-president. I was appointed as Chairman of the committee and got involved and meanwhile he was involved in the hospital. Then in December – they had gotten along to a certain point and DEVCO had decided that this was too good, that they shouldn't stop there and they decided to go north of Grand Avenue which was going to be about twice as much land and housing, or more than twice than below Grand Ave. At that point they knew very well that our plans were insufficient to take care of that group. They were going to have to plan different. Well, Jim Boswell, who was a very forward looking man, he says, I will tell you what, my foundation, James G. Boswell foundation, we will put up a grant of a million two hundred thousand dollars to start this hospital off on the provisions that we build a modern up to date hospital that is capable of taking care of these older people the way they should – a first class hospital. So at that point then they just gave up on all their previous plans and they started – they said well if we do that what would be the most efficient for these older people. Because older people require a lot better services than a young person, like out at Maryvale where you might say they are in the best health they have ever been, having babies or having an accident or something like that. They got all the vitality of youth. Well, Webb had built a hospital, a very outstanding hospital over in Loma Linda California for Loma Linda University and a religious organization over there. The teaching hospital and this hospital was built with what they called the silo nursing units or the round nursing units whereby they had a central station and every room was within twenty or thirty feet of the nurse where they could get very quick service and very efficient. Meanwhile Elder-Base who were the architects, largest hospital architects out of St. Paul, Minnesota had built experimental units under a grant for an experimental unit a number of years before. They built a single corridor nursing unit, a double corridor nursing unit and the round nursing unit. They run the tests on them for the efficiency of the services and everything. As a result of that test, silo, the round unit, proved way beyond these others as far as efficiency and everything else was concerned. So as a result of that and the experience and the ideas they got from Loma Linda they got in touch with Ellerby's. Meanwhile their local architects were Bricker and Hoyt and they had drawn the plans on the original hospital and they had drawn the plans on the rec centers and nothing to do with the housing however. As a result of this experience it was decided that they would follow that late concept of towers and they started out with two towers and they build them with four nursing units and if necessary

they would fill in the top two floors and just finish the first two floors because financing was a major factor. That is how the hospital got started and involved in what it is. In the meanwhile in December 1967 Burr Welch had an operation. Had a blood clot and fell over dead. I was just finishing as President of the rec center and he had been the previous year before. So I would presume that plus the fact that I had shown a lot of aggressiveness and activity in working with them in the development and expansion of the rec centers, I was asked by DEVCO people to do two things. One was would I take over and serve as president of the hospital. The annual corporation meeting was in April so they elected me to the board and then they elected me as Chairman at the next corporation meeting. So I thought it was a very good project and I was very much interested in it and I agreed to do it and that is how I got started with the hospital. At the same time they said they were going north of Grand Avenue and they were going to have to go through all of these problems negotiating the rec centers and determining what should be built to meet all these additional requirements and wanting to know if I would be interested in being a part time consultant for them to handle those negotiations and determine what should be built and so forth. So I was a little bit naïve in respect to that part time business you know. But I felt this, if I could use one of DEVCO's facilities in one way I could use it very much in developing what I needed to know to do in connection with the hospital. I would have them providing the rooms and the offices and all the help I needed, clerical and secretarial and everything else. So to make a long story short that is how I got started in both ends of the business. It so happened, the first thing we had to do going north of Grand Avenue - Oh, I had been very active in trying to put together these two recreation centers, because there was such a conflict, one couldn't use the other. I said this is two groups against each other. It couldn't exist very well in this community; we shouldn't have that, so I had set me up a committee to negotiate with the community center to see if we couldn't resolve that and combine the whole shebang. We drew up a contract and it got negotiated and people voted on it and approved it and that is how consolidation come about. So inasmuch as they wanted to do the same thing on the other side of the street too. So that is one of the things that I worked with Meeker on and helped write most of the master agreement and it was finally approved for all rec centers combining so everything is under one hat and it has worked out very well. But it so happens that I had a very fine board of directors and of course two thirds of that board that I was going to negotiate with were the same people that were on the board when I was there. So I knew them, I knew all this talent and also I bored a bunch of them at the hospital when I needed help too. So the communities and the people and all that, and it was there. I can never get over marveling, when we sit down and figure out what we needed to do and say let's see if we can get the people to help us do it with all the know-how and all

that. Whether it was an electrical engineer or this and that, they were here and willing to do it. So I would say that whether it was the rec centers or the hospital or even the churches they were building. They were built by a bunch of go-getters who saw their duty and were willing to get in and do it.

STURGEON: They just didn't sit around waiting for things to happen?

CHAPMAN: This is right. You know it is a funny thing, I had to develop, you might say literally the economic story of Sun City. You don't go out and get a loan just by going out and saying you need money. So we had to develop the economics, what was the whole story back of Sun City to back up the quality of what the community was. As a result of that, putting that together we were able to get loans, we were able to get very good rate; we had our bonds up; we had to build outstanding facilities and a few other things.

STURGEON: So when you put it together what did you do?

CHAPMAN: When I was President of the rec center it was a period when we were growing too fast and depended on a lot of the volunteer services to do the clean ups and a lot of the things there or just a few employees under the direction of a committee. So it was decided that we should hire a manager. So we hired a manager – we had an interview and we hired a manager, but then it became a point where we better set up rules and regulations for the operation of this thing. So he knows what he is to do and what the board is doing and the committees and how it should operate, like any business. And so we had a committee appointed and they spent months, and I might tell you, there were two or three outstanding personnel directors on that committee too, and office managers and business managers. So there was a lot of talent, so when they come up with this we put together rules and regulations and each year we reviewed it with the various boards until the final form grew which was used for a period of a long time. I don't know what has been done since I got out but for ten years during the development of Sun City when I was involved as a consultant I had to work with them under budgets and their operations each year because it was doing a lot of paying in advance and projecting a lot of things as they went along based on the housing being built and the income per se. So from that originated the whole rules and regulations and they were approved by the members. At that time I made a remark to the general manager, or the manager of the rec center and to the board that I thought they ought to have a number of copies made so that each member of the board so when they came in on the board so they knew what they were supposed to do and they knew what the manager was supposed to do. Jay Titus, who was the manager, thought that was a

good idea and would help him too. So it was made, this whole book was put together and I went down and worked with them on it, primarily helping set up the format from the experience we had had working with the committees. This book contains as of 1978, and I think as much as up to '80, it contains all the rules and regulations for the operations of the rec centers of Sun City. I might say this, that when the manager was hired for Sun City West he was given this book by the Webb people under whose jurisdiction he was, by DEVCO as his operating manual. So if you want to take that along and take a look at it you can because I see nothing secret in that. But you can just bet, just as I said, it was a lot of these politicians that want to build their little empires now, whether it is the bowling or the golfers or the men's clubs or what they might be. Lord knows what it is today.

STURGEON: You are not involved in it today then.

CHAPMAN: I haven't been involved since 1980 or '81.

STURGEON: I wanted to ask you a question about Del Webb. How involved in all this was Del Webb?

CHAPMAN: Well, Del Webb and Boswell were partners, I said eventually one percentage. Boswell had certain rights of approval and so forth. But the two you might say were partners. Boswell put up the land and you might say had a lot of financial standing. Webb was the developers. They had to take it from there and they had to develop it and they had to sell it. Then every month when the houses went through escrow the funds were paid in from escrow to Boswell by DEVCO to pay off so much on all that land. That is the way it happened. Then Webb got involved in some projects, particularly one back east in Jersey. Some projects that were financial disasters. Result is that it became almost an impasse between Webb and Boswell. During the period that they developed Sun City West they went out and secured thousands of acres of land, not only where they are, across Grand Avenue much of which had been land that was owned by the Boswell Company. A lot of it was. But anyway DEVCO had that land then the matter of distribution and the matter carrying on that project. The Webb Company, I guess to satisfy the banks and so forth, I don't know just who, cleaned out the organization you might say down town. Bob Johnson who had been the president, chairman retired to operate Mr. Webb's foundation. The new president Swanson was brought in and he had been with, I think, Greyhound and some of that bunch. Well they didn't see eye to eye apparently on the thing and I know I said in my meetings, and Swanson just wanted to come over and take over. So Jim Boswell made an offer to buy out all of Webb's interests. While this is conjecture to a certain extent on my part, the

Webb people opened lines with the banks and financial people. Their creditors were so extensive that they thought that the Sun City West property and Sun City were the greatest assets, liquid asset that they had. So they would not sell, so Jim Boswell sold at a reduced figure to the Webb people, who I believe, in the meanwhile had made arrangements to liquidate a bunch of this land others like Western Savings and some other people, to develop funds for themselves to help bail out some of their problems. As a result Boswell pulled out at that point and many projects had to be changed or abandoned. At that point it was going to be a Boswell West Hospital, when Boswell pulled out of course it then became Sun City West Hospital and I personally thought to Bob Johnson who I knew very well and Childress, two of the principal members of the Webb Foundation, and was able to negotiate a deal whereby they gave the hospitals \$3,000,000 over a period of years which is now about six years pay out from the Webb Foundation and when I presented it to our board we agreed to name it the Del Webb Hospital, Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital, which in the final analysis, the two names are more or less representative of the two organizations that developed the Sun Cities. So this is about what happened. Now the continued success of Sun City West is a certain number of people from 6 to 800 new homes a year. They are about to the point where they are using up the original land and have purchased some additional lands to expand on out. In as much as this has proven such a success as a community development, they felt that the construction business was no longer a profitable venture. Our primary concentrating on community developments and there are probably three or four or five going in various areas at the present time.

(End of interview)

Ruth Sparks Byrne Interview moved to C253 – Ruth Sparks Byrne