

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

James Boswell

Dec. 12, 1983

Interviewers: Jane Freeman, Glenn Sanberg, Louise & John Byrne.
Transcribed by Belva J McIntosh 31 Mar 2007. Speakers did not identify themselves so their names have not been included next to their questions.

Material Covered: Detailed description of his involvement with the development and growth of Sun City.

Three ranches, one known as the Marinette Ranch which is here – where Sun City is, another comprising about 20,000 acres – this was 10,000 acres, was some 15, 000 to 20,000 acres at the Litchfield Park bench, named after Paul Litchfield and the third ranch was at Chandler, Arizona. The Boswell Company was invited in 1927 by Mr. Litchfield to put up an ore mill at Litchfield Park, to crush the seed from the cotton he was growing. We did and we got into the cattle business, got into the farm loan business. This was all in adjunct to our California operations.

Question: You made loans to cotton growers?

Yes as part of our ginning operations to get the ---to gin cotton to get the seed to crush. We, in California – our head office was in Los Angeles – we had been in operation in California since 1924 and it was a successful operation led by my uncle who was a retired West Point Major and subsequently talked his brother, Colonel Walter O. Boswell into leaving the Army, he was G2 to General Pershing and was presumed to be the next Chief of Staff. And he persuaded him to come to Arizona in 1927 and subsequently that is the name of the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital. The third brother was William Boswell who ran the California operations and that was my father and my father is buried here in Sun City because he remembered the Marinette Ranch with a great deal of fondness and my mother, who is still alive and living in Kirkland, California at age 88 has a crypt here and intends to be buried here also. So our roots go back to 1926-1927. But to back track a little bit – during the 30's they were having financial troubles making profit and they asked us to lease any part of the three ranches. We did, in fact, it went to a ten year lease on this place, Marinette Ranch. The Chandler Ranch and the west part of the Litchfield Park ranch. Those were ten year leases and then shortly after the expiration Mr. Litchfield asked if we would like to purchase anyone or all of the three.

Question: This was in the early 30's?

No, this was the early 40's, after the ten year lease had expired. I think it was 1943 or 1944. At any rate we did purchase the Marinette Ranch for \$50 an acre. The price on the Litchfield Park ranch was \$75 an acre, but the stipulation was we had to agree never to incorporate Litchfield Park and keep it with his name attached. My Uncle and Father determined that we couldn't run a business and be a Mayor of a town at the same time so we declined the Litchfield Park Ranch and also the Chandler Ranch because we had another large property come up in California about that time. In any event, Goodyear operated under the name "The Old Southwest Cotton Company" and if you go back and check some of the water rights on this ranch you can see, or could see before it became a housing project, the canal, which is still visible from the air, that came right down through this house where I am sitting as a diversion from a Brush Dam which was put up near the Heading Ranch. This is up where you have the gun club. They also had some fifteen to eighteen shallow wells up there and those wells are all capped. I think if you ask a couple of our people around here they can take you back and show you where the original wells are. You can take the cap off and drop a rock in and you will find that the water is standing at about thirty feet.

(Statement by a woman, but the transcriber is unable to understand her.)

No, I am talking about the wells long before that. These were drilled in 1917 -1918 and 1920. This posed a major lawsuit between the Southwest Cotton Company and Goodyear and the Beardsley irrigation district because when Mr. Waddell, being the principal bond holder and got the dam built, known as the Waddell Dam, the water was diverted to the west of here which is the district over there where Sun City West is. That water fight went on for years, and was frankly never settled. When I became President of the company in 1952, having inherited that roomful of legal documents, I dropped the suit. So we operated this for – until 1959 and subsequently in between times we also purchased what was known as the Santa Fe Ranch from the old Santa Fe Development Company, which was a subsidiary of the railroad. The purchase price on that ranch was \$7 an acre with the growing crops on it.

Question: Was that adjacent property?

One mile separates it which is the river bed on the north end and it runs down to Cactus Lane grape vineyard on the south end. So we had two properties. In 1951, during the Korean War everyone was growing cotton, the water table was going down and we were concerned about the viability of our Arizona operation as

opposed to some opportunities in California. So in 1958 I happened to be over here and I read – excuse me it was 1959, I read that the Del E. Webb Corporation had just purchased what was known as Arrowhead Ranches and I was on my way to Chandler, Arizona and happened to, for some reason go by way of the old railroad tracks where the Webb building was and just on a whim stopped and had an associate with me, George Ball, --

Question: Excuse me, where was the Arrowhead Ranch?

The Arrowhead Ranch I just to the east of here and it is in Deer Valley. That was an association between the Webb Corporation and Henry Crown of Chicago. The squib in the paper said that Mr. Jacobsen was interested in a large piece of property and so as I say I stopped by, and walked in and I was announced and he happened to be available and I said would you like to – I see in the paper where you would like to buy a piece of property. He said, I would but I want a large piece, and you couldn't qualify for that. I said you are probably right, it is only ten thousand acres and he said let's go look at it. We got Joe Ashton, George Ball, my associate, and we drove out to Waddell, which is on the south end of where Sun City West is and looked and Jake in his great imagination started saying that he was interested in retirement and we could move this mountain and do that and do this, he still had his arms moving when we were coming back on Grand Avenue and I said, by the way there is another ten thousand acres here if you are interested. And with that he said let's go to the office and make a deal. And at three a.m. that evening we had reduced our contract on a yellow scratch pad a simple letter of agreement which he signed. I never did make it to Chandler. What that deal was, was that, I have to digress by saying that there was a fellow that occupied 320 acres that belonged to a widow woman and I frankly can't recall her name at the moment – but the mans name was Elmer Johns. He was a little crippled hunch-backed fellow who had developed Lakewood near Long Beach, which was probably the most successful housing development during the war. He moved to this place which jutted into some of our property just south of Grand Avenue and made an arrangement with the widow to use her pool, which was a water storage for what he called Youngtown. It was Elmer Johns who conceived the idea of active retirement and I think that evening as we signed our agreement Joe Ashton was present, Jake Jacobsen, they brought Tom Breen in and I think it was at that place that we said let's elaborate on Elmer Johns expression, active retirement and one of us, I don't remember who, actually came up with the words Senior Citizens. So that was the start of the two words that we used. Jake shook hands with me on the basis that there would be no promises that we would perform 110% of what we said we would. And that we would not sell a house until the shopping center was complete and the meat market was fully stocked and the vegetable stands

were fully stocked. There would be no signs saying the future home of this, that or what have you. We would only perform first, then, we would sell.

Question: Now you are in partnership?

We are in partnership but the tax considerations of trying to sustain a capital gains on the sale of the land because the price that we set was an average of one thousand dollars per acre, but I wanted a part of the development as well. So in order to accomplish that we had to change our original agreement and the Boswell Company took a forty-nine percent interest and Webb took fifty-one percent. This allowed us to take capital gains on the actual sale of the raw lands and then participate in the operating profits as a minority share holder.

Question: Was Del Webb in on any of this up to this time?

No.

Question: You had never even met him?

No. Jacobsen was the President and Joe Ashton was the Vice President.

Question: Now this means that Elmer Johns sold the land or bought the land from someone else at Youngtown?

Yes. I can't recall her name, but I am sure that you could find it. And part of our deal was that because I was so fond of Elmer Johns and what he was trying to do that I reserved, out of the Webb deal, another two hundred and forty acres, which would be west of the road that runs north and south, just beyond the original shopping center – the main road. The Boswell Company owned the property from Grand Avenue down to where the Youngtown Shopping Center is. So I reserved that out of the Webb deal and went to Elmer Johns and said here you can have it at the same price. Of course he was delighted because this assured his continuation and I thought it was the neighborly thing to do.

Question: Youngtown had already been started?

Yes. There were some houses and some models. As I recall perhaps fifty to sixty houses. The original club house was by the reservoir with cottonwood trees around it. But back to the financial side of it

Question: One more time now. Elmer Johns then had this thought, but we keep hearing the name of someone else, his name starts with an S as the man who had the dream of Youngtown. Elmer Johns was the developer – Schleifer – that was the name.

I tell you it was Elmer Johns. I am sure he passed away in the mid 60's.

Question: Do you have any idea where his idea came from?

No, except that he did come to Arizona for his health. He had been a very successful builder as I said. He built Lakewood.

Question: He was a cripple?

Yes, and a hunchback. It was Lakewood, California. I am sure there is someone in Youngtown who can tell you the history of that. But in any event all this occurrence with Jake and Joe Ashton was in the fall of '59 and we opened – would not sell anything and opened on January 1 and I think we have seen some of the photographs of the traffic that was backed up some six miles. I give Tom Breen a lot of credit. Tom's father was in charge of the old Hays commission in Los Angeles. Tom had the imagination. Webb had, at that time, a very viable standing operation. Unfortunately, Jake left in '65 and I think shortly thereafter some 15-16 of the key people left. Del Webb called me one day and I went in to see him and he said – I've got to put somebody in here and everybody has left and I had hoped to retire and do you have any objection to Bob Johnson, and I said of course not. I had known Bob socially. We had belonged to a monthly \$50 investment club and that is where I first met Bob –

Question: He was stationed in California?

Yes, in the contracting division. Part of the issue, and you should probably interview Bob. In my opinion he never wanted the job. He never made it over here and he didn't like going to Las Vegas and Bob had a terrible time making decisions and as a result when Breen left he put John Meeker in – John was Del Webb's caddy and John had one of those unique abilities to visualize – he has imagination which I think was only surpassed by maybe Jacobsen. John was one of the most sincere quality men I have ever met and he is the one that constantly reiterated to all of in our board meetings – we gotta care, we have an obligation to these people. You have to care, get involved. He brought with him Owen Childress. I used to call Owen the Mayor of Sun City. Frankly, Owen is not a business man in my opinion, but he is quality,

he is sincere, he relates to people and with Johnny doing the physical work in the imagination of building and with Owen keeping the people problems to a minimum as far as John was concerned, they made a great combination.

Question: Wasn't he in financing too?

Bob Johnson made the tragic mistake, I think, by transferring Owen down town, making him chief financial officer and frankly it was a job that Owen didn't want, should never have been offered the job. But this goes back to Bob Johnson. You have to keep in mind, with all due respect to these people, I remember Del Webb when he had a panel truck and he was doing odd jobs on Central Avenue in Phoenix. Jacobsen drove a crude oil tanker between Ajo and Phoenix. Bob Johnson was the first employee (----) was a carpenter. And these three just made it on the housing during the war. And it was Dan Topping who persuaded Webb that in order to avoid the contract renegotiations that all contractors went through maybe you better diversify and get into other things. Webb frankly used the Yankees to wine and dine the Washington would-be's and various and sundry people and Del just – he had a knack that way, because he was the old country boy and they all fell for it. To my knowledge he was the only wartime contractor who was never renegotiated.

Question: You say you knew him when he was a –

He drove a panel truck – he was a carpenter.

Question: But you didn't know him personally?

Yes, I had met him through my Uncle because he rented my Uncle's house in Encanto Apartments on Central Avenue. That was the summer of 1935 and '36.

Question: So when you walked in that office you did have a little –

Oh, sure. Everybody knew of Del Webb – there was the Yankees. He had a big sign No Smoking and I was at that time a smoker and I had to put out my cigarette. I think the other thing about Del was that frankly we used Del Webb. He had the image, and I'll be very frank, and this may be the part that I may want to edit. Del Webb couldn't find his way out here if he had to. I wrote part of his speeches and they always started – when I visualize Sun City standing here in the middle of a cotton patch – and then we go on and on. But Del was the type of person who

delegated a lot of responsibility and a lot of authority. Anyway after the start on the original shopping center, south of grand –

Question: Were you quite active in this development?

Yes, because under our arrangement we gave up the 50-50 arrangement and went to the 49-51-- I changed the 50-50 because of our tax problems. We changed it to 49-51, but we then – of the five members of the board –the Boswell Company had the right to name two and it took four of five directors to buy or sell any asset in excess of \$25,000, to declare a dividend or do anything. So in effect we had a Russian veto. That was in exchange for the one percent. The total capitol ever invested was \$100,000. We put in \$49,000, they put in \$51,000. That was the total dollars ever expended in Sun City. Now, true, they had free carry on the land at pre-arranged prices per section. I was the one that insisted on that. They had it scheduled for so much a year and I said, no, you will go through cycles, and I think rather than do something out there we would later regret, let's put into groups of five years – for each five year period they had this obligation. We beat that obligation by some four years.

Question: You don't talk to anyone from those early years who felt they had any misrepresentation, any over selling, anything like that, now does that reflect Del Webb at all? Was he that kind of a person? They say he was a country boy, but was he basically an honest builder country boy?

Yes, he was a terribly honest good old country boy. He had very high ideals and morals. In my opinion he was not a business man but he was smart enough to surround himself with business people. He had - when he went public I think that was the culmination of his ambition. He had a lot of money from the (---) and so I would say that in the latter part of his career that he was a totally complacent, happy, satisfied man. I think that he was thrilled that he could be invited out here and people would say, Thank you, Mr. Webb, for what you have done. You could see his chest out.

Question: You were in the background all this time, weren't you?

I always stay that way, even to this day. I have only been to Washington D.C. once in my life and I took my kids up to the top of the Washington Monument. I'll say this about John Meeker in regard to Del Webb, John had a tremendous loyalty to Del. As I said he was his caddy and had worked for him since he was seventeen years old. Del made him.

Question: Some say John was the son that Del never had.

That's right. Well said. Bob Johnson did fire John Meeker. I went to him and said you got to put him back out there.

Question: Didn't Bob and Meeker get along?

No. Once again it was that John couldn't get a decision from Bob Johnson. So he would go on his own.

Question: Did Meeker come to you with some of these things?

Yes, John and I were very close. I always encouraged him and frankly we didn't make any bones about it at the time. The faster that Sun City grew the faster Bob would (----) so that was a fact of life. I'll never forget I put the name Meeker Mountain on the lakes down there, by the Lakes Club and I can never forget when we came out for board meeting and Bob Johnson had not seen it, didn't know anything about it, when he saw all those big rocks, he said where did they come from, what did they cost and we just totally ignored him and I just said, John, keep the momentum going. Everybody was happy; it was bigger and better rec clubs, more and more and more. I give Bill Chapman credit for Johnny's whole attitude and his encouragement to keep going. You know, we couldn't wait for the county to put in the roads. We put them in ourselves. The sewer, twenty five million – was the biggest boondoggle of all times. It cost the partnership nineteen million dollars. But that's Johnny. Johnny was always about ten years in front of himself.

Question: Meeker had the same relationship or the same feelings for the second wave of people coming in as to what we now associate with Del Webb. Because you talk to people who came in about the time we came in and they really were for John Meeker. If you wanted anything done go to John – talk to John – John will understand. There is that feeling there that many people feel about Meeker as some of the old timers felt toward Webb.

Well, I agree and this might be boring to you but I will give you a little bit more about the Webb Corp from a third party point of view. Because I happen to be sitting in Jake Jacobsen's office when George Montgomery who was Chairman of the Board of the old Kern County Land Company called Jake and had heard of the initial success of Sun City and said I would like you to the same for us here in Bakersfield, California. Jake whispered to me and said what do you think and I said have them finance the whole deal. Jake said that and he said Ok we will put up all

the money and so that was what started Kern City. It was a year later when (---) called and said Jake, we want you to start a Sun City in Houston because they had 18,000 acres down by NASA and I happened to be there again and Jake said what do you think and I said, why don't you get 70% of the profits and a 5% override on sales and they went for it. That is what started that. I went back to the World Series game with Jake, I can't recall the year but it was probably '63, I tell you it was the Bobby (----) homerun for the Dodgers game, in any event they had the Florida (--) in tow and Casey Stengel had to speak to him and so did Joe DiMaggio and that was the start of the Florida Sun City. All three of those fell on their face. Not a one of them survived because they never had the financial controls that – my point is that Jake built up all this asset base and when he left in '65 there was no one around to manage it, including all of Vegas, all of the Sun Cities so they would call on Johnny Meeker to run here and there and go over to San Diego to look at a housing deal and very frankly, Fred Kuentz, whom I always nicknamed Freddy the Freshman who should have been – and they all knew that – I think he is a great guy but he should have been the Boy Scout leader. That is just about what his capability is. Fred is the one that got them in all these troubles and Meeker would bail him out and how he survived all these years none of us know.

Question: What was his position?

He was the Vice President in the corner office that no one ever really caught up with.

Question: When did Johnson fire Meeker?

Shortly after he found out what it cost to build the Lakes Club.

Question: It burned down, didn't it?

It burned down just before the opening.

Question: Was it insured?

Yes, it was. But you know the type of thing that would drive Johnson up the wall from a contractor point of view was the quality that Johnny Meeker insisted go into everything. You look at the Lakes' Club – that whole front is copper and copper was like gold. Johnny insisted, for instance, that there be genuine marble in all the bathrooms, you had the gold fixtures and the biggest problem that he ever had was that some of the major suppliers would try to sell him a second at a huge discount and Johnny would just be furious. This was the reason he would never buy from General Electric. He wanted the top of the line, whatever the GE major appliances

was and they kept trying to sell him their second at a huge discount. Johnny wouldn't even talk to them. So if you look at what went into La Ronde Shopping Center all of that façade up there, look at the brick that goes up the back of these buildings, every bit of it was top quality. I was always for this because that was the image that Sun City had and this was what we were projecting, and it was successful.

Question: An interesting thing was that Breen said that Ashton had the idea, which he never lost, that retirees wanted the cheapest housing available. And he said that as long as Ashton was in the company he never changed that concept. That they couldn't go into better housing until Ashton left. He said that Ashton couldn't realize that until Meeker came in and I guess trying to change to, but he said that was one concept that they were unable to shake from under Ashton.

Well, Ashton was the only money maker that the Webb Corp. had. Jake, with the imagination waving his arms, and you had Meeker the same way and Ashton had the unfortunate job of trying to control them. And I agree with that. But it is pretty obvious that the housing market is like a pyramid – the higher the price, the less the sales. The key thing that other policy matters that we had which was debatable in a sense, we agreed right off the bat that we would never get into the field of geriatrics. If you stop and look back at Sun City we said, what do you think, can we put five hundred retired people together, then it became a thousand and we used to sit there and – Dr. Horton, who was around here for years, very much a close friend of Del Webb, kept wanting to get the medical side into the studies of the aged and I was the one, who I think was probably adamant than anyone else that you have got to go active, active, active, and do not give the image that you have a geriatric center. Because if you do you will attract the geriatrics from the world over and will destroy what I think is a very unique active way of retirement.

Question: Was there ever any thought given to that ultimately as we have now reached that point, that there would be a need?

Well, when you say we have reached the point what tickles me is that when we get one thousand and we get five thousand and you can go on up by thousands and I don't think there is any limit whatsoever. My attitude, now that I am sixty is that you act within age group. In other words –

Question: Well, you can have an old person at sixty and a young person at ninety.

That is true, but you put on the music in the centers of the 40's, or of the 50's, whatever it is and you will get everyone relating to that music. You can't take our

age group and put on the Beetles at that time and relate to them. This is what made Sun City. Now the people on the outside never realized this. But once you lived with this you are only as old as you think and as old as your colleagues think. So you all relate.

Question: But I think we are seeing the nursing homes that are coming in now.

Well, this is why we were always so active in sponsoring. If you will look back, the land was always given to the churches. The contract to the churches was always built at cost. We never made a dime off any church, we gave them over-sized lots because we felt that if we could get the churches related or involved in those cases where you have to have life care, fine. I was the one that said – a hospital has to be an intensive care unit, then you have to have phases off of that. When we built the medical centers and reserved all the land to the east and sixty two acres to the west, both sides – one of the big debates we had on the board was well should we put up this because it is pretty important and we made the decision that we would probably be better off now to get into all these unrelated businesses and let somebody else come in. I was always one to say let's stick with what we know best and let others come in and make a reasonable profit off of it. So we invited Beverly Enterprises to come in. Unfortunately they had their own problems at that time in problems of financing and it wouldn't go as fast as we would have liked.

Question: This was Beverly Manors?

Yes. Bob VanTyle was the chairman then. They were headquartered in Pasadena. But yes, we were always very conscious of the churches and their responsibilities to day care, life care, nursing homes, this type of thing, yet if we could build the right facilities in the hospitals you can attract the best medical people also. But do not advertise this, keep it active, active, active.

Question: I think the hospital had some of the greatest attractions to people.

I agree.

Question: I have a question. Why is the hospital named after Walter Boswell? What made him the prominent Boswell?

He was the Arizona Boswell. Our office was in the old Louers Tower in downtown Phoenix, branch office at Litchfield Park and we were the largest cotton company in

the west back of Anderson Clayton and Colonel Walter being responsible for the Marinette Ranch and the Santa Fe Ranch and it was a fitting tribute to the Boswell Foundation which is the largest stockholder of the J. G. Boswell Company. It was the one that put up the money for the hospital and we have now built seven hospitals as part of our activities. But the one I am most proud of is the Walter O. Boswell Hospital. And I am probing for names but it seems to me that when we met I think George Meeks

Question: Our fire department fellow? He was the one who was active in the hospital. And Jimmy was active for years.

He and Bill Chapman and the plan called for a one story medical system and I said no – we will put up a million dollars if you will raise you sights and let's put up something that everybody will be proud of. The other side was it was the catalyst that allowed us to jump Grand Avenue. Because development started south and then came back up north and there you have the railroad tracks and a very unsightly - One again Meeker set Mr. Johnson off by going for the most expensive landscaping and raising that full berm along there to hide that eyesore. Then the hospital was developed. But the key thing about the hospital, we would never put up all the money. My philosophy is that the more people that you can get to put one dollar in, the more involved and the more it's theirs; and if it is theirs, the more they care. So that is the background of the hospital. I will tell you right now that I was very much opposed to and still am, a hospital in Sun City West. I just feel the whole medical profession is going to intensive care and to degrees off of that and if you can have one centralized specialty –

Question: There is no real need for one that far away? It is interesting you telling about how carefully you borrowed the concept behind the retirement idea. Breen told us that they even consulted psychiatrists and he is the fellow that told them, according to Breen “ you are right, but you probably don't know how right you are”. That is the way he put it. We were very impressed with the fact that they also called in the firm of – a consulting firm and they didn't get very much satisfaction out of that because they just apparently reviewed some government pamphlets and gave them a report based on that which said no, but they decided to go on anyway. Is that true?

I don't recall that specifically, but yes, it is true in the context, because I know the first, - when I became involved with it we hired Freer and Luckman, Architects. I can tell you that some of thoughts they expressed and I was enthusiastic for – we actually negotiated for the use of the rail line into town – we were going to put in a

mono-rail. Secondly I can recall very specifically we had two sectional plans and I pushed it finally got overruled by the Webb Phoenix office of having one whole area which would be no automobiles. We would have a central garage – you would drive into that and then you would have to take a golf cart and therefore you would get away from streets, curbs and gutters. It never flew because, one again, I think, from my point of view that if you see what happened to Webb Corp., you see what indirectly happened to DEVCO and yet DEVCO, thank God was able to survive in spite of Webb Corp. They got into trouble in Vegas, they got into trouble in all their other Sun Cities; then when they made the disastrous move to Atlantic City, Webb Corp. was on the verge of bankruptcy. To my knowledge, when I say at least three times – and when I say bankruptcy it was a question of hours.

Question: When Swanson came in?

That is the third time. It went through it in '68, '74 and in 1979.

Question: Those were kind of depression years, right?

Right, but it was bankers looking at the history of Webb Corp. You know Webb went public in 1960, never paid a dividend. Let me just give you a couple of facts. DEVCO had 115% of the working capital of the consolidated companies. DEVCO accounted for 120% of the consolidated earnings for four years in a row. So you can see what was happening to Webb Corp. The tail was wagging the dog. So everything we did here, in other words where Meeker was in trouble was that he would use the profits to go back into DEVCO, where as from the Corporation standpoint they had to use it to service their other debts.

Question: Where were you in all this?

I was, obviously, on the DEVCO side. And that is why I had my constant, constant battles with Johnson, and let's go off the record here.

Question: You had a contest, didn't you?

Right. We had just finalized our deal and the original financial deal was that we would put in 49,000, Webb Corp. 51,000, and the Boswell Company loaned the new company 600,000 for the initial development. Someone said what are we going to name it and –

Question: Where did we get the 1.3 million that Jacobsen

(end of tape side A – start of side B)

It was a dollar a share, we had 49 shares and they had 51.

Question: and the development company?

Yes. Then our 600,000 dollar loan – now, I don't know, perhaps, well here, maybe this would be a – maybe he felt in kind they matched that which would be a million two and then you add the one hundred thousand capital so there is your million three. But theirs was always in kind in terms of efforts. But the capital stock was 100,000 dollars. But in any event they hired the search team out of Chicago to come up with a name and I remember I was sitting there, it was after dinner, about nine o'clock, the people were coming up with the finals for the name -

Question: They conducted the contest?

Yes. Webb walked through and said, how are you and I said fine. He walked over and he looked and thumbed through some names and said, I like Sun City. He went on out the door and Jake or Joe, one of the two, said, well that's it. The contest people said, you can't do that. You hired us to conduct this survey and one of them said, Well, I'll tell you, when Webb says that is what he wants that is the way it is going to be. They said, we are not going to certify this, we could be sued. And Jake said what do you want just to get relieved right now? And they put a figure on it, I don't know what it was, twenty thousand dollars or something. So they said, alright, you are paid and they just got up and marched out the door.

Question: Do you remember the name of this company?

No, I don't. They were out of Chicago.

Question: Was it Ruben-Donnelley Company, but I am not sure.

But in any event then Joe Ashton, Joe always seemed the business man, said, My gosh, we have to get the real winners signed off, so he got on the phone to a lady who had won it –

Question: There were four, weren't there?

Yes, to get a house, I think was the number one prize and she lived in Bend, Oregon as I recall it. But anyhow he called up there, and I can remember Joe on the phone and well she has gone down to Palm Springs, she is in a trailer house. Well, do you know the license number. Yes, I think we can get it, let us call you back. And so

they finally called back, and Joe called the Palm Springs Police Force and said if you will locate this women in a trailer house we will contribute a thousand dollars to your Benevolent Society. Sure enough the next morning they called back and said Mrs. So and So at such and such a number. So Joe sent somebody over there and she signed off and signed a waiver – I don't know what they gave her, a trip home or something, but –

Question: She didn't get the house?

Oh, no. So a –

Question: There were three others too.

And third and fourth prizes and they paid them something. Sun City, the name was never in the top dozen.

Question: So then she didn't get a house?

She got something. Oh maybe she did get a house or a house equivalent.

Question: The story we heard was that they won a house and never moved here.

Well, that was the payoff. There was no winner. Webb actually picked the name out of the list.

Question: What Breen or Jacobsen said was we had these four winners and we knew we would have a legal problem so that is the reason we went out and got these waivers.

That's right.

Question: They were going to have a drawing among the four and they made them sign that they were willing to take their chances then the others got the prizes. But here again Del Webb convinced them that this is what I want.

He just made it as a comment as he walked through.

Question: Nobody disputed it?

Nope.

Question: When they built these new models out here in Sun City West a year or two ago the story is that you saw those two huge things and you said, no way. Why did you decide that those weren't for Sun City West? Why did you disagree?

Let's go off the record on this.

I'll just say that I am tremendously proud of Sun City and Sun City West. I can tell you that from a historical standpoint that John Meeker never wanted to see Sun City or Sun City West incorporated because he sincerely believed and I think still believes that he can give more to the people than they can give to themselves. If you are ever incorporated and you start the tax or something, that he would be in a better position to come back and repair your streets and curbs, provide you this or that because John believes and he is right and I certainly subscribe to it that 90% of the sales of Sun City come from you people, from the citizens themselves. As proof of that I can recall that on the second sales office that we had, about two miles south of Grand, one of our big problems was the constant flood of volunteer citizen sitting in the models selling people coming in. And it really was a problem, and we left it. I think that Sun City is a place, that frankly, my wife and I have always considered coming over here and retire, anonymously, and as I say I am very proud of it – it is a great place to live and it is a great way of life.

Question: Would you choose Sun City or Sun City West?

Oh, I think they are totally interdependent. If you were to take the tour and start with the initial models I can almost guarantee that you will come up with the age and the era and what was going on and I can show you what I consider the late '60's as the age of descent. Frankly if you look at aerial photographs you will see that everything was in the circular pattern. This was because people were fearful, we had all the questions to our institutions, the Vietnam – so when we would open up a circle we would sell everything on the inside first and as you gravitated out it was harder to sell. The garden apartments back of the walls would sell. As soon as you got out of that era you could see the opposite occurring. So I think we were attuned to this and that is pretty much evidenced in that next era, called the roaring '70's when you see the era of the Palm Brook and we built the first sanctuary and we upgraded the models. Mary James did this. Have you ever seen the model with the swimming pool in the living room. So, I think, in summary, we would sit around Owen, Johnny and myself and say, what amenities are not available in Sun City. We could not come up with one. We had hunting, we had pheasant hunting, we had all

the water sports, just about everything you could ever want. So that is my part in the history of Sun City. I am going to stay active in the Hospital. I have agreed to be on the Advisory Committee for the upcoming golf tournament – and that is about it. I regret that we don't continue to have an interest in it, but you always have an out and that is you can incorporate and go your own way.

Question: What, in your opinion, is the best tact for Sun City to take now? Should we go ahead with incorporation?

I don't see any reason to incorporate.

Question: How about home rule?

You have to keep in mind that as far as we were concerned, and I am now going back to the board of directors, that the vast majority of people thought they had a good buy, did have a good buy, it was the best buy in the world. You are always going to have a vocal minority that want more. You just can't give enough, but I can just tell you that from the business point of view the residents of Sun City got a lot more from the company than the company ever got from them. We never really cared whether you incorporated or not and that's the truth. Meeker cared because he kept thinking that he could do more.

Question: But we haven't got a Meeker now. It is a whole new ball game.

What the future is going to be I can't tell you. A lot of that depends on the company but as I say you can always incorporate.

Let's go off the record now.

The Boswell held out twenty acres of the original Marinette town site, which would be (from the sale to Webb) – where the King's Inn is. Just north of the railroad track on Grand Avenue was a school and that school was picked up and moved to the southwest corner of section 29, which is just opposite of the development on the north end, of the competition. But they never quick-claimed the deed to the land rights and so that for years the deed to the school – on the site where the hospital is – we finally got that cleared up, but that was the site for the original school.

Question: Do you still have the land west of here?

No, that is all DEVCO.

Question: What was Western Savings big purchase?

Jake left in '64. Things were getting bad in the company and Mr. Johnson asked if we would cancel the contract on the Santa Fe Ranch, i.e. where Sun City West is – if we would take it back, this was, I think, in '68 or '69. In any event, what had happened was the offices of the Webb Company, namely Del Webb and Bob Johnson and others had personally invested and put in grape vineyards in partnership with Pete (---) and out people, who were neighbors, used to laugh because they would all come out with their hard hats and Webb would drive out in his Lincoln Continental and give orders from his air-conditioned car. I had been used to working all my life and they would all come and tell me the story. Well, the long and short of it was they got their personal tax right-off because it was a disaster and there were all kinds of suits with (---) and so forth. Shortly thereafter they asked if we would take it back and we took it back by doubling the price from the original contract and this is how we happened to end up in the grape business. John Meeker said, you know that would be a great sales tool. Why don't we let the citizens go out and harvest grapes and I said, Great and for the old comers, it became more than a party it became a right. I can tell you that John was in on this and we had thousands out there, and all the coke and so forth. But this was all part of the atmosphere – let the people participate and I know it cost the Boswell Company money because we would always leave just enough to make it worthwhile.

Question: If you didn't leave enough it was your fault because they didn't have enough.

Exactly. We cut them too thin. But in any event that is part of the history back of why a – and we still - when we finally made the final deal we retained the grape vineyards sections 10 and 13 – a total of about 3,000 acres that we still had on the south end of the Sun City West property. In the meantime we had made a deal with Charlie Wexler and bought his feedlot out and that is where we opened up the (--) site of Sun City West. John had to do something bigger and better – having built the big Rec Center here on Bell Blvd. I remember ten years ago he visualized – he said what we will do is we will build something like an open pit copper mine and we'll put blue lakes and the white sands of the golf course and everything. People will have to come up on the rim and look down and this will be our sales (--). Before Johnson caught up with him he had signed a contract and was moving four and a half million yards of dirt and when Johnson caught him he said what does that cost – well it was too late because it was already underway. The white sand, Johnny Meeker again thought it had to be brought in from south of Tucson, and if you go up in the –

oh, what do you call it, Crestview, and if you look out on the long par five hole – the green is on a severe angle, only because you see the white sands and the blue lakes in the foreground and the two story apartments and this was your sales tool. Again it is back to Meeker and his quality, regardless of the expense. I was the bad guy who said, Johnny, you are nuts to deed this golf course to the people. You've spent a jillion dollars, keep it for a sales tool. If you turn it over to them, they may not (---) because if it is one of the public courses they won't put in the dry grass like the private clubs do and you won't be able to get as much out of it in terms of the sales value. So I was the guy who said, Johnny, hold it out, you can always give it to them at a later date. Now I see where the (--) are kind of raising hell because it is their right to have it and so forth and so on. But we

Question: But you approved the building of the (--) didn't you?

Yes, but that was never promised incidentally. The company was right to hold that course out and the one thing in the directors meetings I kept insisting on was do not let sales people make any representations unless they do it in writing. A lot of this business of who promised what and is not factually true. End of interview.

Question: There is change here. And now they estimate that about 10% of the people use the Rec Centers. Now these Rec Centers are beautiful and you always take your visitors there to see them but in truth you don't use them. Now that is your own fault, they are there. There has to be some kind of a change because those are millions of dollars invested in places where very few people use them. Now a lot of that, this is just my idea,

(tape got very noisy, was unable to hear or understand.)